

PSYC 5317 Psychological Assessment (Fall 2025)

MADLA 206, Mondays: 2:00 - 4:45PM



Professor	Brett Murphy, JD, PhD	Phone	210-784-2814
Office	STEM 237E	E-mail	bmurphy@tamusa.edu
Student Office Hours	Tues/Thurs: 2– 5PM By Appointment via Calendly: https://calendly.com/bmurphy-tamusa/dr-murphy-office-hours		

Course Description

From the catalog: This course is a broad introduction to the field of psychological assessment, including an understanding of the conceptual issues underlying different approaches to testing and assessment. Surveys the major types of tests used in the field of assessment and addresses the development of the most commonly used instruments. The course also is designed to provide a framework for the development of skills related to assessment practice. Attention will be given to issues of measurement, identifying appropriate sources of diagnostic information, reliability, validity, identifying and selecting empirically supported test instruments, conducting the assessment process in an ethical manner, interpreting norm references and criterion-referenced test scores.

Required Course Materials

- *All Assigned Readings Posted on Blackboard (and cited in the course schedule)*
- *Software:* To run most statistical analyses, we will use RStudio, an open-access software application that relies on the program R. You will become proficient in using RStudio to conduct analyses and interpret the results. To access to R on your own device, you should first [download R](#) (follow the instructions to “Download R for Linux, macOS, or Windows” depending on your operating system). Then, you should [download RStudio](#) (either choose the version in the blue button under “2: Install RStudio” or scroll down and pick the link to your corresponding operating system). Be sure to download R before RStudio! This free, open-access textbook by Dr. Danielle Navarro is an optional resource to help you become familiar with using R to run statistical analyses: [learning statistics with R](#). In particular, Chapters 3 and 4 include information about using R/RStudio –these chapters are not assigned as reading but may be helpful resources as you explore R and RStudio in this class.
- *In addition to R resources, also download JASP to your computer, as we can use it for some basic things.*

Contact Guidelines:

I will strive to be available to aid your learning process by providing a number of ways to contact me:

- **Email: Only use official university e-mail.**

I check my email regularly on Monday – Friday from 8 to 5. I will generally respond back within 24 hours of this timeframe. If you do not hear back from me, email again in the event your message went to my Junk email box and/or follow up directly with me in class or during office hours (see above). On the weekends, I am not available by email but will reply on the subsequent Monday. Please plan ahead especially when it comes to clarifying assignment instructions and/or submission requirements.

In all communications, please be professional in your tone and specific in your message (i.e., avoid informal correspondence styles like text messaging which lack appropriate punctuation and capitalization). Your correspondence **MUST** include the information specified above. If you send an email without sufficient information, I likely will not reply or may reply asking for clarification about your inquiry (this can result in an unnecessary delay). Please begin a new email thread in lieu of responding back to older emails if you are beginning a new conversation unrelated to the previous email (this helps minimize confusion caused by chain replies).

- **Student Hours**: I will be available in my office (STEM 237E) to meet during student hours (see times listed above). Student hours are dedicated to interacting with and providing students assistance regarding course work. The Calendly link above allows you to sign up for a 15-minute slot and choose whether you would prefer to meet in my office or on zoom. If you need more than 15 minutes, please sign up for 2 adjacent slots (30 minutes total). Office hour slots are on a first-come, first-serve basis. If there is a specific assignment/materials or topic you want to discuss, providing advance notice will allow me to have these resources ready. If students cannot meet during these times, an alternative time can be requested via email and I will do my best to try to accommodate students accordingly. For discussions involving more personal and/or sensitive information, some form of advance notice is recommended.

Course Overview

This graduate seminar is designed for you to learn through doing. More specifically, you will learn about psychological assessment while working toward a potentially publishable scientific paper on a psychological assessment issue. I do not expect you to submit your work for publication this semester, but I do want you to produce a draft that shows promise to be submittable within a few months after the end of the course.

It may be permissible to work on paper projects as a 2-person team, rather than solo, but this will only be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance is mandatory to pass the course. Most class sessions will be approximately: ½ of the time with me spent lecturing and you presenting to the class on the assigned presentation question for that week; and ½ of the time with me leading analyses workshops and/or you working on your project while I come around and help each one of you individually. Your presentations to the class are all designed to help you move forward with your final project and keep the class informed as to your progress.

You will try to carefully read all assigned materials AND discuss them in advance of class with at least 1 classmate. Each week, you need to come prepared with at least 2 thoughtful questions that you would like to ask me to help you move forward with your final project.

Throughout the course, I will not only be explaining concepts to you and walking you through prior research studies, but I will also be providing you with walk-through instructions on how to use R code that I will provide to you. By the end of the semester, you will have an extensive document of R code that you can use in future efforts, with your own notes and annotations throughout.

Grading Agreement

Grading for this course will be via grading agreement. You will have the option to contract for either an A grade or a B grade. Templates for an A grade agreement and a B grade agreement are posted in Blackboard.

The B grade agreement is for students who are committed to working hard and doing their fair share to make this class a success for everyone. The A grade agreement is for students who aim to go above and beyond the baseline expectations, to (a) be servant leaders elevating the learning of the class as a whole and (b) expend extensive effort to produce a final research paper draft that has clear promise to lead to a publishable manuscript. My expectations for contributions from students who sign an A grade agreement will be particularly high.

Once you have signed the grading agreement, the class will be counting on you to meet the terms of that agreement. If you fail to fulfill what you agreed to do, I will reduce your grade to a level that I feel is appropriate and provide you with a written justification for my decision.

The specifics for each grade level of the contract (A or B) are shown in the templates on Blackboard.

USAGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The use of generative AI in your writing, such as ChatGPT, is prohibited *without my express permission*, except in the following ways:

- To ensure proper usage of English in students' original self-written materials
 - Prompt: Review the text below and note any grammatical errors. Be detailed and provide examples/explanations. Do not rewrite it for me.
- To identify areas of improvement in students' original self-written materials
 - Prompt: Review the text below and identify areas of improvement. Be detailed and provide examples/explanations. Do not rewrite it for me.

Students who choose to utilize generative AI tools for this purpose MUST:

- Declare the use of AI tools by identifying the program and purpose (i.e., allowed uses)
- Cite the tool in the reference section
- Include their original writing as an appendix to any assignment submission

If generative AI usage is detected and not declared upon assignment submission, the student may be held accountable for violating the Academic Integrity Policy. The first step following any flagged material is a one-on-one conversation in a timely manner with the student to discuss the situation further and to determine what course of action is appropriate.

Assigned Readings

- Clark, L., & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7(3), 309-319.
- Clark, L. A., & Watson, D. (2019). Constructing validity: New developments in creating objective measuring instruments. *Psychological Assessment*, 31(12), 1412.
- Flake, J. K., & Fried, E. I. (2020). Measurement schmeasurement: Questionable measurement practices and how to avoid them. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 3(4), 456-465.
- Higgins, W. C., Kaplan, D. M., Deschrijver, E., & Ross, R. M. (2024). Construct validity evidence reporting practices for the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test: A systematic scoping review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 108, 102378.
- Murphy, B. A., Hall, J. A., & Duong, F. (2022). It looks like construct validity, but look again: Comment on Clutterbuck et al. (2021) and recommendations for test developers in the broad" empathy" domain. *Psychological Assessment*, 34(4), 397-404.
- Maassen, E., D'Urso, E. D., Van Assen, M. A., Nuijten, M. B., De Roover, K., & Wicherts, J. M. (2023). The dire disregard of measurement invariance testing in psychological science. *Psychological Methods*.
- Neary, P. (2023). Questionnaire measures of empathy in children: A scoping review. *Assessment*, 30(3), 798-824.
- Rodriguez, A., Reise, S. P., & Haviland, M. G. (2016). Evaluating bifactor models: Calculating and interpreting statistical indices. *Psychological Methods*, 21(2), 137.
- Simms, L. J. (2008). Classical and modern methods of psychological scale construction. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2(1), 414-433.
- Thomas, M. L. (2011). The value of item response theory in clinical assessment: a review. *Assessment*, 18(3), 291-307.
- Williams, B., Onsman, A., & Brown, T. (2010). Exploratory factor analysis: A five-step guide for novices. *Australasian Journal of Paramedicine*, 8, 1-13.

Course Schedule

I will do my best to abide by this schedule. Any topic changes or course adjustments will be announced by any one or a combination of lecture, e-mail and/or Blackboard.

Week	Topic	Assignments in or prior to class
1 (8/25)	Measurement theory, reliability, and external validity Pt. 1 <i>No Reading Assigned</i>	
2 (9/1)	LABOR DAY ***NO CLASS***	*Meet with mentor to come up with a tentative idea for your project. You can invite Dr. Murphy to this meeting, if that would be helpful.
3 (9/8)	Measurement theory, reliability, and external validity Pt. 2 <i>Flake & Fried (2020); Simms (2008)</i>	*Present to class: "Based on the assigned readings this week, what are two ways that you think you might be able to investigate your assessment topic in your final paper?"
4 (9/15)	Exploratory factor analysis Pt. 1 <i>Williams et al. (2010)</i>	*Present to class: "Do you have any concerns about factor structure re: your assessment topic? Why or why not?"
5 (9/22)	Exploratory factor analysis Pt. 2 <i>Clark and Watson (1995)</i>	*Present to class: "What do you think might worry Dr. Clark and Dr. Watson about measurement practices re: your paper topic?"
6 (9/29)	Confirmatory factor analysis Pt. 1 <i>Murphy et al. (2022)</i>	*Present to class: "In your own view, what are the most important discriminant validity questions people should address in your topic area?"
7 (10/6)	Confirmatory factor analysis Pt. 2 <i>Clark and Watson (2019)</i>	*Present to class: "What progress have you made on your final project thus far?"
8 (10/13)	Item response theory (IRT) <i>Thomas (2011)</i>	*Present to class: "Do you think measurement in your topic area has good precision at both high and low levels of the construct?"
9 (10/20)	Systematic reviews of measurement questions <i>Higgins (2024)</i>	*Present to class: "In the last 2 weeks, what progress have you made on your final project?"
10 (10/27)	Scoping reviews of measurement questions <i>Neary (2023)</i>	
11 (11/3)	Bifactor and multilevel factor analyses <i>Rodriguez et al. (2016)...just skim to get idea of basic concepts</i>	*Present to class: "In the last 2 weeks, what progress have you made on your final project?"
12 (11/10)	Measurement invariance <i>Maassen et al. (2023)</i>	Turn in a draft of your manuscript to Dr. Murphy
13 (11/17)	MMPI testing and interpretation <i>To be determined</i>	*Present to class: "What specific tasks are you going to accomplish for your final project in the next two weeks?"
14 (11/24)	Clinical interviewing and diagnostic assessment <i>DSM-5 (Panic Disorder) and SCID-5-CV (Panic Disorder)</i>	
15 (12/1)	Child, Educational, and Aptitude Assessment <i>No assigned reading</i>	*Present your final paper to the class ☺
Final Research Paper Due Dec. 12th		



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services as soon as possible.

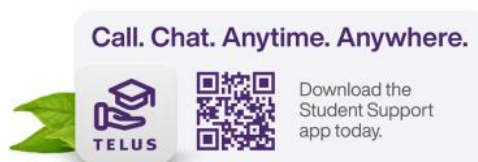
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are **free and confidential** (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information on SCC services visit <http://tamusa.edu/studentcounseling>

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331.

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found [here](#).

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on "Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center" to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Office Hours: All faculty with teaching assignments should include regularly scheduled office hours on each syllabus in addition to "by appointment." Please review your appointment letter for the number of weekly office hours you are expected to set. Regularly scheduled office hours should also be posted outside your office door (where applicable).

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided with an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and

individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable modifications to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K). Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Young Jaguars: can support parenting students with daycare who meet this criteria: Must be enrolled in classes at TAMUSA in the current semester. Must be Pell eligible or a single parent. They serve children ages 3 to 12-years-old. Children must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. youngjaguars@tamusa.edu (210) 784-2636

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university students' rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

Important Dates: Fall 2025 Regular 16-Week Session

August 25	First day of class
September 1	Labor Day Holiday – No classes
September 10	Census Date
November 14	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
November 25	Last day to withdraw from the University
November 26	Study Day – No classes
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Holiday – No classes
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5	Study Day – No classes

December 6-12	Final exams
December 16	Commencement

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>