

Language Testing
LING 5374 CRN 19475
Course Syllabus, Fall 2020
Department of Languages and Linguistics, UTEP

COURSE INFORMATION

Days: Tuesday & Thursday **Time:** 6:00-7:20 PM

Location: Online: Blackboard & Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Final Exam: Thursday, December 10

Course meets August 24-Dec 3

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Sabrina Mossman

Office: Online—Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Email: samossman@utep.edu

Office Hours: By appointment—Office hours will take place on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Instructions for office hours will be provided on Blackboard. I am very flexible, so contact me and we can select the best time for you.

Course Description:

This course is an introductory language assessment course for students who have little or no formal training in second/foreign language assessment. One of the key roles that teachers perform on a daily basis is assessing student learning. Effective teaching, therefore, requires that teachers know what assessment instruments to use, under what contexts, and how to utilize the instruments. In the course of the semester, the students will examine 1) key concepts and issues in second/foreign language assessment and 2) basic concepts used to describe and interpret test results in reports of research in language assessment.

Course Objectives:

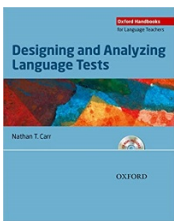
Upon completion of this course successful students will be able to:

- To understand measurement concepts, limitations and principles relevant to language assessment
- To understand a theoretical model of the language abilities that affect performance on language assessment instruments
- To understand the characteristics of assessment methods that affect performance on language assessment instruments
- To understand the logic and procedures for investigating the reliability of assessment results
- To understand the logic and procedures for investigating the validity of the uses of assessment results

- To be familiar with current issues and problems in language assessment and language assessment research
- To be able to design, construct, and pilot useful language assessments, and to interpret test results.
- To develop the capacity for critical judgment of the adequacy of test materials purported to assess language abilities.
- Understand how assessment can be used in listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Required Text:

Carr, Nathan T. (2011). *Designing and analyzing language tests* New York: Oxford University Press.



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Course Policies and Requirements

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 *Health and Safety* and Section 1.2.2.5 *Disruptions* in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

- Because this is an online class, the regular rules for attendance have been modified. We will have bi-weekly class meetings for hands-on activities and presentations. Absences due to medical reasons or emergencies will need to be adequately documented.
- Participants are expected to learn not only from readings and projects but also from class interaction, formal and informal discussions, and class presentations.
- Participants should read all assigned readings carefully before each class and be prepared to participate in class discussions.
- Students should be prepared to accommodate the necessary study time in their schedule to read, review, write, and study the material, as well as to work on assignments and course projects.
- All assignments and projects should be completed when they are due. No make-up exams will be permitted.
- Students should make sure they have access to the course's Blackboard shell in order to receive class announcements, access class materials, post papers and reports, etc.

Technology Requirements

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, a webcam, and a microphone. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

Blackboard Collaborate Sessions

This class requires that you participate in scheduled Blackboard Collaborate sessions for group activities, discussions, and presentations. These sessions will generally take place on Tuesdays, every other week. The days they will take place are indicated on the calendar with the word "SYNC".

Students are expected to participate in these sessions with a webcam and microphone. The sessions will be recorded and provided so that they can be reviewed by classmates at a later time. Students should not record the sessions and post them to any sites outside of Blackboard.

If you are unable to attend a Collaborate session, please let me know as soon as possible so that accommodations can be made when appropriate.

Housekeeping Rules & Netiquette

- The instructional activities of this course will be conducted entirely on Blackboard, which you have now accessed. You will find all the information and materials for the course on Blackboard, as well as course announcements, which are constantly updated. Students are required to check in on Blackboard daily.
- In addition, students may receive e-mail messages (reminders, queries, etc.) at their address of record and are responsible for monitoring and responding to these.

Communicating effectively online:

When we converse, we expect other people to observe certain rules of behavior. The same is true online. Here are a few pointers to help you communicate more effectively.

- Clearly summarize the contents of your message in the subject line of your e-mail AND your discussion board and blog postings.
- Avoid using all capital letters. USING ALL CAPS MAKES IT LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING! IT'S ALSO MORE DIFFICULT TO READ.
- Avoid using sarcasm in your postings and e-mail messages. Sarcasm does not translate well in the online world, and you are liable to start a words war.

Communicating effectively with your professors:

In a recent course I received an email from a student that began as follows:

Mossman,
Hiya! I was about to check Blackboard and...

This is not appropriate. To avoid this in the future, I am including a link to some excellent guidelines on how to be professional when you send an email to any of your professors. (Hint: Addressing your professor by their last name with no title, and using "Hiya" as a greeting are not appropriate.)

<https://marktomforde.com/academic/undergraduates/Email-Etiquette.html>

Please review the NETIQUETTE GUIDE provided on Blackboard. You will be expected to follow these guidelines throughout the course.

Course Evaluation

Weekly Activities	30%
Presentation	10%
Final Exam	30%
Test Development Project	30%
Total	100%

Weekly Activities:

Every week you will have some activities to complete. Sometimes these will be discussion questions related to different concepts and issues in language testing. These are intended to help you view language tests and testing with a critical eye and to consider issues that may be new to you. Sometimes they will be practice exercises for carrying out statistical procedures important in language testing using excel and/or other tools. All of these activities are ungraded. That is, they are considered practice activities to help you gain the knowledge you need to succeed on your final exam and test development project. You will obtain the 30 points simply by completing these assignments. Many of these activities will be done with a partner or in groups.

Presentation:

You will present and lead the discussion of a research article on language testing. Presenters should (a) lead the class through a discussion of the reading, (b) summarize the major points, and (c) provide discussion questions to lead the class in a discussion of the article. Special instructions adapting this assignment for our online format this semester will be provided on Blackboard. You will also need to prepare a handout to accompany your presentation for your classmates.

It should be noted that you should NOT simply read aloud either your handout or the original paper. Anyone who reads their presentation will be interrupted and asked to go on without reading.

Final Exam:

This is a comprehensive take-home exam consisting of multiple-choice, short-answer questions, and statistical exercises, and essay questions given during Finals Week. The take home exam will be available at 9 am Tuesday, December 8 and will be due by 10 pm on Thursday, December 10. The exam is designed to allow you to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the material covered in class and in the reading. **Absolutely NO collaboration is allowed.** Any incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) and I will assign that student an F in the course. More information about the exam will be provided on Blackboard.

Test Development Project:

For this project, you will develop a form of language test materials, and will come up with a plan to demonstrate the reliability and validity of your test. The completed project will be due on **Wednesday, Dec. 3rd before midnight**. This project consists of the following four components:

1. **Design statement:** identifying potential stakeholders, beneficial and detrimental consequences, decisions to be made, and the purpose of the test; description of the TLU domain and the test-tasks (based on Bachman and Palmer's framework), and test takers; defining the constructs to be measured.
2. **Item Specification:** Include purpose, definition of construct(s), characteristics of input and expected response, and scoring method of each task/item. Note that for each decision; discuss your rationale for why you did what you did.
3. **Item development:** minimum 10 items for receptive tasks and minimum 3 tasks/prompts for productive tasks.
4. **Answering the AUA questions**

The following four validation questions regarding your developed test, which are related to basic principles in language assessment (i.e., authenticity, consequences, and content and construct validity) should be answered and supported by evidence.

- i. How would we assure that the interpretations of ability are **meaningful**?
- ii. How would we assure that the interpretation of language ability **generalizes** to the TLU domain of the decision?
- iii. How would we assure that our interpretations about test takers' language ability are **relevant** to the decision?
- iv. How would we assure that our interpretation about test takers' language ability provides **sufficient** information to make the decisions?

Additional Information

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations provide important feedback to the instructor and they are essential for measuring teaching effectiveness in the profession. Chairs and Deans see course evaluations every year in reviewing faculty performance, and committees at all levels of the university rely on evaluations in making decisions. Before the last class session, you will be asked to complete University Course Evaluation Forms. Informal mid-term formative evaluations may be conducted by the instructor.

Instructional Accommodations Due to Disability

In accordance with University policy, a student who needs special accommodations because of a documented sensory and/or learning disability (even if temporary) should contact the Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO), located in the East Union Bldg, Rm 106 (747-5148; dss@utep.edu). After contacting DSSO, please notify the instructor at the beginning of the course to ensure provision of approved accommodations.

Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Class Recordings

The use of recordings will enable you to have access to class lectures, group discussions, and so on in the event you miss a synchronous or in-person class meeting due to illness or other extenuating circumstance. Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP's acceptable-use policy. A recording of class sessions will be kept and stored by UTEP, in accordance with FERPA and UTEP policies. Your instructor will not share the recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, teaching assistants, or graduate assistants, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners with whom we may engage during a class session. **You may not share recordings outside of this course.** Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

Test Proctoring Software

Your final exam may make use of Respondus Lock Down Browser and Respondus Monitor inside of Blackboard to promote academic integrity. You are encouraged to learn more about how to use these programs prior to the exam.

Please review the following guidelines:

- The assessments will only be available at the times identified on the course calendar.
- You may take the test at any time during the 24-hour window.
- A reliable Internet connection is essential to completing the exam. If you must go to a location to take the exam (such as the library), be sure to follow their health and safety requirements.
- You have 2 attempts to take the test. Once the window closes, your answers will be saved, and no changes can be made. The higher score will be recorded.

- Respondus Lockdown Browser will require that all internet tabs are closed prior to the start of the test.
- Respondus Monitor requires a webcam and microphone.
- You will be required to show the webcam your student ID prior to the start of the test.
- Your face should be completely visible during the test. Blocking the camera will disable the test.
- No notes or textbook materials are permitted during the test. Respondus Monitor requires you to take a video of your surrounding area (desk, chair, walls, etc.)
- You should not have conversations with other people and/or leave and return to the area during the test.

Plagiarism Detecting Software

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

Copyright Statement For Course Materials

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.