

LING 5346: Topics in Applied Linguistics (Language Assessment)
Spring 2015

Instructor: Naoko Witzel

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm or by appointment

Section Information: Section 001

Time and Place of Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:50am Trimble Hall 118

Description of Course Content: This course is an introductory testing course. Topics will include different types of language assessment, issues related to language testing, measurement and evaluation of achievement and proficiency in a second language, and developing language tests of various language skills.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- 1) describe basic concepts in second language testing;
- 2) calculate basic psychometric measures involved in language testing;
- 3) read and critique literature in the field of second language testing;
- 4) construct and evaluate language test specifications for various ESL/EFL contexts; and
- 5) construct and evaluate language tests for various ESL/EFL purposes.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:

- The textbook listed below is necessary for this course.

Green, A. (2014). *Exploring language assessment and testing*. Oxon: Routledge.
ISBN# 978-0-415-59724-1

- Other required readings will be provided on the course Blackboard site (login at <https://elearn.uta.edu/>). You are responsible for checking this Blackboard site regularly to access (among other things) class notes, updates, readings, and assignments.

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:

ARTICLE PRESENTATIONS (2 x 5% = 10%): You will do two 20-minute presentations on peer-reviewed articles that you select. The presentation topic should relate to the topic of interest for the presentation day. The article can be theoretical or empirical. In your presentation, please summarize the article (~15 mins) and lead a discussion (~5 mins). Please submit your e-article to the instructor early enough so that you can get approval and so that it can be put up on the Blackboard website at least one week prior to your presentation.

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT (10%): You will be given a set of problems that requires calculating test scores as well as reliability and validity measures. You will have about a week to complete this assignment. You will be allowed to work with your classmates, but please make sure that you submit the assignment individually. If you do work with your classmates, please indicate their names upon submission.

CLASS TEST DEVELOPMENT (40%): You will develop two tests in this class. These should measure students' achievements, and ideally would be tests that you could use in the courses you teach. Each test should assess different skills. This project will consist of the following components:

Test item presentations (2 x 5% = 10%): Before you submit each of the fully developed tests, you will present one or two of its components to the class. Each of these presentations should relate to the skill that is the focus of that day. During the presentation, you will be expected to explain the purpose of the test items (i.e., which skills/subskills you are testing) and relevant contextual information (e.g., target student proficiency level, learning context, such as ESL, EFL, ESP, EAP, etc). You will then present the test items to your classmates. You will then discuss how the components of the test match its goals and then address questions/comments from your classmates. Each presentation should be about 20 minutes long (including the discussion).

Tests (2 x 10% = 20%): You will submit two tests during the semester. Note that your test item presentations should be based on these tests. They should include information on the target student population, the test objective(s), descriptions of each component of the test (including score weights), and the test items that assess the skill you are trying to test. There is no set length for these tests. They will be assessed based on the clarity of your test description and the quality of the test items. These tests will be due one week after the associated test item presentation. This should give you enough time to integrate feedback from me and your classmates.

Feedback blog posts (10%): You will post feedback on each of your classmates' demo test items on Blackboard. You can structure this feedback in any way that you think would be useful, but you might consider including information on (i) what you liked most about the test (i.e., what you might consider adopting in your own tests) and (ii) what you might change if you were testing this skill (i.e., what you would do to make this test even better). Please try to upload your feedback soon after the test item presentations (no later than the following class after it is delivered) so that your classmate can integrate it into the test that he/she will submit.

PLACEMENT TEST DEVELOPMENT (30%): In this project, you will develop a placement test that would be ideal for one of the institutions that you work in. This test should measure students' proficiency. This project will consist of the following components:

Test Specifications (15%): In order to develop a valid and reliable proficiency test, it is important to create test specifications. In your test specifications for a placement test, you will outline each of the test components and the number of test items in each component, provide sample items, and discuss the skills that are tested, grading criteria, and scoring/score weights.

Placement Test (15%): For your final product, you will develop a full test based on the test specifications that you created earlier in the semester. When you submit this test, please make sure that you include the test specifications. Please submit them as one file.

Attendance: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, course engagement refers to regular on-time attendance, preparation for class, participation in discussion, and physical as well as mental presence in the classroom. ***More than one (unexcused) absence will negatively affect your grade.***

Grading: Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels. Your course grade will be determined as follows (A = 90% or above; B = 80-90%; C = 70-80%; D=60-70%, F = below 60%). Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

10%	Class participation
10%	Two article presentations (5% each)
10%	Take-home assignment
40%	Class test development
10%	Two test items presentations (5% each)
20%	Two tests (10% each)
10%	Feedback blogposts
30%	Placement test development
15%	Test specifications
15%	Placement test

Late assignments will not be accepted.

Please upload all of your assignments onto the course Blackboard site by 9am on the due date, unless otherwise specified.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Title IX: The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Writing Center: The Writing Center, 411 Central Library, offers individual 40 minute sessions to review assignments, *Quick Hits* (5-10 minute quick answers to questions), and workshops on grammar and specific writing projects. Visit <https://uta.mywconline.com/> to register and make appointments. For hours, information

about the writing workshops we offer, scheduling a classroom visit, and descriptions of the services we offer undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members, please visit our website at www.uta.edu/owl/.

Librarian to Contact: Jody Bailey (jbailey@uta.edu)

Course Schedule

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. – Naoko Witzel

DUE DATES:

3/3 – Submit your Test Specification

3/31 – Submit the assignment

5/14 – Submit your Placement Test

OUTLINE OF TOPICS & READING ASSIGNMENTS

Class #	Date	Topic	Reading Assignments and other deadlines
1	1/20	<i>Introduction to Language Assessment</i>	
2	1/22	<i>Why study language assessment?</i>	Green, Chapter 1
3	1/27	<i>Different types of assessment</i>	Green, Chapter 2 Brown, 2012a
4	1/29		
5	2/3	<i>Issues related to language testing</i>	Green, Chapter 3 (~p. 29) Green, Chapter 4 (~p. 63) Green, Chapter 7 (pp. 214-216)
6	2/5		
7	2/10	<i>Placement tests</i>	Green, Chapter 3 (pp. 29-41) Green, 2012 Davidson & Fulcher, 2012
8	2/12	<i>Writing test items</i>	Green, Chapter 3 (pp. 41-57) O'Sullivan, 2012a
9	2/17		
10	2/19	<i>Please attend a talk at UTASCILT</i>	
11	2/24	<i>Reviewing test specification for a placement test</i>	<i>Please bring a draft of your specification for a placement test to class</i>
12	2/26	<i>Describing and interpreting test results</i>	Green, Chapter 7 (pp. 194-196) <i>Please submit your specification for a placement test on Blackboard (3/3)</i>
13	3/3		

14	3/5	<i>Reliability 1</i>	Green, Chapter 4 (pp. 63-74) Farhady, 2012
15	3/10	<i>No class due to Spring Break</i>	
16	3/12		
17	3/17	<i>Reliability 2</i>	Same as 3/5
18	3/19	<i>Validity</i>	Green, Chapter 4 (pp. 75-84) Green, Chapter 7 (pp. 173-187) Akbari, 2012
19	3/24		
20	3/26	<i>Criterion-referenced tests</i>	Green, Chapter 4 (pp. 85-94) Brown, 2012b Hudson, 2005 Katz, 2012 Cheng & Curtis, 2012
21	3/31	<i>Assessing receptive skills</i>	Green, Chapter 5 <i>Please submit the assignment on Blackboard</i>
22	4/2	<i>Listening Assessment</i>	Flowerdew & Miller, 2012
23	4/7	<i>Reading Assessment</i>	Hubley, 2012
24	4/9	<i>Assessing productive skills</i>	Green, Chapter 6
25	4/14	<i>Speaking Assessment</i>	O'Sullivan, 2012
26	4/16	<i>Writing Assessment</i>	Weigle, 2012
27	4/21	<i>Assessing grammatical ability</i>	Jones, 2012
28	4/23	<i>Assessing vocabulary</i>	Read, 2012
29	4/28	<i>Assessing pragmatic skills</i>	Green, Chapter 7 (pp. 196-198) Eslami & Mirzaei, 2012
30	4/30	<i>Assessing communicative skills</i>	Green, Chapter 7 (pp. 188-194, 198-206) Morrow, 2012
31	5/5	<i>Alternative assessment</i>	Coombe, Purmensky, & Davidson, 2012 Brown & Hudson, 1998
32	5/7	<i>Reviewing test specification and test items for a placement test</i>	<i>Please bring a draft of your specification and a full set of test items for a placement test to class</i>

*****The full list of reading references is on Blackboard. *****