**ADVANCED RORSCHACH SEMINAR (DPSY 874) • SPRING 2011**
**WIDENER UNIVERSITY • INSTITUTE FOR GRADUATE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**PROFESSOR:** James Loving, Psy.D.  (jamesloving@verizon.net / 215-939-7393)

**CLASS HOURS:** Tuesdays, 8-9:40am  (Bruce Hall, Room 012)

**OBJECTIVES:** (all intended build on knowledge and skills previously learned in the prerequisite course DPSY513, Introduction to the Rorschach Comprehensive System [CS])

- To develop more advanced (i.e., more refined and up-to-date) understanding of Rorschach interpretation
- To integrate the most current developments in Rorschach assessment, including newer CS research, as well as development of the forthcoming Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS); at the same time, gaining an appreciation for some of the classic foundational theory underlying the test
- To develop more advanced knowledge and skills in terms of CS administration and coding, informed by the most recent empirical findings, as well as by interpersonal process and patient phenomenology
- To appropriately and skillfully apply the Rorschach to various clinical issues and populations; including recognizing potential misuses and limitations of the test; also including meaningful integration of the Rorschach with other clinical findings

**NCSPP TRAINING MODEL:**  
This course will emphasize the following core competencies:

- **ASSESSMENT:** Students will build advanced knowledge and skills in the use of the Rorschach, which is one of the most widely used and extensively-researched personality assessment tests.

- **CONSULTATION / EDUCATION:** Students will become better-positioned to offer assessment/consultation services, by appropriately applying the Rorschach to common referral questions. Students will also be well-equipped to educate patients, clients, and colleagues about the appropriate uses of the Rorschach.

- **INTERVENTION:** Students will be able to apply Rorschach findings to clinical situations, as an important step toward carrying out effective, efficient, individualized interventions.

- **DIVERSITY:** This course will strive to apply the Rorschach to a wide variety of clinical situations and patient populations, while incorporating the many individual and contextual factors that can influence test findings.

**COURSE CONTENT:**

Each class will be designed to provide lecture and/or class discussion of a particular Rorschach-related topic. At the start of the semester, I will solicit students’ input as to topics that most/least interest you. Based on your input, I will gladly replace one or more of the course’s existing topics with students’ suggested topics. Once these plans are finalized, I will provide an updated schedule and/or reading list. I will appreciate your input and also your flexibility, so that this course can be tailored to meet the interests of all our students as much as possible.

**COURSE GRADING:**

This is a two-credit elective course. Final grade will be pass/fail, and will be based on two components:

1. Completion of a class presentation, described below; and
2. Active contribution to class discussions each week, including to other students’ presentations.
REQUIRED READINGS:

This course has no required textbooks but does include the following required readings. All will be posted on the university’s E-Reserves website (password is DPSY874). See the attached course schedule for specific dates when these readings are to be read.


CLASS PRESENTATION:

Near the end of the semester (see schedule, below), you will be required to present a 20- to 25-minute presentation to the class, covering a Rorschach-related topic. This will include roughly 15 minutes for the presentation itself, followed by 5 to 10 minutes of class discussion, which you will facilitate.

Topic selection: You may present any topic of direct relevance to the Rorschach. On or before class #4 / Feb. 4, you will need to consult with me (in person before or after class, by email, or by telephone) to finalize your topic. I may reject or refine your proposed topic, for example, if it is not sufficiently relevant; too similar to a topic already covered by this course; or too similar to a classmate’s already-approved topic. I also encourage you to speak with me at any point, in order to shape your topic, to point you toward specific references in the literature, etc. As general suggestions, you might consider presenting one of the following:

• Application of the Rorschach to a specific clinical issue or population. Be sure to provide a clear, conceptually sound definition/operationalization of your issue/population. Describe how/why the Rorschach might play a useful role in assessing this issue/population. Discuss which variables (perhaps also test behaviors or other aspects of the Rorschach) you would expect to be relevant. Review and summarize the existing conceptual and/or empirical literature (e.g., best-validated variables). Discuss limitations of the existing literature, and suggest directions for future study.

• Conceptual and empirical review of a specific Rorschach variable (or small collection of closely-related variables). Explain the origins of the variable (e.g., when and by whom it originated; include any evolution in terms of how the variable has been defined/coded over time or across systems). Discuss the variable’s conceptual bases (again including any evolution in terms of conceptualization over time or across systems). Review the empirical literature, highlighting the variable’s best- and worst-validated uses. Offer recommendations for how the variable could be improved or refined (e.g., additional research needs; refinement of coding definitions; adjustment of existing interpretations).

• Presentation of a Rorschach case from your clinical practice (e.g., practicum). Give relevant background and referral questions. (This section should be fairly brief, so that most of your presentation can focus specifically on Rorschach interpretation.) Explain why the Rorschach was used and what specific role this test was intended to play in the test battery. Discuss any obstacles you encountered, such as administration challenges or validity concerns. Briefly summarize findings from other tests, as relevant. Review the key Rorschach findings for this case, always tying them to the case’s referral questions. Discuss recommendations that led from the Rorschach, and if possible, discuss any follow-up you were able to have, especially if future behaviors or events were directly relevant to the Rorschach findings.

Other guidelines:

• At our first class, all students will sign up for presentation dates.

• On or before class #8 / Mar. 8, a preliminary outline with reference list is due. The outline need not be highly detailed, but it should allow me to steer you toward any topic areas or resources that you may have overlooked. The reference list should include any key references that I could make available to students in advance of your presentation.

• At your presentation, a final outline with reference list is due. This is intended to help me evaluate your presentation. Format of the outline is flexible, and again, it need not be highly detailed.

• The format of the presentation itself is intended to be flexible. The presentation need not be overly formal, especially given our comfortably small class size. Powerpoint slides, handouts, and/or other aides are welcome but certainly not required. (But, if you present a case, I do strongly suggest offering overhead slides and/or handouts of the structural summary page, etc.)

• While presenting, you are welcome to follow an outline, but you may not read from a pre-written paper. I also urge you to avoid over-relying on Powerpoint slides (i.e., simply reading from them).
**CLASS SCHEDULE**
(subject to change)

1) **January 11:** Introduction to, and planning of, this course, including students’ interests and needs  
   **Read:** None

2) **January 18:** The CS after John Exner & introduction to the R-PAS. Implications for practice  
   **Read:** None

3) **January 25:** Advanced issues in CS interpretation (refined assessment of protocol validity, continuous vs. dichotomous interpretation of variables, impact of R, normative sample issues, etc.)  
   **Read:** Meyer (1992); Meyer, Erdberg, & Schafer (2007)

4) **February 1:** Administration & test-taking: Examinee phenomenology & interpersonal dynamics  
   **Read:** Schafer (1954); Schachtel (1966); Brickman & Lerner (1992); Lerner (1998); Masling (1998); Lerner (1991)

5) **February 8:** Structural variables as efforts to conceptualize & operationalize constructs  
   **Read:** Schachtel (1943); Overton (2000); Piotrowski (1960)

6) **February 15:** Public exposure to the Rorschach. Implications for practice  
   **Read:** None, but please search the Rorschach online & be prepared to discuss what you have found

7) **February 22:** Assessment of unusual response sets (malingering, defensiveness, etc.)  
   **Read:** Rogers (2008); Sewell (2008); Ganellen (2008)

**March 1:** NO CLASS / UNIVERSITY MID-SEMESTER BREAK

8) **March 8:** Assessment of antisocial personality & psychopathy  
   **Read:** Loving & Lee (2006); Gacono, Gacono, & Evans (2008)

9) **March 15:** SPA conference re-cap, including any student input  
   **Read:** None

10) **March 22:** Assessment of psychosis & thought disorder, including vs. creativity  
    **Read:** Kleiger & Peebles-Kleiger (1993); Wagner (1998)

11) **March 29:** Assessment of trauma  
    **Read:** Armstrong (2002); Kaser-Boyd & Evans (2008)

12) **April 5:** Student presentations (4)  
    **Read:** To be determined

13) **April 12:** Student presentations (4)  
    **Read:** To be determined

14) **April 19:** Student presentations (3)  
    **Read:** To be determined

15) **April 26:** Advanced interpretation issues, revisited, including multi-test integration  
    **Read:** Finn (1996); Meyer (1997)