

Psy 333: Assessment of Individual Differences Fall 2023

Course Information

- PSY 333, Section 01
- Thursdays 6-9 p.m., Roop Hall, Room 2, Allen Village
 - Backup Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/91234699227?pwd=UXY3K3l6bTZOWWdDWDU3QTN6TDVuZz09>

Professor Information

- Professor: Dr. Taryn A. Myers (she/her/hers)
- Office: Roop 3
- E-mail: tmyers@vwu.edu
 - E-mail is the best way to reach me. I check my e-mail multiple times per day and it is sent to my smartphone. However, if your e-mail requires more than a sentence or two to answer, I will usually ask that you ask me about it before or after class or set up an appointment to discuss the topic in more detail.
- Office Hours
 - By appointment via Calendly for a Zoom or Hangouts meeting: www.calendly.com/drtarynmyers
 - Or email me to meet before or after our evening class.
 - Please feel free to come to me with any questions or concerns. I cannot assist you with problems that I am not aware of. If you do not understand something, please ask. I am always willing to sit down with you in person or virtually at any time.
- VWU number to call for class closings and delays due to inclement weather: (757) 455-5711
 - Or check the top of the page at www.vwu.edu – a banner will be displayed across the top with relevant information on closings and delays.

Required Text

- Neukrug, E. S., & Fawcett, R. C. (2015). *Essentials of Testing & Assessment: A Practical Guide for Counselors, Social Workers, and Psychologists* (3rd ed).
- Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or distributed throughout the semester.
- You will also need a scientific calculator or app. Get one and bring it to class or get an app on your phone or online.

Orientation

This is a 300-level course with prerequisites of Psy 101 or 102 and Junior or Senior standing, thus, a moderate level of sophistication regarding general psychology and methods for studying psychology is assumed.

Course Objectives

1. Understand the use and development of psychological tests.
2. Calculate and apply basic test statistics.
3. Accurately interpret output from statistical software programs.
4. Evaluate and compare the development, standardization, psychometric properties, etc., of psychological tests.
5. Understand and apply the scientific method to the development and evaluation of a psychological test.
6. Understand the administration and scoring of different assessment tests and measures used by psychologists.

Blackboard

Throughout the semester, class assignments, handouts, and general guidance about various aspects of this course may be made available on Blackboard, Virginia Wesleyan's on-line course management system. To log into Blackboard, you will need your Blackboard username and password. Once in the system, you will find a course listing for Assessment.

It is your responsibility to check Blackboard on a regular basis in order to download copies of materials you will need to participate fully in class discussions and activities. Further information about the use of Blackboard in this course will be provided in class.

Attendance & Participation

I fully recognize that there will be times where you cannot attend class due to illness, responsibilities for other family members, caretaking for sick friends or relatives, work at an essential job, etc. Therefore, I do not take points off for missing classes. However, I will take attendance each day as recommended by the Office of Academic Affairs. I will check in on you if you are missing more than two classes in a row to make sure you are okay.

That being said, *if you are healthy and have the time, yet choose not to come to class, you are still responsible for all material covered in class.* In addition, you are also responsible for any announcements made in class, which may include, but are not limited to, changes regarding the syllabus, exam dates, and assignments.

I would strongly recommend getting the contact information of a fellow student in case you miss a class and need the notes. I will not provide anyone with a copy of my personal class notes.

The format of the class will include lecture, hands-on activities, and discussion. I encourage you to share your questions, opinions, and comments to the extent that you feel comfortable. However, this class is NOT the appropriate forum for discussing personal issues relating to the class material (i.e., your, your friend's, or your family members' struggles with one of the disorders we discuss, etc.). If you are experiencing these difficulties, or know someone else who is, proper referral information can be provided, but please note that I will NOT be able to serve as your therapist or provide advice beyond this referral information because of ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association. Information for the VWU Counseling Center is provided later in this syllabus.

Please also be aware that some of the topics we discuss will relate to personal issues and may foster strong opinions in each of us. We will strive to keep communication in the classroom civil and respectful. Also be aware that some of the terminology and topics discussed in the context of certain disorders may be uncomfortable, offensive, and/or objectionable to some. We will discuss these issues because of their relevance to the material that are central to this class and to our knowledge in this area.

Masking

I am recommending – but not requiring – that you mask during this class. **We cannot provide an equitable and just atmosphere for learning if we are not protecting one another by masking.** Refusing to mask indoors is a manifestation of ableism, classism, and racism, an exercise of individual privilege that tells the most vulnerable that their health does not matter. To practice community care, we should mask to protect those of us with compromised immune systems, those of us with family members unable to get vaccinated, those of us who do not want to transmit the virus to others, and those of us who want to avoid re/infection, particularly in light of research about the severe consequences of long COVID. I recommend upgrading to a KF94, KN95, or N95 mask, all of which are widely available on Amazon and other websites, as research has shown that cloth and surgical masks are ineffective against recent variants.

Illnesses and Missed Classes

If you have ANY illness, even if you think it is just a cold or food poisoning, do NOT come to class. Even with a mask on, you may risk transmitting this illness to others. If you are feeling up to it, you may sign on to the Zoom link for the class and participate remotely. However, if it is best for you to just rest, please do not feel the obligation to do so.

If you must miss class for a reason such as tending for a sick family member or travelling for an athletic event and are able to sign on to the Zoom link and participate remotely, you can feel free to do so. However, you can also get the notes from a classmate or meet with me via Zoom or Hangouts to go over what you missed as we would do in non-COVID times.

Contingency Plan

If I or a member of my family develops COVID-19 or another contagious illness and I am still able to teach class, we will meet via Zoom for the duration of the illness. Our class will follow the exact same format, including lecture via screen sharing and group work via breakout rooms. Once I am cleared to return to campus, we would then return to our normal in-person meetings in our assigned classroom.

In the case that I am not able to teach class due to my own illness or that of a family member, you can expect to be notified by me or the office of Academic Affairs. This notification will include instructions about how the course will proceed.

Recording Lectures

You are expected to attend all meetings of a class for which you are registered, whether in-person or virtual. For this course, I will record our lecture-based classes and post them on Blackboard in recognition of the fact that we are *still* in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic and there may be times you cannot attend class at the scheduled time. However, you should not take these postings for a substitute for being in class, as attending the Zoom class means you will be able to ask questions in real time.

Student Video/Photo Recording

To ensure open dialogue about the difficult topics covered in our course material, class meetings may not be recorded by students (either audio or video) unless it is for purposes approved by the Learning Resource Center. Violations of this policy may result in penalties up to and including failing the course at the instructor's discretion. Additionally, any recording without knowledge and consent violates a number of policies in the VWU Student Handbook and students can be subject to additional sanctions from the Office of Campus Life.

Camera Usage on Zoom

If you must attend class via Zoom, I encourage you to use your camera if possible to foster a sense of connection. Students attending class meetings remotely may, at their discretion, keep their cameras turned off. Students whose cameras are turned off are expected to be active participants in class, either by speaking aloud or typing in the chat box in Zoom. Students who will be around others (roommates, family members, etc.) and want to maintain privacy are encouraged to use earbuds or headsets during class discussion. Students who do not feel comfortable or safe discussing a topic aloud should make use of the chat ask questions and make their class contributions.

Lecture Notes

Any PowerPoint slides used in class will be made available online through Blackboard. However, *do not depend on these slides as your sole source of information!* You will need to take notes. The slides are a *loose outline* of topics we will be discussing. Again, you will be responsible for everything covered in class, not just what is on the PowerPoint slides. Slides will be available to you on the course website on Blackboard the night before class at the latest. It is highly recommended that you print the slides and bring them with you to class to serve as a guide for taking notes.

Exams

400 points (4 at 100 points each)

Exams will be take-home, open-book, open-note (but **not** open-friend) and consist of assessment-related mathematical problems, multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, identifications, and essay questions. Exams will include information from the texts and readings as well as material presented in the lectures and from class discussions. Each exam will cover three chapters. *Exams will not be cumulative!* There will be four exams worth **100 points** each. Students will not be allowed to collaborate on exams. *Students caught cheating on exams will be dealt with severely, according the Honor Code.* Each exam will be due at the start of class time on the indicated day.

Assignments

90 points (9 at 10 points each)

There will be multiple short assignments during this course. Topics will be given unannounced, in class. Most of these will be completed in class as individual or group assignments, and some will be assigned as homework assignments. Each assignment will be worth 10 points. If you miss an assignment, you will have to complete it on your own, even if it was done in class as a group. Note that you are only required to complete 9 of the assignments, so any assignments above that number can replace low scores on previous or missed assignments.

Meeting with Dr. Myers

10 points

Each student will be required to set up a brief (5-10 minute) meeting with Dr. Myers **by Friday, 9/22** via Zoom or Google Hangouts (schedule all types of meetings at: www.calendly.com/drtarynmyers). Alternately, you can arrange to meet in-person before or after class time via email. This meeting will be an opportunity for you to get to know each other, be aware of how to set up a meeting with Dr. Myers, and ask any questions you have about the work for the semester. You do not have to prepare anything for this meeting, and you will receive **10 points** simply for attending your scheduled meeting. Points will be deducted if you do not show up to your scheduled meeting.

Assessment Report**100 points**

We will learn about a number of assessment instruments throughout the semester, and you will have the opportunity to administer parts of these reports to each other in class. You should plan to pair up with a fellow student and administer the tests to the same partner throughout the semester. You should keep a careful record of the person's responses. At the end of the semester, you will turn in an assessment report writing up the findings for all of the assessments you gave that person. Your report should include a description of each test, your partners' scores, and what those scores mean. This report will be worth **100 points**. Further details will be provided for this assignment throughout the semester. The final report will be due on **Thursday, 12/7**. You must plan to turn this assignment in **on time**.

The following rubric will be used to score your assessment report. The sections listed below each correspond to sections of the template you will use for your report, which is posted on Blackboard.

____/15	Demographics & Intake Interview
____/10	Structured Clinical Interview for the DSM
____/5	Severity Measure for Depression – Adult
____/5	Beck Depression Inventory
____/5	State-Trait Anxiety Inventory
____/5	Sentence Completion
____/10	Free Career Tests
____ 20	Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status
____/5	Practice Problems from the Graduate Record Exam
____/10	Summary/ Conclusions
____/10	Recommendations
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____/100	points total

Major Group Project**200 points**

Students will work in small groups to create, administer evaluate, and describe a psychological test. Groups will administer this test to at least 30 participants along with a few other measures for purposes of testing validity, and data will be analyzed using SPSS. Students will work together to create and administer the test, as well as to analyze the data. Students may choose their groups. The project will cumulate in two large assignments, but several small assignments will have to be completed along the way.

Steps in developing the group project.

- 1) Assessment Topic Selection. A brief description of the construct you would like to measure and why with at least 2 relevant references will be due on **Thursday 9/7**. You can either turn this in individual or with a pre-selected group. Dr. Myers will then assign the final groups and topics by **Thursday 9/14**. You will then have until **Thursday 9/21** to switch groups if necessary. **(10 pts)**
- 2) IRB Application. Each group will be required to submit an application to the Institutional Review Board for review of their research prior to conducting this study. This application will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard. With the application, each group needs to include a copy of the questionnaire you constructed, copies of the other measures to be included for validation purposes, the demographics questions, and the informed consent form. A template for this form will be provided by Dr. Myers, and group members will just have to change the relevant information. Details will be covered extensively in class. The IRB application must be submitted to Dr. Myers via email by **Thursday, 10/12 (Fall Break) via email before 11:59 p.m.** for review prior to submission to the IRB.

This assignment will be worth **50 points** for the group, with grades being assigned based on the following rubric:

- Section A (Info & Abstract) **5 points**
- Section B (Summary of Research) **15 points**
- Section C (Confidentiality) **5 points**
- Section D (Participants) **5 points**
- Section E (Informed Consent) **10 points**
- Section F (Risks & Benefits) **5 points**
- Section G (Debriefing) **5 points**

- 3) Group Poster Presentation. A group poster to be presented to the rest of the class at a poster presentation day on **Thursday, 12/7**. You will construct posters using a style similar to those used at professional conferences. Details about formatting and presenting posters will be given by the instructor in class and via documents made available in Blackboard. Poster presentations will be graded based on the instructor's judgment of quality and feedback gathered from the class during presentations. Note that there will be several work days throughout the semester to give groups the opportunity to meet together to work on these projects in consultation with Dr. Myers. You are required to come to class to check in on these work days.
- Introduction – Where a brief description of the questionnaire is given with references to at least 2 primary sources from the literature. What aspect of personality does your questionnaire actually measure? **(20 pts)**
 - Method – Where you will describe how you collected your data. **(15 pts)**
 - Results – Where you will use the revision of your questionnaire data summary from above with the table/graph. **(25 pts)**
 - Discussion – Where you will offer comment about what your findings might mean and what researchers might want to do in the future to study this questionnaire or this aspect of personality. **(15 pts)**
 - References – Two references should be included in APA style. **(5 pts)**
 - Presentation Style – Ability of the group members to explain the poster and answer questions during the session **(20 points)**

The poster will be worth **140 points total**, with 100 of those points being judged by Dr. Myers using the metric above, **30 points** being awarded by your group members for participation in the project, and **10 points** being awarded based on your other students' ratings of your groups' work.

The following rubric will be used to score your posters:

_____	/20 Introduction
_____	/15 Method
_____	/25 Results (including illustrations of data)
_____	/15 Discussion
_____	/5 References
_____	/20 Presentation Style
_____	/30 Individual Grade by Group members (average of scores)
_____	/10 Judging Scores
_____	/100 TOTAL; Letter Grade: _____

Late Work

In deference to the fact that students have (sometimes complex!) lives outside of class, any and all work will be accepted until the day of the final exam. However, it is **highly** recommended that you keep up with the syllabus whenever possible so that you are not overwhelmed by work at the end of the semester.

Grading

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the exams, assignments, and projects:

Exams (4 at 100 points each)	400
Assignments (9 at 10 points each)	90
Meeting with Dr. Myers	10
Assessment Report	100
Group Project	200
Total	800

Grades will be based on the following distribution:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Percentages</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Percentages</u>	<u>Grade</u>
752-800	94-100%	A	592-615	74-76%	C
720-751	90-93%	A-	560-591	70-73%	C-
696-719	87-89%	B+	536-559	67-69%	D+
672-695	84-86%	B	512-535	64-66%	D
640-671	80-83%	B-	480-511	60-63%	D-
616-639	77-79%	C+	0-479	< 60%	F

Incompletes

Incompletes will be arranged for severe emergencies only. Arrangements for incompletes **MUST** be made with me before prior to the end of the semester. A formal contract must be agreed upon and signed.

Extra Credit

Throughout the semester, we will be discussing many findings from psychological research. But what might not be obvious is the fact that much of this research was conducted at colleges and universities like Virginia Wesleyan University, with participants much like yourself. The descriptions of psychological research that appear in textbooks necessarily omit a great deal of information about what participants actually do in these studies, and what the experience is really like.

Serving as a research participant gives you a unique, behind-the-scenes look at how research is conducted. Accordingly, I am giving you the option to earn extra credit points in this course from research experience. Research experience points may be earned either through participation in research studies (conducted by student and faculty researchers in the Department of Psychology) or by writing brief reviews of research articles. Regardless of which option you choose, the goal is to supplement the broad coverage of many topics in class with experiences that will deepen your understanding of psychological research.

Option 1

You may participate in research studies. You will do so by signing up for an account at <https://vwu.sona-systems.com/> After signing up for your account, you can sign up for studies via the website, which will keep track of your Sona credits for you and for your professors. Extra credit points will be awarded based on the number of Sona credits applied to each study. Therefore, participation in in-person or longer studies will result in more online credits and thus more extra credit points.

If you choose to participate in research studies, note that these are REAL studies that are being conducted by REAL researchers (for example, faculty projects and senior Original Research Projects). You should take your participation seriously – you are helping to promote a better understanding of human thought, emotion, and behavior. (Who knows – you may even participate in a study that gets published in a psychology journal and discussed in the next generation of textbooks.) Opportunities for participation will be announced as they arise.

Option 2

If you would like to earn extra credit but do not wish to participate in research, you can write a short paper (no longer than 4 pages typed, double-spaced) which reviews, connects, and draws conclusions about three recent research articles on one topic about which you have a particular interest which is covered in class or in the text. "Recent" will be arbitrarily defined as since 2000. The articles should be empirical in nature and revolve around the same topic. Topics should be approved in advance by Dr. Myers.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Virginia Wesleyan University is committed to giving all students the opportunity of academic success. If you are a student who is requesting accommodations based on the academic impact of a disability, speak to me about your accommodations letter and your specific needs. If you do not have an accommodations letter for this course, you will need to visit or call for an appointment with Executive Director of Academic Support Services Crit Muniz at (757) 233-8898 or by email at disabilityservices@vwu.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations. He is located in the Learning Center, Clarke Hall, 2nd floor.

Counseling Center

The nature of psychology describes some very personal human experiences. Therefore, from time to time, the topics in this course may touch on personal issues for you, especially topics related to mental health, relationships, and/or stress-related experiences. In addition, college in general is an exciting but often challenging time for most students, and there can be lots of ups and downs. Please don't try to manage these problems and issues alone. I encourage you to seek confidential support from the counseling center when you need it. Contact: April Christman, 455-3131, achristman@vwu.edu or Brandon Foster, 455-5730, bfoster@vwu.edu

Academic Honesty

Honesty is one of the most valuable assets that a member of an academic community possesses. In recognition of this fact, VWU has enacted an honor code which is available to you in your student handbook. I adhere to this code explicitly and follow its recommended procedures. If I discover you have plagiarized an assignment in any way, I reserve the right to give you a 0 on that assignment. If you repeat this offense, I may fail you for the course and/or take your case to the Honor Board.

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Using an AI-content generator (such as ChatGPT) to complete coursework without proper attribution or authorization is a form of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please contact your instructor to discuss the issue.

Lecture and Reading Outline

The outline on the next page can be only a rough guide, since dates for particular lecture topics can only be approximate and since material may be added or deleted. The dates and material for the exams will be as listed, unless changes are absolutely necessary.

**Psy 333 Assessment of Individual Differences
Tentative Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings**

Note: GP = Group Project, BB = Blackboard, Assignments in *bold italics* are related to the Major Group Project.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Due</u>
8/24	Class Introduction; Intro to Assessment	Chapter 1	
8/31	Ethical & Legal Issues	Chapter 2	
9/7	Validity & Reliability	Chapter 5	<i>GP Topic</i>
9/14	Raw Scores	Chapter 6	Exam 1
9/21	Scores & Data Interpretation	Chapter 7	Meeting with Dr. Myers
9/28	Educational Assessments	Chapter 8	
10/5	Intelligence & Neuropsych Assessments	Chapter 9	Exam 2
10/12	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK	Chapter 10	<i>GP IRB via email</i>
10/19	Personality Assessments	Chapter 11	BB Assn Ch. 8
10/26	Informal Assessment	Chapter 12	Exam 3
11/2	Diagnostic Assessment	Chapter 3	
11/9	The Assessment Report	Chapter 4	
11/16	GROUP PROJECT WORK DAY		
11/23	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING		
11/27	REFLECTION, QUESTION, and WORK DAY		Exam 4
12/7	Poster Presentations		<i>GP Poster; Assessment Report</i>

** Note: The last day to drop a course without record is 8/31, and the last day to drop a course without receiving an automatic “WF” is 11/5.