Adler Graduate School
Richfield, Minnesota

AGS Course 533
Clinical Assessment

1. Course Designation and Identifier

1.1 Adler Graduate School
1.2 Course number 533
1.3 Clinical Assessment
1.4 Three (3) credits
1.5 Prerequisites: AGS courses 511, 504

2. Course Description

This course introduces student to purposes, types, and the process of clinical assessment. Special issues in assessment, including biases, assessment with special populations, and ethical considerations are presented. Research in clinical assessment will be discussed. Course activities will focus on assessment considerations with several clinical conditions, assessment of mental status, risk assessment, and Adlerian approach to clinical assessment.

Techniques for understanding non-verbal behavior, speech and language, and interpersonal transactions are reviewed in a context of behavioral observations as an assessment tool, as well as part of objective and projective types of assessment.

3. Hybrid Course Overview

In addition to the 23.5 hours of class time spelled out in this syllabus, students will carry 2 units worth of OL activities both before and after on-campus sessions. See schedule for details.

Your instructor will be actively available for all class activities and individual consultations for the duration of the coursework and as needed until final papers grades are submitted.

During the course, your course instructor will respond to your questions or comments within 48 hours (barring unforeseen circumstances). You will be expected to observe the same response time--replying within 48 hours. During the class, your instructor will post specific office hours on your class webpage. You are encouraged to use Moodle e-mailing option for communicating with your instructors and coursemates outside of live sessions. For course-related questions, please use Q&A forum on your coursepage.

Please stay current in the class. In units One and Nine, you will be expected to complete reading assignments, submit one substantive posting and two peer responses per unit (in response to the questions and/or tasks by your instructor), and – in some cases - engage in experiential activities, per syllabus. These expectations are very general, as you will find unique teaching style and specific expectations presented in each on-line class.
Although you will likely find that you have a lot of experience in the discussed topics, please remember that the most convincing position is the one supported by the most current and relevant research. You will find these sources in peer-reviewed journals. Use APA style and format requirements in referencing sources.

4. Texts, Materials, and Resources (required and optional)

4.1 Required texts:


4.2 Supplemental texts (not required):


OR


4.3 Students should have access to DSM-IV-TR for assessment exercises

4.5 Additional materials in student handouts

4.6 Selected video and audio tapes will be presented in class.

4.7 A list of additional articles for reading (optional) will be provided

5. Competencies and Learning Outcomes

Students in this course will:
5.1 Continue to gain knowledge of the history, principles, philosophy, types, purpose, and uses of clinical assessment, including significant figures in the history of clinical assessment and importance of research in clinical assessment. Gain beginning understanding of various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses, including diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments.

Standards met are 1a; 7a,b,d,e; 8a,e

5.2 Learn basic concepts of standardized and non-standardized testing and other assessment techniques including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, environmental assessment, performance assessment, individual and group test and inventory methods, behavioral observations; intake interview, a mental status evaluation, a biopsychosocial history, a mental health history, and a psychological assessment for treatment planning and caseload management.

5.3 Learn approaches in identifying specific biases and limitations in clinical assessment and ways of dealing with biases in selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment tools.

Standards met are 1g; 2d; 5a; 7f,g,h,i

5.4 Continue to learn about ethical standards in mental health in general, and in clinical assessment in particular.

Standards met are 1g; 2d; 7i

5.5 Continue to learn about issues of diversity, acculturative experiences, and other cultural variables in clinical assessment, as applied to its content and the assessment process; social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations.

Standards met are 2b,d,f; 7f; 8a,e.

5.6 Gain knowledge in understanding human behavior and conducting clinical assessment on various levels of human functioning (from micro level to larger and environmental systems); at different phases of the life span, and from various assessment perspectives (categorical, dimensional, and developmental); the principles and models of assessment, case conceptualization, theories of human development, and concepts of normalcy and psychopathology leading to diagnoses and appropriate counseling treatment plans.

Standards met are 3c,e; 7b; 9b,d

5.7 Continue to learn Adlerian principles of the assessment process.

Standards met are 10 b, c ,e, and f

5.8 Have a beginning knowledge of and beginning skills in selecting, administering, and interpreting selected standardized screening instruments commonly used in counseling profession as it related to common DSM-IV diagnoses and treatment planning (including but not limited by assessment in selected Personality Disorders, Mood Disorders, Anxiety Disorders, Adjustment Disorders; Substance Use Disorders; types and uses of Mental Status
Examination, safety assessment); acquire an understanding about reliability and validity of the assessment instruments

*Standards met are 5d; 7b,d,e,f,g,i*

5.9 Continue to gain knowledge in using clinical assessment data in counseling process

*Standards met are 5b; 7h*

*Numbers and letters, i.e. 1a., identify learning competencies as outlined in the Adler Graduate School’s accreditation guidelines*

6. Course Outline (minor changes may be made to adjust to specific needs of a particular class as this course progresses) and Reading Assignments

Please note that all reading assignments must be completed prior to the class (unit) for which the assignments are posted.

**UNIT 1 (Online) April 1st – April 19th**

- History, principles, philosophy, types, purpose, and uses of clinical assessment, including significant figures in the history of clinical assessment and importance of research in clinical assessment;
- models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses, including diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments
- Biases and limitations in clinical assessment; ways of dealing with biases in selection, administration, and interpretation of assessment tools.
- Ethical considerations in clinical assessment;
- Research in assessment

*Reading*: Chapters 1, 2, 5, & 14 in Whiston’s book (required); pp. 43-50 in Groth-Marnat’s book (optional); selected handouts

**UNIT 2: on-campus April 20th, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

- Introduction into cross-cultural considerations in clinical assessment; issues of diversity, acculturative experiences, and other cultural variables in clinical assessment, as applied to its content and the assessment process; social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations
- Role of the clinician in clinical assessment;

*Reading*: Chapters 1, 2, 5, & 14 in Whiston’s book (required); pp. 43-50 in Groth-Marnat’s book (optional); selected handouts
Full Day on Campus
April 22nd, 9:00 AM – 5:00.

UNIT 3:

➢ Types and uses of mental status examination and clinical interview; assessment of chemical use/abuse
➢ Introduction to risk assessment and Adlerian explanation of a social purpose of suicide

Reading: Chapters 6 & 15 in Whiston’s book (required), pp. 51-58, 73-94 in Groth-Marnat’s book (optional); selected handouts

UNITS 4:

➢ Assessment of Depressive Disorders;
➢ Adler and Adlerians on assessment of depressive symptoms (“hazards of everyday life” and “unreachable fictional goals”);

Reading: Chapter 12 in Whiston’s book (required); pp. 526-530 in Groth-Marnat’s book (optional); selected handouts

UNIT 5: on-campus April 23rd, 1:30 PM – 4:45 PM

➢ Assessment of anxiety disorders;
➢ Adler on nature of anxiety and “fear of defeat”
➢ Collaborative approach in clinical assessment

Reading: Chapter 12 in Whiston’s book (required)

UNIT 6: on-campus April 24th, 1:30 PM – 4:45 PM

➢ Attachment styles and Personality Disorders in clinical assessment;
➢ Clinical manifestations and screening for traits of Personality Disorders in counseling;
➢ Adlerian interpretations of Personality Disorders

Reading: chapters 2, 4, & 5 in Sperry’s book (required); selected handouts

UNIT 7: on-campus April 25th, 1:30 PM – 4:45 PM

➢ Clinical assessment with special populations (children and older adults);
➢ Understanding human behavior and conducting clinical assessment on various levels of human functioning (from micro level to larger and environmental systems); at different phases of the life span, and from various assessment perspectives (categorical, dimensional, and developmental);
➢ theories of human development, and concepts of normalcy and psychopathology leading to diagnoses and appropriate counseling treatment plans;

Reading: Chapter 11 and pages 266-270 in Whiston’s book; selected handouts
UNIT 8: on-campus April 26th, 1:30 PM – 4:45 PM

- Special Topics in Assessment:
  - Grief Assessment,
  - SA Assessment
  - Brief Assessments
  - Functional assessments

Reading: handouts

UNIT 9: on-campus April 27th, 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM

- Projective techniques in assessment;
- Closure and topics for further research and exploration

Reading: Chapter 13 in Whiston’s book; Chapters 13-14 in Groth-Marnat’s book (optional); selected handouts

UNIT 9: Continued online 04/29/12 to 05/12/12

- Assessment and Treatment Planning

Reading: assigned handouts

Special Project (online) – due May 20th, 2012
Final Paper is due 06/16/2012

7. Special Project Time (SPT)

Special Project Time (SPT) allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials. SPT is meant to be a self-contained, 30 hour experience. SPT generally focuses on either (a) an experiential exercise paired with an integrative writing component or (b) a research exercise and a short integrative writing component.

An integrative, SPT experience can be based on an individual project or a group project. Once again, the individual or group completes an experiential or a research oriented exercise, followed by a short integrative writing assignment. This should all be planned within the context of a 30 hour student expectation.

SPT experiences may be constructed in such a way that they pertain to students’ unique degree plans. For example, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist students, Licensed Professional Counselor students, and Licensed School Counselor students might construct a SPT experience unique to their chosen disciplines. This is done in consultation with the course instructor.

8. Writing Guidelines including APA Format
8.1 All written assignments in courses at the Adler Graduate School, including those submitted in on-line courses, must be in APA format unless specifically noted by the course instructor (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition), 2009, American Psychological Association. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8).

8.2 Strict APA publication rules in Online Peer Discussions might prove difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. Following the “letter” of the Manual (i.e., not using “I”, or passive voice, keeping proper margins, or complying with headings requirements) may be either difficult or counterproductive in forums such as peer discussions. However, it is still important to adhere to the “spirit” of the APA Manual (i.e., grammar, orderly presentation of ideas, reducing bias in language, and presenting scholarly statements and arguments).

8.3 Prior to submitting a response, please proofread carefully. Grammar and spelling errors may make your response difficult for other students to appreciate.

8.4 Please keep in mind that, while the internet offers a lot of exciting and up-to-date information, not all internet sources are considered scholarly. For example, Wikipedia is not an academically peer-reviewed source. Rather, it is an “anybody-reviewed” source and, therefore, can’t be used in presenting your argument in AGS classes-related tasks.

9. Assessment/Evaluation Procedures

9.1 Two OL units - 12% of a grade (12 points; see grading rubrics for details)

9.2 Special project time (SPT) – 15% of a grade (15 points, including 12 points for the presentation, and 3 points for three peer responses max).

SPT is meant to be a self-contained, 30 hours experience. Special project time allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials, to involve additional reading and experiential activities, to use academic knowledge and professional experience related to their chosen degree plan, to practice working in diverse teams, do research and deliver effective presentations.

The culmination of SPT is a team or individual presentation posted in a courseroom on 5/20/2012.

The projects will focus on drafting an assessment “battery” (or a single tool) for a specific condition, or for various conditions in specific populations to be used in outpatient setting. Alternatively, an existing approach/tool/instrument (or a part of it) can be considered to assess a traditionally underassessed/clinically challenging condition. Special attention will be paid to differential diagnoses. Ideally, the topic for the project will be consistent with students’ chosen discipline or a special interest. Students are expected to interview a professional in a field to gather a professional perspective on their chosen topic. Students have to inform their interviewees about the purposes of consultation and secure their permission to use their responses in a class presentation, in accordance with a Copyright Law.
Students are encouraged to revisit Adlerian concepts and/or assessment approaches. Topics need to be determined by the second session of this class.

Students are expected to keep a log of activities. A log form will be provided, but students can use any form of their choice, as long as time and activities are accounted for. Students are encouraged to communicate their SPT progress weekly (via oral communication or in e-mails) and to address any concerns early, to ensure the projects are completed successfully.

9.3 Class participation – total 42 points

- Four half-day sessions (04/23 – 04/26) – 6 points each,
- Two quarter day sessions (04/20 and 04/27) – 3 points each;
- A full day session (4/22) – 12 points

9.4 Final Paper Assignment (minimum of 8 pages without a title page and a reference page) – 31 point

Based on class discussions and your individual reading, please pick a disorder or another clinical condition and write up your process of clinical assessment, incorporating at least four different existing assessment methods useful to arrive to an accurate diagnosis. One of the tools will have to be chosen from the BDI-II (Beck Depression Inventory), BYI (Beck Youth Inventories), BAI (Beck Anxiety Inventory), or BHS (Beck Hopelessness Scale). Another tool will have to come from Adlerian assessment techniques. In your paper, please explain the purpose of using the assessment techniques that you decided to include in your assessment process, and how these might later be used to track changes. In your discussion about Beck scales, please explain what items from the chosen inventory seem particularly helpful in your diagnostic process and why, and how the Beck score will be integrated into this process. APA format and use of 3-4 scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources required.

9.5 OL portion - Original Forum Posting Submissions

Original posts are graded on a scale of 0-4 points. Responses posted after the deadline will have two points deducted for every late post. **You can earn a maximum of 8 points in this required activity.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Comments a) are accurate and relevant; b) demonstrate original thinking; c) use appropriate scholarly support; d) are well written, with no significant grammar and punctuation errors and no violation of “netiquette”. Four point comments contribute substantially to the course discussions and stimulate additional thought and further discussions about the topic discussed in the particular unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Comments lack at least one of the above qualities, but are above average overall, with regard to their content, and make a good contribution to our understanding of the issue being discussed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Comments lack two or three of the required qualities.</td>
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Comments which are based upon personal opinion but not supported by scholarly research or personal experience and/or comments violating important “netiquette” rules often fall within this category.

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Comments present little or no new information, lack three or more of the above qualities. However, one point comments may provide important social presence and contribute to a collegial atmosphere.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>The comment lacks all four qualities or in violation of AGS academic integrity policy</td>
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8.1 Peer Responses

Peer responses can earn 1.0 point per each peer response (with the total of 2 points per unit, and a maximum of 4 points for units 1 and 9). Peer responses are graded on accuracy, relevance, presence of scholarly support, and delivery (including compliance with major grammar and punctuation rules and netiquette). Peer responses posted after deadline will be not be graded.

9.6 How the total grade will be calculated

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Maximum Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>On-Campus Class participation</td>
<td>42 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online discussions</td>
<td>12 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Project (presentation and peer responses)</td>
<td>15 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>31 point</td>
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Grades

Grades are assigned according to a classical strategy (i.e., A, B, C, R)
A – 91-100 points; B – 81-90 points; C – 71-80 points; R – Non-performance related to either attendance or failure to complete assignments within 45 days after last class session. Highest possible grade for students who will miss two units is “B”. Students who will miss one unit will have to take a brief quiz during the last session of this class on a topic they have missed.

Request for extension must be made in writing, prior to deadline. Extension (if granted) cannot go beyond 45 days after last class session. Highest possible grade for students with extension requests is “B”, and students are encouraged to submit their written assignments on time.

10. **Attendance Policy**

On-campus

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. When a student is unable to attend class, it is a courtesy to notify the course instructor in advance using either e-mail or phone. AGS’ attendance and grading policies appear in the School’s Student Manual.
Online

10.1 At the beginning of each course, please complete or update your student profile on Moodle and get familiar with your classmates and the instructor by visiting their profile information.

10.2 You are expected to attend all the course learning activities. In the AGS asynchronous on-line courses, you attend the class by complying with posting and other submission deadlines.

10.3 In most of the courses, you will have two deadlines per week during the five weeks of coursework. For each unit, and in conjunction with on-line instruction and other learning activities, your course instructor will announce a discussion question corresponding with the unit in the course outline. The questions will appear in Moodle the first day of online activity (or earlier). You will have until specific deadline (11:59 PM CST on a day of a deadline) to submit your original response.

10.4 Your original response will be at least 350 words, with at least one scholarly reference. Through discussions supported by in-text citations and other references, your response will reflect critical thought related to the topic and specific assignments for that unit.

10.5 You will then have until another deadline (all posted on Moodle) to respond to at least two of your classmates’ postings for each question. These peer responses have to be substantive. In these responses, you will bring another aspect to the discussion, find additional scholarly support for your classmate’s position, reply to a group of your classmates by comparing or contrasting their stated positions, integrate your classmates’ observations into your original position. In sum, an ideal peer response will bring the discussion to an advanced level and will parallel what you might observe in a live scholarly debate.

10.6 You can post your peer responses at any time, but not before you post your original response. Your course instructor will acknowledge your participation and will grade the quality of it by responding to your original pasting, whether individually or in a summary format.

10.7 It is the AGS attendance policy that student have to attend at least 80% of the class sessions in order to be eligible for a letter grade. Online attendance is posting on time. Not complying with posting deadlines or not posting at all will be counted as a missed class.

11. Participation Disclaimer

Active participation in class discussions/exercises/demonstrations is encouraged. As with other AGS courses, in this course, individual students must determine for themselves the level of disclosure/intimacy that is appropriate for them.
Whenever confidential information/material is used in any AGS course, students and faculty members are expected to observe AGS policy concerning the handling of confidential information/material. Full descriptions of these policies are readily available.

12. **Academic Integrity Policy**

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects, and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism, or some other form of dishonest conduct may result in failure for the work involved. Academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the Adler Graduate School. Here are examples of academic dishonesty:

- **Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit.

- **Fabrication** - Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of academic integrity.

- **Plagiarism** - The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

13. **On-Line Discussions or Activities**

On-line classes provide an opportunity for open and insightful dialogue. As in any dialogue, these discussions demonstrate many facets of diversity, including diversity of values, opinions, and experiences. We view these differences as welcomed and needed attributes of a scholarly discussion. Acknowledgement of and respect for these differences is a sign of mature scholarly debate.

Following are guidelines governing on-line discussions:

13.1 Faculty members monitor discussions and intervene when requested or deemed necessary.

13.2 NEVER post to the courseroom content:
   - That is known to be illegal,
   - That is potentially harassing, threatening, or embarrassing,
   - That might be offensive and might be received as disrespectful in any way.
   - That is vulgar or sexually explicit

13.3 The tone of the exchange is one of respect for individual differences. If you disagree with an opinion expressed by a classmate or instructor, respond in a
scholarly manner, arguing about the subject of discussion vs. the person who posted it.

13.4 Students are encouraged to not overuse exclamation marks!!!!!, CAPITAL LETTERS, or other marks of emotional reaction that may be received as yelling, etc.

13.5 Online communication presents a significant level of ambiguity, as verbal content of communication is not well supported by its non-verbal (including contextual) components. If a student feels threatened or offended by a statement made by another student during online portion of a class, please address the issue immediately with the other student(s) to clarify their position and your reaction. If this does not work, contact your class instructor so actions can be taken if necessary.

13.6 During online discussion, follow the same rules concerning protection of confidential information as you would follow in face-to-face discussion. Confidential client information is not appropriate in forum postings. Further, mental health related issues pertaining to you or your family members must be used with caution, if at all.

13.7 Be aware that some agency-specific information, such as descriptions of programs that have been developed or specialized treatment approaches, may potentially be a subject of copyright law. Although it is not always possible to know whether information is protected, the minimum expectation is to always identify and credit the source of information.

14. **Nondiscrimination Clause**

The Adler Graduate School is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The Adler Graduate School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or physical disability in the employment of faculty or staff, the admission or treatment of students, or in the operation of its educational programs and activities. The institution is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws.

15. **Learning Accommodations (including students with disabilities)**

If a student in this course has a documented learning disability, he or she should tell the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor needs to know on the front end so that he or she can work with the student. The Adler Graduate School is committed to helping all students be successful, as best as can be reasonably accommodated. Documenting a learning disability occurs at the student’s expense. When documented appropriately, the Adler Graduate School makes all reasonable accommodations.

16. **Instructor Contact Information**
Please submit your paper via e-mail or regular mail (either to AGS mailing address or the instructor’s office address). If mailed, it must be postmarked by the due date assigned in class.

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