COURSE DESCRIPTION: Systematic, comprehensive, and accurate assessment of a client’s resources and risks provides a vital foundation for successful counseling outcomes. This course explores numerous instruments used in the assessment process and the importance of their results.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course, you should,
1. be knowledgeable about historical perspectives concerning of assessment;
2. understand basic concepts and techniques of standardized and nonstandardized testing and other assessment instruments;
3. be knowledgeable about select statistical concepts in assessment;
4. understand the importance of reliability and validity in assessment;
5. consider multicultural factors related to assessment and evaluation, especially spirituality and religious orientation;
6. employ sound ethical and clinical strategies for evaluating, selecting, administering, and interpreting assessment instruments in counseling and documenting findings; and
7. develop and demonstrate basic skills using common assessment instruments such as a clinical interview, mental status examination; and screening instruments.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM MODEL: All coursework at Ashland Theological Seminary is intrinsically connected to the 4-Cs of the curriculum model: core identity, character, calling, and competency. This course primarily focuses upon the development of important competencies for the professional counselor in the area of appraisal, although core identity, character, and calling will be touched upon as well.

KNOWLEDGE BASE: Ohio Educational Requirement for Admission to the Examination for Professional Counselor Licensure—This course meets the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) requirement for Appraisal of the individual — 4757-13-01(A)(4)(i).

CACREP CMHC Standards Addressed in this Course Include Areas such as:

- G.1 – Knows 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.
- G.2 – Understands various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses, including diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments.
- H.1 – Selects appropriate comprehensive assessment interventions to assist in diagnosis and treatment planning, with an awareness of cultural bias in the implementation and interpretation of assessment protocols.
- H.3 – Screens for addiction, aggression, and danger to self and/or others, as well as co-occurring mental disorders.
- K.4 – Understands the relevance and potential biases of commonly used diagnostic tools with multicultural populations.
TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT LEARNING: This course will utilize a variety of learning approaches including, but not limited to, assigned readings, lectures, multimedia presentations, in-class dialog, and assignments designed to foster clinical and critical thinking skills.

PRIMARY REQUIRED TEXT:

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED ONLINE READINGS (a reading list and schedule for these readings will be distributed in class)

REQUIREMENTS/GRADING:
1. Professionalism and Positive Participation (10%): Throughout your time at ATS thus far, you have been developing in a number of important ways. This class provides you with further opportunities for growth. Attendance and participation in class sessions is expected, however, being “present” is much more than simply showing up. Since it is my belief that there are parallels between how one approaches academic training and one’s professional conduct in field, the following are expected of all students (failure to meet these guidelines will negatively impact your final grade).
   - promptness (in arriving to class and meeting class requirements when due),
   - preparedness (e.g., active reading and processing of assigned materials for each class session),
   - presence (e.g., your in-class verbal and non-verbal communication [e.g. eye contact]),
   - positive participation (during class), and
   - professionalism (in manner, conduct, and submitted work).

   Attendance at all class sessions is expected. Regardless of the reason for absence, if you miss the equivalent of two classes you may be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade or withdraw from the class (this is at my discretion). It is your responsibility to acquire missed lecture materials and/or handouts from other students. You are encouraged to monitor your class-related professionalism and positive participation and to seek feedback from others (e.g., me, graduate assistants, and other students) as you deem prudent.

Use of laptops and other electronic devices: Regarding the use of laptops in the classroom, the following policy has been adopted by the Counseling Department at ATS;

   It is up to the discretion of the professor whether laptops may be used in any particular course. In those courses where permission is granted, please remember to limit computer usage to course related purposes while in class sessions by refraining from using laptops (and other electronic devices) for other than course related reasons, including internet search, e-mails, etc. Please demonstrate respect by giving your full attention to the instructor or student presenting.

You are permitted to use your electronic devices in this class, so long as you abide by the above policy. Should I or any other student become distracted by your use of these devices in class, your permission may be revoked and your “Professionalism and Positive Participation” grade may be adversely impacted. One of the ways I will use to assess whether or not your use of technology in class is intrusive is your non-verbal feedback to me regarding your level of in-class engagement (or disengagement; e.g., eye contact, displaying attending skill). If you have any questions or concerns about this, please see me before this becomes a problem.
Taking the initiative for success: The larger size of most counseling cohort classes is a “mixed blessing.” On the one hand, I am delighted you are here and I praise God for leading you to ATS! On the other hand, the larger class size makes individualized attention very “challenging” to say the least (I really wanted to write that this is “impossible” but “…with God all things are possible,” Matt. 19:26, so…). You will need to assume the primary responsibility for your success in this class. To do so, the best advice I can give you is to 1.) carefully and closely read, review, and heed this syllabus and 2.) never be shy about asking questions or approaching me or one of the GA’s for help. Doing so will not communicate that you are somehow “lacking” or a “poor student.” Instead, asking questions and approaching us for help will tell us that you are serious about succeeding and are willing to do what it takes. This is a message you definitely want to communicate.

Development of the person of the counselor: C. Gilbert Wrenn, an influential figure in the history of counseling, wisely observed “It is a liberating experience to increase in one’s sense of openness, to move toward a complete sense of being, to become more willing to admit others and share oneself. To grow in this way is to increase the worth of the most potent single element in the counseling relationship. This is the person of the counselor, his sense of reality, his self-trust, his increasing awareness of the beauty and joy of living, and his open regard for others.” (from "The nature of caring" at http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0901-wrenn1.html, retrieved June 9, 2015)

In like manner, the counseling profession has affirmed from the beginning that the person of the counselor is critical to client welfare, the success of counseling interventions, and the integrity of the counseling profession. As but one example, the 2014 ACA code of ethics (section F.8.c., “Self-Growth Experiences”) states that “Self-growth is an expected component of counselor education.” This valuing of the person of the counselor and her personal growth, is congruent with the seminary’s emphasis upon “character” (one of the “4-Cs of the curriculum model”) and the “core value” of spiritual formation. It is further reflected in the Counseling department’s emphasis upon cultivating “Christian Counselor Effectiveness Characteristics.” Therefore, to foster your growth as a person and counselor, together we will read, reflect upon, and respond to selected relevant readings (a reading list will be distributed at the beginning of the semester.

Final grade for this course element: Your final grade for this course element will be based upon your 1.) in-class attendance, 2.) completion and timely satisfaction of all course requirements (including assigned readings; see below), and 3.) my assessment of your in-class participation and professionalism.

2. Content Mastery Examinations (45%; CACREP CMHC G.1, G.2, H.1, H.3, K.4): During the 3rd, 7th, 11th, and final week of class, content mastery examinations will be administered. The first three exams should take about 30 to 45 minutes, will be non-cumulative, and will cover assigned readings, handouts, lectures, video presentations, and any other class related materials. These examinations will consist of a combination of True-False, Multiple-Choice, Definition, and/or Short Answer items aimed at evaluating both your knowledge and understanding of important class concepts. A list of key terms for each examination will be distributed in advance to help you prepare.

The final examination will be a Comprehensive Content Mastery Examination covering all assigned readings, lectures, video presentations, and any other class-related materials throughout the entire course. This examination will take about 60 minutes, be cumulative, and will consist of True-False, Multiple-Choice, Definition, and/or Short Answer items. Again, items included will assess both your knowledge and understanding of important class concepts.
Content Mastery Examinations (continued)

Note: During these examinations, you may be asked whether or not you have read all assigned materials. You may also be asked to provide information on the extent of your active processing of course materials (e.g., amount of study time for an examination or preparation time for small group processing). Your answers may figure into your “Professionalism & Positive Participation” grade above.

Final grade for this course element: Your final grade for this course element will be based upon the total number of items answered correctly across all examinations (each of the first three exams will count toward 10% of your final course grade (30% total); the final exam will count toward 15% of your final course grade). Extra-credit will be included on each examination. Make-up examinations may include brief essay items in addition to the other item types listed above.

3. Instrument and Assessment Skills Development Activities (45%): Building upon your mastery of the course content above, you will develop your assessment skills by learning to administer and critically reflect upon the instruments listed below. You will use these with a (mock) client, document the results of your assessment, and critique both the instruments used and your assessment skills. Guidelines for each instrument and your write-up will be provided in class and write-ups will be due on the published dates.
   a. A semi-structured clinical interview,
   b. Mental status examinations,
   c. Screening instruments,
   d. Multicultural assessment instruments (including Religious/Spiritual Orientation), and
   e. Functional assessment.

You will develop such skills through a two-phase approach.

- In phase one, you will learn to use at least one instrument in each of the five categories above. You will do so by completing the instrument yourself (when possible) and then administering it to a mock client (i.e., another student). You will also interpret instrument results and critique the instrument and your use of it.

- In phase two, you will build upon what you learned in phase one by conducting a comprehensive assessment. To do so, you will administer each of the instruments you used in phase one to an actual (or mock) client as a part of an intake (or simulated intake). You will interpret instrument results, integrate significant findings, and develop a written summary (i.e., case conceptualization using the 5-fold model of assessment). Finally, you will critique your findings, the instruments used, and the assessment process. (Note: You may only use these instruments with an actual client once you have received the written permission of both your supervisor and the client.)

Grading: Your final grade for this course element will be determined by your successful completion of; 1.) each phase one instrument skills development activity and write-up (these will be graded “Pass – Marginal Pass – Fail”). Any grade of “Fail” (and/or more than one grade of “Marginal Pass”) may result in you being required to repeat the phase one instrument skills development activity (this is at my discretion).
Grading (continued)

2.) assessment of a (mock) client using all of the instruments practiced in phase one and your write-up of the assessment using provided guidelines. (This activity will be graded using a 100-point grading sheet developed for this purpose and given to you in advance.)

Academic Integrity Policy: Ashland Theological Seminary seeks to model servant leadership derived from biblical standards of honesty and integrity. We desire to encourage, develop, and sustain men and women of character who will exemplify these biblical qualities in their ministry to the church and the world. As members of the seminary community, students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of academic, personal, and social integrity. All students, therefore, are expected to abide by the academic integrity standards outlined in the Student Handbook.

Writing Assistance: If you need assistance with writing projects for your coursework, contact the ATS Writing Center. The center provides free sessions with a peer consultant who can help you with all of your concerns about academic writing. Contact the center if you have a question about how to complete your assignment, if you have documentation questions, or if you would like to have your paper evaluated for areas needing improvement. The ATS Writing Center can be reached at 419-289-5162 or by e-mail at atswc@ashland.edu.

Students with Disabilities: Ashland University makes every effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student who has a specific physical, psychiatric or learning disability and requires accommodations is encouraged to inform their instructor of their needs early in the semester so that learning needs can be appropriately met. It is the student’s responsibility to document the disability with Disability Services in The Center for Academic Support on the 7th floor of the Ashland University Library, (419) 289-5904.

Seminary Grading Scale: The grading scale described in the most recent ATS catalogue will be used in this course.

Course Schedule: To be provided.