Language Assessment
LING 439 / 539
Winter Term 2007

SCAN! (handwritten)

Professor:	Johannes Eckerth, Ph.D.
Office:	236 East Hall
Office hours:	Tuesday (scheduled) & Wednesday (drop-in), 12:30 – 13:30
	or by appointment
Phone:	503 725 8258
Email:	< eckerthj@pdx.edu >
Course:	Monday & Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:50, LH 335

Mail Eckerth! (handwritten)

Course description:

This course is an introduction to the field of language testing and assessment. The course will provide practical experience in the design of useful testing materials.

By the end of the course, students will be able to
- Differentiate between different types of language tests and assessments
- Present rationales for various language assessments and tests
- Critically evaluate language tests
- Apply the concept of usefulness to test construction
- Write original, purposeful language test items and assessments

The course is divided into the following three sections:

Section 1: Theory—We will examine the theoretical background for writing test materials, including reviews of test types and their purposes, essential properties of good tests, with an emphasis on reliability, construct validity, authenticity, and impact.

Section 2: Practical test writing—Students will apply theoretical knowledge by writing tests and test items for listening, reading, vocabulary, writing, grammar, and speaking. These will be critically reviewed in class. Groups of students will present additional information on testing different skill areas to the class.

Section 3: Assessment without testing—We will examine innovative ways to assess language beyond tests, and students will write an original assessment tailored to their educational contexts.

Course requirements

<u>In-class work</u>

In-class work will include a variety of tasks, as practice analysis activities, presentation and discussion of data and information in small groups, reading assignments, and leading discussions of assigned readings. As this course is designed for the discussion of information that you have acquired at home rather than for listening to instructor lecturing, the thorough preparation of overnight tasks and assigned readings is crucial to your success in the course.

As I expect regular attendance, please inform me in advance and per email if you cannot attend a class.

<u>Group presentations</u>
Your 30 minutes group presentation should
- provide an *overview* of the particular skill area
- outline the *major theoretical issues* in testing this skill area
- discuss *practical issues* in testing the skill area
- present selected *methods of testing* the skill area
- present some *evaluation* of these methods

Weigh carefully the importance and relevance of information included
Evaluation:
Content: quality of information presented (use of other sources, relevance, usefulness)
Delivery: skillfulness and professionalism of presentation
Visual aids: quality of OHP, PP and handout.
Note on handout: The handout is a guide to help listeners, it is not a script. It should contain relevant information for the audience to understand the talk. It should be easy to read, yet not distract the audience from listening to the presenters. Handouts will be judged on their clarity, ease of use, relevance to the presentation, referencing and bibliography.

<u>Grad Students (LING 539): Presentation Paper</u>
Grad students will write a 6-8 page paper providing a systematic summary of their presentation and the subsequent discussion. Papers will be evaluated due to the quality of i) the structured way in which information is presented, ii) the quality of analysis and evaluation, iii) the incorporation of class discussion, and iv) formal requirements (author, course, citation conventions, biblio etc.).

<u>Test Item Writing:</u>
- Must be your original work. (Not copied from another book, test, or source)
- Are short quiz items, not full length tests
- Each test must include test specifications (i.e., target audience and level, primary skill being tested, purpose, time requirement, etc.)

You are expected to bring three copies of the test to class. Tests will be evaluated based on their appropriateness to the skill area specified, probability of meeting specifications, and quality of revisions. A revised copy with changes suggested during the review process should be prepared for the portfolio along with the original version.

<u>Portfolio:</u>
- Introduction (2-3 pages): Specify the contents of the portfolio; indicate what you learned in compiling the portfolio; discuss one section of the portfolio you are particularly proud of.
- Presentation handout (include OHP or PP copies)
- Grad students: Presentation paper and revisions, as necessary
- Test items and revisions

Portfolio evaluation: Structure, completeness, quality of analysis in introduction, quality of revisions.

Delivery of assignments
All out-of-class assignments should be typewritten and include a cover sheet (containing the author's name, the course title and number and title of the paper). They should be sent to the instructor via email attachment (*.doc or *.rtf). Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Late assignments will not be accepted.

<u>Students with special needs</u>: Please see me if you have a disability that may require some modification of the seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Also, call Disabled Students Services at 725-4150 or 725-6504. I will work with you to arrange needed supports.

Course evaluation	LING 439	LING 539
In-class activities and participation	20	20
Group presentation	30	20
Presentation Paper	-	15
Test item writing	20	20
Portfolio	30	25
TOTAL	100%	100%

Required textbook:
Hughes, A. (²2003). *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

References:
Alderson, J. C. (2001). Assessing reading. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Alderson, J.D., Clapham, C., & Wall. D. (1995). *Language test construction and evaluation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Alderson, J.D. & Wall. D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics* 14, 115-129.

Bachman, L.F., & Palmer, A.S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bailey, K.M. (1996). Working for washback: A review of the washback concept in language testing. In: Language Testing 13, 257-279.

Banerjee, J. & Luoma, S. (1997). Qualitative approaches to test validation. In: Clapham, C. & Corson, D. (eds.), Encyclopedia of language and education, Volume 7: Language testing and assessment. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 275-287.

Brindley. G. (1998). Describing language development? Rating scales and SLA. In L. f. Bachman & A. D. Cohen (Eds.). *Interfaces between second language acquisition and language testing research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 90-111.

Brown, J.D. (2004). Language assessment : principles and classroom practices. London: Longman

Brown, J.D. (1996). *Testing in language programs*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.

Brown, J.D. (Ed.) (1998). *New ways of classroom assessment*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Brown, J.D. & Hudson, T. (1998). The alternatives in language assessment. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32, 653-675.

Buck, G. (2003). Assessing listening. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, Andrew D. (1994). Assessing language ability in the classroom. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dickinson, L. (1987). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Genesee, F. & Upshur, J. A. (1996). *Classroom-based evaluation in second language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hamp-Lyons, L. (1996). Applying ethical standards to portfolio assessment of writing in English as a second language. In M. Milanovic & N. Saville (Eds.). *Performance testing, cognition and assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 151-164.

Hamp-Lyons, L. (1997a). Washback, impact and validity : ethical concerns. *Language Testing* 14, 295-303

Hamp-Lyons, L. (1997b). Ethical test preparation practice : the case of the TOEFL. *TESOL Quarterly 32*, 329-337.

Hughes, A. (1988). Inroducing a needs-based test of English for study in an English medium university in Turkey. In: Hughes, A. (ed.), *Testing English for university study*. Oxford: Modern English Publications.

Kirschner,M., Wexler, C., & Spector-Cohen, E. (1992). Avoiding obstacles to student comprehension of test questions. *TESOL Quarterly,* 26, 537-556.

Luoma, S. (2004). Assessing Speaking. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lynch, B. K. (2001). The ethical potential of alternative language assessment. In: Elder, C. (ed.), *Experimenting with uncertainty: essays in honour of Alan Davies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lynch, B. K. (1997). In search of the ethical test. *Language Testing*, 14, 315-327.

Lynch, B. K. & Davidson, F. (1994). Criterion-referenced language test development: linking curricula, teachers, and tests. *TESOL Quarterly* 28, 4, 727-743.

Lynch, B. K. & Shaw, P. (2005). Portfolios, Power, and Ethics. *TESOL Quarterly*, *39*(2), 263-297.

McNamara, T. (2000). Language Testing. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Paulson, F. L., Paulson, P.R., & Myers, C.A. (1991). What makes a portfolio a portfolio? *Educational Leadership*, 48 (5), 60-63.

Purpura, J. (2004) Assessing Grammar. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Read, J. (2000). Assessing Vocabulary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Further Readings:

<u>I. General</u>

Alderson J.C. & Banerjee, J. (2001). Language testing and assessment (Part I +II). In: Language Teaching 34, 213-236 and 35, 79-113. 213 —

<u>II. Discourse perspectives on the assessment of oral proficiency interviews</u>

Lazaraton, A. (1992). The structural organisation of a language interview: a conversation analytic perspective. In: System 20, 3, 373-386.

Swain, M. (2001). Examining dialogue: Another approach to content specification and to validating inferences drawn from test scores. In: Language Testing 18, 3, 275-302.

Van Lier, L. (1989). Reeling, writhing, drawling, stretching, and fainting in oils: oral proficiency interviews as conversation. In: TESOL Quarterly 23, 489-508.

Young, R. & He, A. W. (eds.) (1998), Talking and testing. Discourse approaches to the assessment of oral proficiency. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins.

<u>III. Internet resources</u>
http://www.dundee.ac.uk/languagestudies/ltest/ltr.html
This site designed and maintained by Dr Glenn Fulcher, Author of *Testing Second Language Speaking*.

Date	Topic	Readings	Presentations / Assignments

I. Stages of test development

Week 1

Mo Jan 08 Introduction and course overview

We Jan 10 Tests: Why and what for?   Hughes, Chapter 1-3

Week 2

~~Mo Jan 15 Types of assessment   Brown & Hudson 1998~~   →Holiday!

Snowday We Jan 17 Types of tests   Hughes, Chapter 8   ⟨MLK⟩

Week 3

Mo Jan 22 Test development – Specifications   Hughes, Chapter 7

We Jan 24   Alderson et al. 1995, Chapter 2

Week 4

Mo Jan 29 Test development – Item Construction   Alderson et al. 1995, (Chapter 3); ~~Brown 2004 Chap. 3~~   → overview TOEFL

We Jan 31   ★ Lynch & Davidson 1994

History review
when developed
Development stages
– how it changed
www.TOEFL.com
(www.ets.org)

II. Test theory: properties of a good test

Week 5

Mo Feb 05 Validity and Reliability   Hughes, Chapter 4+5; Brown 2004, Chapter 2
                                            Bachman & Palmer, Chapter 2+7

We Feb 07 Testing and teaching: backwash   Hughes, Chapter 6; Hughes 1988, Bailey 1996
                                            Alderson & Wall 1993

III. Test construction: from theory to practice

Week 6

Mo Feb 12 Testing oral proficiency

We Feb 14

Hughes, Chap. 10; Cohen 1994, Chap. 8

Luoma 2004

1. Speaking group

Test items "speaking"

Week 7

Mo Feb 19 Testing writing

We Feb 21 Testing reading

Hughes, Chapter 9

Cohen 1994, Chap. 9

Hughes, Chap. 11

Cohen 1994, Chap. 7

Alderson 2001

2. Writing group:

Test items "writing"

3. Reading group:

Week 8

Mo Feb 26 Testing listening

We Feb 28 Testing grammar and vocabulary

Hughes, Chap. 12; Buck 2003

Hughes, Chap. 13

Purpura 2004

Read 2000

4. Listening group:

Test items "listening"

5. Grammar group:

6. Vocabulary group:

Week 9

Mo March 05 The European Framework of Reference

We March 07 DIALANG: A diagnostic test

7. Dialang group: **ONLINE**

www.dialang.org

javier-argentina73@hotmail.com

971-409-8661

Week 10

Mo March 12 Portfolios

We March 14 Ethics in language testing

Portfolio Due!

Paulson et al. 1991

Ceylan 2006

Lynch 1997, 2001; Hamp-Lyons 1996, 1997a, b

8. Portfolio group :

Items "portfolio"

Portfolio Due!