LING6040 – Language Testing & Evaluation

Course Co-ordinator: Dr Jean Harkins
Room: MC122, McMullin Building
Phone: +61-2-4921-5179
Fax: +61-2-4921-6933
Email: Jean.Harkins@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Tue 2-4 or by appointment

Course Overview
Semester: Semester 1 - 2008
Unit Weighting: 10 credit points
Teaching Methods: Lecture
Contact Hours: Lecture for 2 hours per week for 13 weeks

Brief Course Description
The course focusses on current theories of Language Testing within contemporary Applied Linguistics, and will provide students with essential knowledge and practical skills in the area of language test design and administration, and evaluation of language proficiency.

Learning Materials/Texts
Hughes, A. 2003 Testing for Language Teachers (2nd ed.) Cambridge University Press

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate:
1. An understanding of central concepts and issues in language testing, such as basic types of language tests (and their specific features).
2. An understanding of central concepts and issues in evaluation of language proficiency.
3. An understanding of basic aspects of test construction and validation.
4. An ability to design and administer language tests.

Course Content
Topics to be covered include:
• Types of language testing techniques
• Principles of language test construction
• Principles of language test validation
• Methods for analysing and interpreting test results
• Assessment and evaluation of language proficiency
Assessment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>*Take-home assignment - 20%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Set of test specifications (c.750-1000 words) - 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Individual test construction project - 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Trial administration and critical analysis of test (c.1000-2000 words) - 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumed Knowledge

Foundations of Linguistics (LING6910) or equivalent

Callaghan Campus Timetable

LING6040

LANGUAGE TESTING & EVALUATION

Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science

Semester 1 – 2008

Lecture Tuesday 16:00 - 18:00 [MCG28C]

Plagiarism

University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one's own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs. Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000608.html

The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking); and/or
- submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking.

Written Assessment Items

Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised. Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks. Please go to the Policy at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- Requests for Special Consideration must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

Requests for Rescheduling Exams must be received in the Student Hub no later than ten working days prior the first date of the examination period.

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. Students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer in the first instance.

Changing your Enrolment
The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) are:
For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2008
Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.
Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs.
To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to myHub - Self Service for Students
https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

Faculty Information
The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students on campus. The four Student Hubs are located at:

Callaghan campus
• Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
• Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

City Precinct
• City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

Ourimbah campus
• Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

Faculty website
Faculty of Education and Arts
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/

Contact details
Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie
Phone: 02 4921 5000
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students
Resolution Precinct
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)
Phone: 02 4348 4123
Fax: 02 4348 4145
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Alteration of this Course Outline
No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards
STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness. If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester. For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Online Tutorial Registration:
Students are not required to enrol in the Lecture time for this course via the Online Registration system.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/
This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Important Additional Information
Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students

Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Late assignments are subject to the penalties described below.

- Keep a copy of all assignments: It is the student's responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Students are advised to keep updated back-ups in electronic and hard copy formats.

Online copy submission to Turnitin
In addition to hard copy submission, students are required to submit an electronic version of the following assignments to Turnitin via the course Blackboard website available @ www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Take-home assignment - 20%, due 8 April 2008
- Individual test construction project – 30%, due 13 May 2008
- Trial administration and critical analysis of test - 30%, due 10 June 2008

Prior to final submission, all students have the opportunity to submit one draft of their assignment to Turnitin to self-check their referencing. Assignments will not be marked until both hard copy and online versions have been submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission of either version.
Penalties for Late Assignments
Assignments submitted after the due date, without an approved extension of time will be penalised by the reduction of 5% of the possible maximum mark for the assessment item for each day or part day that the item is late. Weekends count as one day in determining the penalty. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the due date will be awarded zero marks.


Special Circumstances
Students wishing to apply for Special Circumstances or Extension of Time should apply online. Refer - ‘Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items - Procedure 000641’ available @ [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html)

No Assignment Re-submission
Students who have failed an assignment are not permitted to revise and resubmit it in this course. However, students are always welcome to contact their Tutor, Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

Re-marks & Moderations
A student may only request a re-mark of an assessment item before the final result - in the course to which the assessment item contributes - has been posted. If a final result in the course has been posted, the student must apply under ‘Procedures for Appeal Against a Final Result’ (Refer - [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/)).

Students concerned at the mark given for an assessment item should first discuss the matter with the Course Coordinator. If subsequently requesting a re-mark, students should be aware that as a result of a re-mark the original mark may be increased or reduced. The case for a re-mark should be outlined in writing and submitted to the Course Coordinator, who determines whether a re-mark should be granted, taking into consideration all of the following:
1. whether the student had discussed the matter with the Course Coordinator
2. the case put forward by the student for a re-mark
3. the weighting of the assessment item and its potential impact on the student’s final mark or grade
4. the time required to undertake the re-mark
5. the number of original markers, that is,
   a) whether there was a single marker, or
   b) if there was more than one marker whether there was agreement or disagreement on the marks awarded.

A re-mark may also be initiated at the request of the Course Coordinator, the Head of School, the School Assessment Committee, the Faculty Progress and Appeals Committee or the Pro Vice-Chancellor. Re-marks may be undertaken by:
1. the original marker; or
2. an alternate internal marker; or
3. an alternate external marker (usually as a consequence of a grievance procedure).

Moderation may be applied when there is a major discrepancy (or perceived discrepancy) between:
1. the content of the course as against the content or nature of the assessment item(s)
2. the content or nature of the assessment item(s) as against those set out in the Course Outline
3. the marks given by a particular examiner and those given by another in the same course
4. the results in a particular course and the results in other courses undertaken by the same students.

For further detail on this University policy refer - ‘Re-marks and Moderations - Procedure 000769’ available @ [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html)

Return of Assignments
Arrangements for the return of marked assignments will be announced by the Course Coordinator in lectures and via the course Blackboard site. Students should not contact the Student Hub to collect assignments until notified by the Course Coordinator of collection arrangements. Students must present their student identification card if collecting their assignment from the Student Hub.

Preferred Referencing Style
In this course, it is recommended that you use the Harvard in-text referencing system (similar to the APA system) for referencing sources of information used in assignments. Inadequate or incorrect reference to the work of others may be viewed as plagiarism and result in reduced marks or failure.

An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication, and for a direct quote includes a page number, in parentheses. At the end of the paper, a list of references provides publication information about the source; the list is alphabetised by authors' last names (or by titles for works without authors). For further information on referencing and general study skills refer - ‘Infoskills’ available @ www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/tutorials/infoskills/index.html

Student Representatives
Student Representatives are a major channel of communication between students and the School. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on School websites. Refer - ‘Information for Student Representatives on Committees’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/committees/student_reps/index.html

Student Communication
Students should discuss any course related matters with their Tutor, Lecturer, or Course Coordinator in the first instance and then the relevant Discipline or Program Convenor. If this proves unsatisfactory, they should then contact the Head of School if required. Contact details can be found on the School website.

Essential Online Information for Students
Information on Class and Exam Timetables, Tutorial Online Registration, Learning Support, Campus Maps, Careers information, Counselling, the Health Service and a range of free Student Support Services is available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/currentstudents/index.html

Assessment Details

1. **Take-home assignment** (20%), due Tuesday, 8 April 2008
   In this assignment you will reflect on your own experiences with testing, in the light of what you are learning about concepts and issues in language testing (detailed guidelines will be given on Blackboard).

2. **Test specifications** (20%), due Tuesday, 29 April 2008
   Write a set of Test Specifications for a comprehensive ESL proficiency OR achievement test, including:
   (1) Test specifications; (2) Instructions to candidates; (3) Criterial levels of performance. For the purpose of this assignment, you should consult Chapter 7 of the course textbook (Hughes 2003).

3. **Test construction** (30%), due Tuesday, 13 May 2008
   Write a set of between 20 and 30 test items for each of the following principal language skills: listening, reading, writing, speaking, grammar/vocabulary. For the purposes of this assignment, you should consult the respective chapters of the course textbook (Hughes 2003).

4. **Test administration and analysis** (30%), due Tuesday, 10 June 2008
   Integrate your test items from Assignment 3 into a comprehensive ESL test, after revision on the basis of feedback in class. Do a trial test administration and collect the test data, using at least one non-native speaker and one native speaker of English. Analyse the results, in about 1000-2000 words (detailed guidelines for analysis will be given on the course Blackboard site).

Additional Details
While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this information prior to printing, please note that important information regarding assessment, including possible changes and updates, will be announced by the Course Coordinator during the semester, in lectures and via the course Blackboard site.

The table on the following page summarises the marking criteria applied within the School of Humanities and Social Science.
Grading guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mark Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fail (FF)</td>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass (P)</td>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit (C)</td>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schedule of Lectures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date (Tue)</th>
<th>Lecture Topic &amp; Assessment at a Glance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19 Feb</td>
<td>Overview and terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26 Feb</td>
<td>Types and purposes of tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 Mar</td>
<td>Aspects of measurement in language testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11 Mar</td>
<td>Stages of test development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>18 Mar</td>
<td>Testing of specific skills: reading, listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25 Mar</td>
<td>No lecture (Easter holiday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 Apr</td>
<td>Testing of specific skills: writing, speaking, grammar/vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8 Apr</td>
<td>Reliability; subjective and objective scoring; Assignment 1 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mid-Semester Recess: Monday 14 April – Friday 25 April</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29 April</td>
<td>Validity in language testing; Assignment 2 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6 May</td>
<td>Testing methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>13 May</td>
<td>Analysing test data; Assignment 3 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>20 May</td>
<td>Testing overall ability; communicative language testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>27 May</td>
<td>Language proficiency tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3 Jun</td>
<td>No lecture; work on Assignment 4, due 10 June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination period: Tuesday 10 June – Friday 27 June (no final exam for this course)