COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is for graduate students interested in gaining advanced knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to the principles, purposes, and processes of assessment and evaluation in early childhood studies, particularly for young children with or at risk for disabilities and their families. In this course, we explore traditional and contemporary issues in early childhood assessment and evaluation. Standards of educational and psychological measurement as they apply in early childhood will be addressed. Opportunities will be provided for in-depth analyses, integration, and application of recommended and developmentally appropriate assessment and evaluation practices for use with infants, toddlers, or preschool children and their families. In addition, we will consider environmental assessment and evaluation as well as assessment and evaluation for accountability in early childhood. Issues related to diversity, cultural competence, and assessment and evaluation processes will be considered. Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate competence in applying recommended and developmentally appropriate assessment and evaluation practices as well as standards of educational and psychological measurement in early childhood.

RELATION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES SPECIALIZATION
This course is part of the UF early childhood studies doctoral specialization course sequence. The specialization sequence is designed to prepare early childhood studies leaders with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to advance policies, research, and practices for the benefit of young children and their families within and across various ecological contexts. A course in early childhood assessment and evaluation is part of the specialization sequence because early childhood studies leaders should have knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to (a) use, analyze, or develop measures to be used for various assessment and evaluation purposes in early childhood studies; (b) interpret various types of assessment and evaluation data, including reliability, precision, validity, and utility of measurement; (c) describe and apply key principles as well as recommended and developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood assessment and evaluation; and (d) advance further principles and practices in early childhood studies assessment and evaluation.
PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING
Our teaching philosophy includes several key principles, maxims, and norms: (a) establish an instructional context that sets the occasion for learning and achievement of course objectives; (b) use instructional strategies that have been demonstrated empirically to support learners to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions; (c) use scaffolding and individualize instructional strategies, as appropriate, for each learner; (d) respect diversity, including learning histories, and the importance of creating a culturally responsive and contextually relevant learning environment; and (e) motivate learners by establishing clear expectations for learning and performance and by applying meaningful evaluations, including performance feedback and differential consequences. Learners take an active role by making substantive contributions to their own learning and to the learning of others by identifying (a) learning needs in relation to established course objectives, (b) preferred methods to ensure they master course objectives and demonstrate competencies, and (c) motivators for learning.

LEARNER EXPECTATIONS
The value of our learning together during course discussion and application sessions is dependent on the preparation and participation of each participant. Therefore, each participant is expected to complete the assigned readings for each session, to attend each session, and to participate actively in small and large group discussions and activities. Learners are expected to engage in continuous cycles of planning, organizing, instructing, monitoring, and evaluating their learning in relation to specified objectives throughout the course.

1. Each participant should read ALL assigned readings and complete all learning activities specified on the syllabus. Readings and learning activities for class sessions should be completed by the date listed on the course schedule.

2. Learning assessments are due by 4:05 pm on the date shown on the course schedule. Late assessments will be accepted only in extreme cases and only after consultation with the instructor. A grading penalty may be applied when learning assessments are submitted late.

3. Learners are expected to attend scheduled class sessions and participate actively in discussions and activities. Cell phones should be placed on vibrate during class sessions unless we are using them as part of learning activities. Learners are responsible for procuring handouts, notes, assignments, et cetera in the event that they are absent from the class sessions. Active participation means expressing your own thoughts and listening to those of others, engaging in respectful dialogue, and being willing to challenge and be challenged by important ideas or diverse perspectives. Learners are expected to take leadership roles in particular discussions and class sessions, engage actively in discussions and activities, and share their knowledge and expertise with other learners. Participation will be assessed by the instructor and student using the following criteria: (a) degree to which learner is knowledgeable about content of required
readings and other materials as evidenced by their substantive contributions to discussions, activities, or responses to questions; (b) contributions made to the learning community through sharing of resources or offering supports to other learners; (c) insightfulness of questions and comments during discussions or activities to encourage analysis and critical thinking; and (d) ability to follow group discussion and contribute effectively to face-to-face or electronic discourse. **Up to 10 points are available for participation.**

4. For preparing written assignments and class presentations, learners should follow guidelines outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 2010). Points will be deducted from learning assessments when APA guidelines are not followed (this includes correct APA formats for citations and references).

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, learners will be able to:

1. Define and illustrate key terms used in early childhood assessment and evaluation.
2. Identify and differentiate the major purposes of assessment and evaluation in early childhood.
3. Describe, analyze, and evaluate issues related to reliability/precision, validity, utility, and other standards of educational and psychological measurement relevant or unique to assessment and evaluation in early childhood.
4. Describe and differentiate traditional and contemporary issues in early childhood assessment and evaluation.
5. Describe, analyze, and integrate recommended and developmentally appropriate assessment and evaluation practices in early childhood with respect to 10 criteria (utility, acceptability, authenticity, equity, sensitivity, convergence, collaboration, congruence, technological application, outcomes alignment).
6. Identify, differentiate, and critically analyze assessment and evaluation processes based on the purpose(s) of the assessment or evaluation, including assessment or evaluation processes used at individual, family, environment/classroom, program, or system levels.
7. Describe and critically evaluate linkages among assessment, intervention or instructional planning, intervention or instructional implementation, and evaluation of outcomes.
8. Describe and critically analyze contemporary issues in early childhood assessment and evaluation, including response-to-intervention and accountability.
9. Identify and describe key features of contemporary assessment systems in early childhood.
10. Demonstrate advanced knowledge, skills, and dispositions in a self-selected aspect of early childhood assessment or evaluation.

**Additional Early Childhood Studies Specialization Objectives Addressed in this Course**

1. Analyze how early childhood theory, research, and policy is used to inform the development of assessment instruments (theoretical foundations).
2. Discern differences between competing viewpoints on critical early childhood assessment and evaluation issues (critical thinking skills).

3. Apply inquiry skills to conduct critical reading of and to synthesize the extant theoretical and empirical literature in assessment and evaluation (research inquiry skills).

4. Create scholarly papers and receive feedback about scholarly writing (writing skills).


6. Demonstrate clear, coherent, and accurate oral communication skills and engage in critical dialogue with peers and faculty (communication skills).

7. Apply theories of measurement and standards of educational and psychological testing in early childhood studies (research and measurement)

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS


In this course, another resource useful for students (particularly as they write critiques of assessment instruments) is Mental Measurements Yearbook. This source is available through the UF Library in the On-Line A-Z Databases/EBSCO Host.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNED READINGS
(A beneficial outcome from doctoral courses and seminars occurs when each learning community member shares additional readings and resources. Below is an initial list of additional readings, all of which are available on-line or through the UF library. The learners or instructor will likely identify additional readings to extend or enhance learning.)

eligibility: Evidence base and practice characteristics. *Infants and Young Children, 21*, 334-349.


**COURSE STRUCTURE AND POLICIES**

**Formal Learning Assessments and Points Assigned to Each Assessment**

Learners will complete several formal learning assessments during the course. Each assessment is designed to help students and the instructor monitor and evaluate the extent to which learners meet course objectives. For most learning assessments, evaluation criteria or an evaluation rubric will be used to help inform the monitoring and
evaluation. Learners will be provided with the list of criteria or rubric to be used at least 2 weeks before the learning assessment is due.

1. **Learning Assessment #1 – Instrument Review and Critique Paper.** Write a 10-to 15-page double-spaced paper that is a review and critique of an assessment instrument used in early childhood studies research/practice. Please discuss with the instructors the instrument you want to review and critique. There will be two major sections of this paper, each due at a different time.

   In the first part of the paper, you should (a) identify the name, authors, and the type of instrument selected; (b) describe the primary constructs intended to be measured by the instrument; (c) detail the purpose(s) for which the instrument is designed to be used and with whom the instrument is designed to be used; and (d) review the structure of the assessment instrument, including how it is organized, how it is administered, how long it takes to administer, who can administer it, how it is scored, and the types of score(s) produced. This portion of the paper should be similar to reviews published in extant sources such as *Mental Measurements Yearbook*. This review will be due **January 29, 2015**.

   In the second part of the paper, you should critique the instrument by (a) analyzing the type and extent of psychometric evidence available, (b) describing its strengths and weaknesses, and (c) offering suggestions for further development or refinement of the instrument. For this part of the paper, you should review instrument manuals and the empirical literature to identify studies that have provided psychometric evidence for the instrument. Summarize in table form the available psychometric evidence. Be sure to provide sufficient detail in text and tables about study samples and score validity and reliability evidence (e.g., type of evidence, validity and reliability data). In addition, b and c should be informed your practice administrations. **This critique will be due on March 12, 2015.**

2. **Learning Assessment #2 – Application of Assessment Instrument in Authentic Early Childhood Context.** For the assessment instrument you choose to critique for learning assessment #1, you will practice administering the assessment instrument with at least 5 sampling units (e.g., child, caregiver, classroom, program). The instructors will help facilitate access to children/practitioners/sites where you can conduct practice administrations. After your practice administrations are complete, you will write a 10- to 15-page double-spaced summary of your practice administrations. The structure for the practice administrations should be in the form of an assessment report that describes with whom the assessment was used (use initials or letters to de-identify); the context in which the assessment was administered; the processes used to conduct the practice administration; results of the practice administration, including scores and other relevant findings; inferences or informed decisions that can be made based on the results; and limitations.

3. **Learning Assessment #3 – Lead Class Session.** Each student will lead one class session in this course and might be asked to conduct a guest lecture in the
undergraduate assessment course on the topic. Topics will be determined based on student interests, instructors’ perspectives about learner needs, and relevance to the course objectives. Students might choose a topic covered generally by the instructors that they want to explore further (e.g., family assessment, family involvement in assessment, assessment of dual language learners). Students will select a topic and work with the instructors to (a) identify readings and (b) develop PPT and other relevant class session materials, including guiding questions, learning activities, and learning checks for the class session. After the session is completed, students will write a brief 2-page reflection paper about their teaching experiences using a format provided by the instructor. (A final copy of the all materials for the session must be provided to the instructors for final review and approval 2 weeks before the session and made available to the class the week before the session).

4. **Capstone Learning Assessment.** For the capstone learning assessment, students will select a topic of special interest related to assessment or evaluation in early childhood studies. Topics can include issues related to the assessment of (a) young children with specific conditions, risk conditions, disabilities, or attributes (e.g., young children with autism spectrum disorders, young children who are dual language learners, young children with cerebral palsy); (b) a specific domain or skill area (e.g., emotional literacy, social-problem solving, literacy, communication); (c) knowledge, skills, dispositions of adults who work with young children; or (d) environments, classrooms, or systems (e.g., classroom quality, accountability). Grades for this project will be based largely on the thoroughness and quality of the sources reviewed, the extent to which multiple perspectives are considered and integrated, and the extent to which the literature is reviewed critically. Rubrics for each part of the project (assessment project and poster presentation) will be provided.

**Assessment Project:** The components of the Assessment Project include the following:

**Definition of Topic:** In this section, students should define their topic thoroughly, using multiple sources from the theoretical and empirical literature.

**Approaches to Assessment/Evaluation:** Which assessment/evaluation instruments, methods, or approaches have been used in the past related to the topic? This section of the project should review the literature on your topic and analyze the ways assessment/evaluation has been conducted in the past. Depending on your topic, this could include a review of specific instruments (e.g., the BDI-II), or it could include a review of methods or approaches (e.g., Q-sort, questionnaires, observation), or you may find that several different instruments, methods, or approaches have been used. It is important in this section to be inclusive in terms of types of instruments, methods, and approaches used in relation to the topic. Information on the reliability, validity, and utility of each instrument, method, or approach should be discussed, with reference to primary sources, as appropriate. In addition to text, in this section, you should include a table that reviews the
instruments, methods, or approaches you have found and any related psychometric evidence. Different topics will have different evidence. At a minimum, your table should include the name of the instrument, method, or approach; authors associated with it; brief description; population for whom it is intended (e.g., birth to 3 years,” or “preschool classrooms.”); reliability, validity, and utility data (when available).

For this section, depending on your topic, you may find that textbooks, literature reviews, instrument reviews, or instrument manuals are appropriate sources of information. Some reference to these sources is likely to be appropriate. It also is important to use primary sources. Depending on your topic, you may find that you need to carefully consider the Methods section of articles in order to find information on score reliability and validity.

Considerations and Issues in Assessment/Evaluation: In this section, you should integrate the findings outlined in the previous section. Discuss considerations and issues for those who wish to conduct assessment or evaluation in the topic area. What are the opportunities and challenges for assessment or evaluation in the topic? As always, it is important to cite scholarly sources and research to support your opinion.

Recommendations for Future: In this section, offer suggestions, based on your review, for future assessment or evaluation in your chosen topic. When making recommendations, it is important to consider the purpose(s) of assessment or evaluation (e.g., diagnosis, program planning, accountability, research). You should also consider practical matters such as cost, feasibility, availability of testers, utility as they apply to your topic. Again, in this section, share your perspectives and support your perspectives by citing relevant literature.

Poster Presentation: Students will develop a poster and present it to class during the last class period. Information should be displayed in a traditional “poster” format but you should use other materials to supplement your poster. Depending on your topic, it may be helpful to have examples of assessment instruments available for others to examine or you might have a video available on your computer that shows an approach to assessment. Handouts, including a 1-page executive summary of the topic or copy of the poster and resources for future use, should be available to all participants.

Grading

Points Available:
Participation: 10 points
Learning Assessment #1: 15 points
Learning Assessment #2: 15 points
Learning Assessment #3: 25 points
Capstone Learning Assessment #4: 35 points
Total Points = 100
Grades Earned Based on Points Earned/Total Points X 100
92% or higher: A
87 - 91%: A-
86 - 84%: B+
83 - 80%: B
79 - 77%: B-
76 - 74%: C+
73 - 70%: C
69 - 67%: C-*
68 - 60%: D*
Below 60%: E*

*Note. These are not “passing” grades for graduate students according to the UF Graduate Student Catalog.
(http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=1054#grades)

**Academic Honor Code**

Students and faculty are expected to adhere to the academic honor code of the University of Florida as published on the University of Florida Web site at: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php For this course, students should pay particular attention to the policies related to citing sources appropriately and avoiding plagiarism. Please ask the instructor if you would like some helpful references related to citing sources effectively and avoiding plagiarism.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**

As described on the UF Disability Resource Center Web site, “there is a strong commitment to equal education for all students at the University of Florida. The University will strive to be aware of and sensitive to the unique needs of all students. Student needs will be addressed through a lens of knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity to cultural, racial, religious, ethnic, and disability diversity.” Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Resource Center, and (2) bring a letter to the instructor from the DRC that verifies the need for academic accommodations and what type. This should be done before or within the first week of class. For more information about the Disability Resource Center contact them at

Disability Resource Center
0020 Reid Hall
Phone: (352) 392-8565
Fax: (352) 392-8570 Web site: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>-Review of course syllabus</td>
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<td>-Needs assessment in relation to course objectives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-Defining assessment and evaluation</td>
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<td>1/15</td>
<td><strong>Assessment and Its Importance in Early Childhood Studies</strong></td>
<td>MHS(^2) – Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 38-59)</td>
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<td>-Legal and Policy Bases for Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>NRC(^3) - Chapters 1-3</td>
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<td>-Essentials of Assessment: Why, What, and How</td>
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<td>1/22</td>
<td><strong>Traditional and Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Assessment and</strong></td>
<td>McConnell (2000)</td>
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<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Priest et al. (2001)</td>
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<td>-Traditional purposes and approaches to assessment and evaluation</td>
<td>Snyder, Wixson et al. (2008)</td>
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<td>-Why changes are needed in early childhood assessment and evaluation</td>
<td>VanDerHeyden (2005)</td>
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<td>-Authentic assessment: Defining it and operationalizing it</td>
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<td>-Family involvement in assessment</td>
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<td>-Distinguishing curriculum-based assessment from curriculum-based</td>
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<td>measurement</td>
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<td>-Assessment and evaluation in an accountability context</td>
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<td>1/29</td>
<td><strong>Recommended and Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early</strong></td>
<td>MHS – Chapter 12</td>
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<td><strong>Childhood Assessment and Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>DEC (2014)</td>
<td>Learning Assessment #1</td>
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<td>-DEC Recommended Assessment Practices</td>
<td>DEC (2007)</td>
<td>– Part 1 Due</td>
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<td>-DAP/Authentic Assessment Criteria</td>
<td>NAEYC (2003, 2005)</td>
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<td>-DEC/NAEYC Position Statements</td>
<td>NASP (2009)</td>
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<td>-NASP Position Statement</td>
<td>Office of Head Start (n.d.)</td>
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\(^1\) For relevant academic calendar dates see http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=1180
\(^2\) MHS = McLean, Hemmeter, & Snyder (2013) text
\(^3\) NRC = Snow & VanHemel NAP text
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| 2/5   | **Reliability, Precision, and Errors of Measurement: Issues for Early Childhood Assessment and Evaluation**  
- Defining reliability: Two ways  
- Sources of reliability evidence  
- Types of reliability coefficients  
- Consistency of scores across replications of measurement  
- Deconstructing and analyzing reliability evidence for select EC assessment or evaluation instruments | MHS – Chapter 2 (pp. 59-81)  
AERA\(^4\) - Chapter 2 |
| 2/12  | **Validity and Utility of Measurement: Issues for Early Childhood Assessment and Evaluation**  
- Defining validity  
- Sources of validity evidence  
- Deconstructing and analyzing validity evidence for select EC assessment or evaluation instruments  
- Utility in early childhood assessment | MHS – Chapter 2 (pp. 59-81)  
AERA – Chapter 1  
NRC – Chapter 7  
Greenwood & McConnell (2011) |
| 2/19  | **Digging Deeper: Child-Level Assessment and Evaluation in Early Childhood**  
- Screening  
- Eligibility  
- Assessment of Various Domains or Skills  
- ICF-CY Framework and Implications for Measures for Children with Disabilities | MHS – Chapters 4-10 (Each student will read and summarize information from two chapters)  
NRC – Chapters 4 and 5  
| 2/26  | **Digging Deeper: Child-Level Assessment and Evaluation in Early Childhood**  
- Assessment of Various Domains or Skills  
- Linking Assessment and Instruction/Intervention  
- Monitoring Intervention and Children’s Progress | MHS – Chapters 4-10 (Each student will read and summarize information from two chapters)  
Learning Assessment #2 Due |
| 3/5   | Spring Break  
NO CLASS | |
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| 3/12  | Digging Deeper: Environmental Assessment and Evaluation in Early Childhood | MHS – Chapter 3  
NRC – Chapter 6  
Learning Assessment #1 – Part 2 Due |          |
| 3/19  | Program and System Accountability: Issues for Assessment and Evaluation in Early Childhood | NRC – Chapters 10 and 11  
Meisels (2008)  
Riley-Ayers (2014)  
Schilder & Carolan (2014) |          |
| 3/26  | Diversity, Cultural Competence, and Accommodations in Early Childhood Assessment and Evaluation | NRC – Chapters 8 and 9  
DR Access Accommodations and Assessment Specification Documents  
Christensen, Carver, VanDeZande, & Lazarus (2011)  
Duran, Cheatham, & Santos (2011) |          |
| 4/2   | Doctoral Student Session                                              | Learning Assessment 3 Due<sup>5</sup>                                                                                                                                   |          |
| 4/9   | Doctoral Student Session                                              | Learning Assessment 3 Due                                                                                                                                  |          |
| 4/16  | Doctoral Student Session                                              | Learning Assessment 3 Due                                                                                                                                  |          |
| 4/23  | Reading Day – No Class                                                |                                                                                                                                  |          |
| 4/30  | Capstone and Poster Presentations DUE                                  |                                                                                                                                  |          |

<sup>5</sup> Learning assessment #3 is due on the day the student conducts the session.