

LLT 808 sec. 730 – Assessment for Foreign Language Teaching

Online

Updated
1/3/17

Michigan State University, Master of Arts in Foreign Language Teaching
Center for Language Teaching Advancement and the College of Arts & Letters

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Course Description

The course will expose students to language testing principles and controversies in the field of language testing and assessment as they relate to the measurement of language at different levels and contexts, from K-12 to university levels. In addition, students will gain experience in actual development of reliable and valid assessment tools that are performance, task, and content-based for foreign language classroom instruction. An important component of the course is the introduction of critical views of language tests by examining the educational, political, social, and economic consequences of tests, especially as they relate to the current context of testing in the USA (e.g., the No Child Left Behind Act and state mandated tests) and abroad. Students will learn basic statistical procedures related to testing the validity and reliability of tests. Also explored are alternatives to standardized tests.

Course Objectives

- 1 Learn how to construct statistically valid, reliable, and ethical test items and tests.
- 2 Get exposed to basic research studies in the field of L2 testing.
- 3 Learn how testing fits into the context of the classroom and how it affects the stakeholders involved (students, teachers, administrators, institution, community, etc.) This involves understanding the educational, social, economic, and political contexts of tests and the uses of tests for these purposes.
- 4 Learn about alternative methods of measuring language knowledge, such as self- and portfolio assessment.
- 5 Learn about the various criteria for assessing the quality of measurement instruments—also learn methods for developing different types of assessment procedures which have high levels of reliability and validity.
- 6 Learn basic statistical procedures for measuring test outcomes, validating tests, and for comparing tests.

This course is an essential foundation for aspiring foreign language teachers and fulfills many of the educational objectives laid out in the Master of Arts degree in Foreign Language Teaching

(MAFLT) handbook. In particular, this course enables students to create, review, and use reliable and valid methods of assessment for classroom (formative) purposes and for standardized, higher-stakes tests (such as final exams, placement tests, and diagnostic assessments). For more information, please refer to the program handbook and/or communicate with your advisor.

Classroom-based Expectations

- Communications will be accomplished via email and through Desire 2 Learn (D2L). Please make sure that you check your MSU account regularly or have your MSU email forwarded to an address that you do check regularly. If you email me, please email me directly a defelic5@msu.edu. Do not email me through D2L as I do not check the D2L email accounts.
- Turn in all assignment that must be turned in electronically in MS Word format (.doc or .docx). Do not submit PDFs. I will not accept PDFs for assignments.
- You are responsible for knowing MSU's policy on plagiarism. Familiarize yourself with this site: <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>. Note that this web site states that "plagiarism not only is legally wrong but also morally corrosive..." Any paper based upon the writing of others should **acknowledge every source used.** (I added the bolding.) If you plagiarize, I will (a) give you a penalty grade on the assignment, (b) fail you on the assignment, or (c) fail you in the class. Please note that I unfortunately have given all three types of penalties out to students before, and yes, these were penalties given to MSU graduate students. If I give you a penalty, I will inform the director of your program of the penalty. I will also inform your department chair and the dean of your college if required. Note that plagiarism can lead toward expulsion from MSU.
- You must notify the instructor by email when submitting any assignment past the due date. **The highest score any late assignment can receive is 70%.** The only exception to this policy is for students experiencing undue hardship who have notified the instructor prior to the due date. All submissions must be turned in and the instructor notified no later than the last week of class. Any work received after this week will not be assessed for course credit. All assignments must be completed on time to receive full credit.

Required Readings

TB	(Text book)	Carr, N. T. (2011). <i>Designing and analyzing language tests</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
OL	(Online readings)	Other required readings (research articles or others available via PDF or on the Web) are available in D2L. You will need to download them to read them and/or print them out.

Note that any starred article (*) on the syllabus can be used by students as their article discussion assignment.

GRADES

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Total</u>
Module quizzes and/or module work	12	5	60
Midterm exam	1	15	15
Final exam	1	20	20
<u>Overall participation (awarded at the end of the semester)</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Total points			100

GRADING

Grading is an extremely complex task. For this class, grading is a combination of criterion- and norm-referenced. Thus, I assign grades based on how students perform relative to other students and also how well they achieve course goals.

Mastery-Based (Criterion-Referenced) Grading

If you get a 94% or above in this class, you will receive a 4.0. This shows that you met all requirements for the course and demonstrated your learning to an exceptional degree, and you even exceeded expectations in this course. Scores between 88% and 93% are a 3.5, 82% to 87% are a 3.0, etc.

94% or above is generally a 4.0 (A)	The student met all requirements for this course and demonstrated his or her learning to an exceptional degree and exceeded expectations in the course.
88% to 93% is generally a 3.5 (A-)	The student met all requirements for this course and demonstrated his or her learning very well.
82% to 87% is generally a 3.0 (B)	The student met most of the requirements for this course and demonstrated his or her learning relatively well.
76% to 81% is generally a 2.5 (C+)	The student did not fulfill all requirements for this course. Learning was demonstrated adequately.
70% to 75% is generally a 2.0 (C)	The student did not fulfill the requirements for this course. Learning was demonstrated somewhat adequately.

Norm-Referenced Grading

The grading scale shown above does not mean that if you get, let's say, a 92 or 93% in this class, that you are locked out of getting a 4.0, or if you get an 87% you are locked out of getting a 3.5. If the class mean is lower than 93 and/or the standard deviation is greater than 6, the cutoff score for a 4.0 will most likely be lower than a 94. That is, I will use norm-referenced grading. I calculate the mean and the standard deviation for the course to determine students' achievements of course goals in relation to other students in the course and to find natural breaks in the distribution of scores. Thus, I may "pull down"

the score distribution to award more 4.0s and 3.5s if the actual course-scores students receive at the end of the course are skewed.

References

- Bejar, I. I. (2008). Standard setting: What is it? Why is it important? *R&D: Connections*, 7. Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RD_Connections7.pdf
- Carr, N. T. (2011). *Designing and analyzing language tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cublio, J., & Winke, P. (2013). Redefining the L2 listening construct within an integrated writing task: Considering the impacts of visual-cue interpretation and note-taking. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 10(4), 371-397.
- Krashen, S. (2012, July 18). Invitation to a dialogue: An excess of testing. *The New York Times*.
- Lee, H., & Winke, P. (2013). The differences among three-, four-, and five-option multiple-choice item formats in the context of a high-stakes English-language listening test. *Language Testing*, 30(1), 99-123.
- Roever, C. (2011). Testing of second language pragmatics: Past and future. *Language Testing*, 28(4), 463-481.
- Winke, P. (2011a). Evaluating the validity of a high-stakes ESL test: Why teachers' perceptions matter. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(4), 628-660.
- Winke, P. (2011b). Investigating the reliability of the civics portion of the U.S. Naturalization Test. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 8(4), 317-341.
- Winke, P. (2013). The effectiveness of interactive group orals for placement testing. In A. Mackey & K. McDonough (Eds.), *Interaction in diverse educational settings* (pp. 247-268). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Wong, E. (2012, July 1). Test that can determine the course of life in China gets a closer examination. *The New York Times*, p. A4.

L2 Testing Websites

- CAL's Foreign Language Test Database: <http://www.cal.org/nclrc/fltestdb/>
- Interagency Language Roundtable: <http://www.govtilr.org/>
- International Language Testing Association: <http://www.iltaonline.com/>
- Midwest Association of Language Testers: <http://www.public.iastate.edu/~mwalt/homepage.html>

Syllabus Changes: The instructor reserves the right to modify, add to, or delete assignments, projects, assessments, etc. Communication is an important factor in the success of this course. In order to fulfill the course requirements, students must communicate with the instructor and other students as necessary; students are expected to communicate with the instructor as a learning resource, reply to emails, follow deadlines; students must check D2L frequently for announcements/updates in the assignments; and students must actively participate in all class activities. Any *necessary* changes to the course syllabus will be posted on D2L and/or placed in an announcement or email.

MAFLT Portfolio Information: The following course assignment should be saved for inclusion in the Online Portfolio: Foreign Language Teaching Assessment Tool*. As stated in the program handbook, the Portfolio serves as a way for students “to demonstrate the coherence and impact of the program of study” (p.2) and provides the student with the opportunity to reflect on their progression towards becoming highly proficient language teachers. For more information, please refer to the program handbook and/or communicate with your advisor.

Religious Observance: In accordance with MSU policy, no student will be penalized in any way for missing class due to religious observance. If you will be absent from the course due to religious observance, please notify me in advance so that we can arrange for you to make up missed work, materials, etc.

Academic Honesty: Your assignments must be original and not used in any other class (prior or present) without approval by me and the professor of that other class. You are responsible for knowing MSU's policy on plagiarism. Familiarize yourself with this site: <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html> Note that this web site states that "plagiarism not only is legally wrong but also morally corrosive..." Any paper based upon the writing of others **should acknowledge every source used.** (I added the bolding.) If you plagiarize, I will (a) give you a penalty grade on the assignment, (b) fail you on the assignment, or (c) fail you in the class. If I give you a penalty, I will inform the director of your program of the penalty. I will also inform your department chair and the dean of your college if required. Note that plagiarism can lead toward expulsion from MSU.

Course Enrollment: If you decide to drop this class any time after starting the class, you must go online to the MSU schedule system and un-enroll yourself. If you do not un-enroll by the cut-off date for un-enrolling, you are responsible for paying the tuition associated with the course. Within the schedule system (<http://schedule.msu.edu/>), you can click on a course's section number to see the date by which you must drop if you would like to receive a refund (not pay for the class). The professor cannot un-enroll you. For information about dropping a course, go here: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/EnrReg/Lateadds.asp>

Acknowledgments: This course was designed by Paula Winke, Ph.D., a foremost expert in language assessment here at MSU. We will also review/learn from many research studies Dr. Winke conducted in language assessment research.

SCHEDULE & WORK PLAN

Module	Topic or Area	Textbook Readings	Articles	Notes
Module 1 To Jan 18th	What are we testing and why? The big picture.	Ch. 1 in Carr	(Wong, 2012)	
Module 2 To Jan 25th	Test tasks	Ch. 2 in Carr	(Krashen, 2012)	
Module 3 To Feb 1st	Planning and designing tests	Ch. 3 in Carr	(Lee & Winke, 2013)	Dr. De Felice to give specific directions for midterm exam.
Module 4 To Feb 8th	Test specifications	Ch. 4 in Carr		Dr. De Felice will give Signup form for individual Skype meetings.
Module 5 To Feb 15th	Writing tests and planning for administration of tests	Ch. 5 in Carr	(Winke, 2011a)	
Module 6 To Feb 22nd	Reliability and validity	Ch. 6 in Carr	(Winke, 2011b)	Dr. De Felice to give more information on the final exam.
Midterm Exam To Mar 1st	DUE WED. MARCH 1st via D2L dropbox. Write a reflection on a test for language learners learning the language you teach or plan to teach. You can choose a test that you have or have access to, or I can give you a test from one of the language-teaching faculty here at Michigan State University. The reflection should be about 4 to 5 pages, double spaced. You can provide references if you would like (especially to Carr, our textbook). More directions on this midterm exam will be given to you during Module 3.			
Individual Skype meetings To Mar 15th	Half-hour Skype meeting with Dr. De Felice. Scheduled one-on-one. Can be scheduled anytime between March 13 th and March 15 th . In this meeting, you will talk about your reflection on a test (the midterm) and also discuss ideas for the test that you will develop for the final exam.			
Module 7 To Mar 22nd	Oral skills testing	Ch. 8 in Carr	(Winke, 2013),	
Module 8 To Mar 29th	Writing skills testing			Submit to Dr. De Felice via D2L a plan for your final exam (specifications for your test development project).
Module 9 To Apr 5th	Reading skills testing		(Bejar, 2008)	
Module 10 To Apr 12th	Listening skills testing		(Cublio & Winke, 2013)	
Module 11 To Apr 19th	Testing grammar skills	Ch. 9 in Carr		Submit to Dr. De Felice via D2L a draft of your final exam (whatever you have drafted at this point). He will provide feedback.
Module 12 To Apr 26th	Other topics in testing (computer-based testing, testing pragmatics and sociolinguistic competence)	Ch. 10 in Carr	(Roever, 2011)	
Final exam To May 3rd	DUE WED. May 3rd via D2L dropbox. Develop a language assessment tool* for your classroom. This can be an oral test, a diagnostic test, or a revision of a test currently used in your class. If you are not teaching now, you can develop a general proficiency or diagnostic test, or create items for an English-listening test.			