LING 5308: Language Assessment
Spring 2018

Instructor: Naoko Witzel

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Office Hours: Mondays 4-5pm and Wednesdays 1-2pm (or by appointment)

Section Information: LING 5308-001

Time and Place of Class Meetings: Mondays 5:30-8:20pm Trimble Hall 102

Description of Course Content: This is an introductory language 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 tests of various language skills. Prerequisite: LING 5301, LING 5302, or permission of the instructor.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successfully completing this course, students should be able to:
1) discuss basic concepts in second language testing;
2) use second language testing literature to inform test creation;
3) construct and evaluate language test specifications for various ESL/EFL contexts/purposes;
4) construct and evaluate language tests for various ESL/EFL contexts/purposes;
5) calculate and correctly apply basic psychometric measures involved in language testing.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials: All materials 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.
Recommended Textbook: Brown, J. D. (2005). *Testing in language programs: A comprehensive guide to English language assessment.* London: McGraw Hill.

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations:

TESTING PRESENTATION (10%): You will do a 30-minute presentation on issues specifically relevant to the assessment of one of the language skills/domains covered during Weeks 4-6. You will work with at least one partner on these presentations. The organization of these presentations is up to you, but each of your group members should participate. For each of the skills/domains, an introductory reading has been provided. Your presentation should address (some of) the issues raised in this article as well as reference at least two other sources related to testing in the skill/domain of interest. After your presentation, please email your PowerPoint slides and/or handouts to your instructor by 9am the following day so that they can be posted onto the course Blackboard site (for assessment and so that they can be made available to your classmates).

TEST ITEM PRESENTATION (10%): After your testing presentation, you will individually present item specifications for the assessment on at least one component of the skill/domain of interest (~10 minutes, ~10 minutes for discussion). During this presentation, you should explain relevant contextual information (e.g., target student proficiency level, learning context, such as ESL, EFL, ESP, EAP, etc.), detail the purpose of the test item(s) (i.e., provide a description of the knowledge or (sub)skill(s) to be measured), provide a sample item/item set, describe its stimulus and response attributes, and address questions/comments from your

classmates. After your presentation, you should email your PowerPoint slides and/or handouts to your instructor by 9am the following day so that they can be uploaded onto the course Blackboard site (for assessment and so that they can be made available to your classmates).

FEEDBACK BLOG POSTS (10%): You will post feedback on your classmates' test item presentations 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 item(s) (i.e., what you might consider adopting in your own tests) and (ii) what you might change if you were testing this skill/knowledge (i.e., what you would do to make the test item(s) even better). Please try to upload your feedback soon after each test item presentation (and no later than the Monday class after it is delivered) so that your classmate can integrate it into his/her test development project.

TEST DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (35%): For this testing project, you will develop a test that you could use in a language course that you (plan to) teach. This project will consist of the following components:

Test specifications (10%): In your test specifications, you will discuss the purpose of the test (with reference to relevant contextual information) and provide item specifications for each of its components (see above). There is no set length for these test specifications. They will be assessed based on the clarity of your test description and its component item specifications.

Note: You may use/adapt the item specifications from your test item presentation for this project if you would like.

Test write-up (15%): Based on these test specifications, you will submit a fully developed version of your test. Your write-up should include your (revised) test specifications, a complete version of the test (exactly as it would be administered to your students), grading criteria (including scoring procedures/score weights), and information on what you would do to evaluate the adequacy of your items as well as the reliability, dependability, and validity of your test (with reference to the testing measures that we will study in the last half of the course). There is no set length for these write-ups. They will be assessed based on the clarity of your test description and its component item specifications, the quality of the test itself, and the completeness of your plans for evaluating the test/test items.

Test presentation (10%): Give a presentation on your test write-up. Briefly provide relevant contextual information, and then provide an overview of test specifications, the actual test, grading criteria, and also information on how you would evaluate your test.

TESTING MEASURES HOMEWORK (25%): There will be five short homework assignments related to testing measures. These assignments will be problem sets similar to exercises that we will do in class.

PARTICIPATION (10%): It is recommended that you come to class on time. However, note that you will be graded for your participation rather than mere attendance. Please email me prior to class if you have a legitimate reason for missing class.

Attendance: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. 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, I will take attendance for each class. ***More than one (unexcused) absence will negatively affect your letter grade.*** However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their

class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

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 final grade will be determined as follows (A = 90% or above; B = 80-90%; C = 70-80%; D=60-70%, F = below 60%):

10%	Testing presentation
10%	Test item presentation
10%	Feedback blog posts
35%	Test development project
	10% Test specifications
	15% Test write-up
	10% Test presentation
25%	Testing measures homework
10%	Participation

Late assignments will not be accepted.
Please upload all your written assignments onto Blackboard by 5:00pm on the due date.
Please note that all assignments will be graded on content. Submitted assignments do not ensure a passing grade. Please be sure to be relevant in all your assignments.

Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional 9 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

Grade Grievances: Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current University Catalog. For undergraduate courses, see http://catalog.uta.edu/academicregulations/grades/#undergraduatetext; for graduate courses, see http://catalog.uta.edu/academicregulations/grades/#graduatetext. For student complaints, see http://www.uta.edu/deanofstudents/student-complaints/index.php.

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://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/).

Disability Accommodations: UT 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), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* 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 disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of **a letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: **The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit* www.uta.edu/titleIX *or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or* jmhood@uta.edu.

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 in their courses by 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. Additional information is available at https://www.uta.edu/conduct/.

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.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are 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 via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses**,** 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.

Students should also be encouraged to subscribe to the MavAlert system that will send information in case of an emergency to their cell phones or email accounts. Anyone can subscribe at https://mavalert.uta.edu/ or https://mavalert.uta.edu/register.php

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): [Optional.] The Writing Center offers **FREE** tutoring in 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Register and make appointments online at https://uta.mywconline.com. Classroom visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services.

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:

3/19 – Submit your test specifications
5/7 – Submit your test write-up

 (Other important dates: 1/31 Census Day; 3/30 Last day to drop classes)

OUTLINE OF TOPICS & READING ASSINGMENTS:

Week #	Date	Topic(s) (bold = presentation groups)	Reading Assignments and other deadlines
1	1/22	*Introduction*	
2	1/29	*Different types of assessment; Language testing issues*	Brown, 2005_1; Brown, 2005_2 Green, 2012 Morrow, 2012 Krathwohl, 2002
3	2/5	*Developing test items*	Brown, 2005_3 O'Sullivan, 2012a Davidson & Fulcher, 2012 Fives & DiDonato-Barnes, 2013
4	2/12	*Assessing receptive skills (**listening** and **reading**)*	Flowerdew & Miller, 2012 Hubley, 2012
5	2/19	*Assessing productive skills (**speaking** and **writing**)*	O'Sullivan, 2012b Eslami & Mirzaei, 2012 Weigle, 2012 Green & Hawkey, 2012

6	2/26	*Assessing **vocabulary**, **grammatical** abilities*	Read, 2012 Jones, 2012
7	3/5	*Test specifications workshop*	
8	3/12	**NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**	
9	3/19	*Item analysis*	Brown, 2005_4 *--**test specifications due***
10	3/26	*Describing language test results*	Brown, 2005_5
11	4/2	*Interpreting test scores*	Brown, 2005_6 *--**testing measures HW1 due***
12	4/9	*Language test reliability*	Brown, 2005_8 *--**testing measures HW2 due***
13	4/16	*Language test dependability*	Brown, 2005_9 *--**testing measures HW3 due***
14	4/23	*Language test validity*	Brown, 2005_10 *--**testing measures HW4 due***
15	4/30	*Test write-up presentations*	*--**testing measures HW5 due***

READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Brown, J. D. (2005). *Testing in language programs: A comprehensive guide to English language assessment.* London: McGraw Hill.

Green, A. (2012). Placement testing. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 164-170). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morrow, K. (2012). Communicative language testing. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 140-146). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krathwohl, D. R. (2002). A revision of Bloom's taxonomy: An overview. *Theory into Practice, 41,* 212-218.

O'Sullivan, B. (2012a). The assessment development process. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 47-58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Davidson, F., & Fulcher, G. (2012). Developing test specifications for language assessment. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 59-65). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fives, H., & DiDonato-Barnes, N. (2013). Classroom test construction: The power of a table of specifications. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 18,* 1-7.

Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (2012). Assessing listening. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 225-233). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hubley, N. J. (2012). Assessing reading. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 211-217). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Sullivan, B. (2012b). Assessing speaking. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 234-246). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eslami, Z. R., & Mirzaei, A. (2012). Assessment of second language pragmatics. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 198-208). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weigle, S. C. (2012). Assessing writing. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 218-224). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Green & Hawkey (2012). Marking assessments: Rating scales and rubrics. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 299-306). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, W. (2012). Assessing students' grammatical ability. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 247-256). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Read, J. (2012). Assessing vocabulary. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff (Eds.), *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Assessment* (pp. 257-264). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381