

**University of Guelph**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONS AND APPLIED NUTRITION**

**FRHD\*3180: Observation and Assessment Lab**  
**COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2015**

**Instructor:** Leon Kuczynski  
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Office hours by appointment  
Section

**T.A's.:** Caitlyn Osborne  
Section 1  
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**Lecture:** MCKN 029 Monday & Wednesday 3:30 – 4:20pm

**Seminar (lab):**

Sec 01	MCKN 304	Mon	4:30 – 5:20pm
Sec 02	ROZH 107	Wed	4:30 – 5:20pm
Sec 03	ROZH 109	Wed	4:30 – 5:20pm

### CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Direct observation as a strategy for collecting information on children's behaviour in applied and research settings is the focus of this course. Emphasis will be placed on theory, recording and interpreting observational data and communicating findings in written reports.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Boehm, A.E., & Weinberg, R.A. (1997). *The classroom observer* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

### COURSE WEBSITE

There is a course website at <http://courselink.uoguelph.ca>. In an attempt to be more environmentally friendly, all components of this course will be housed on the Courselink site including this course outline, assignments, additional readings for the labs, learning activities and links to further resources. Your assignments will be submitted through the dropbox function. Marks and feedback will also be released on the site.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This Laboratory course has a strong emphasis on "learning by doing." Upon successful completion of the course you will be able to:

1. Explain the types and uses of observational assessments,

2. Collect and interpret data from systematic observation and coding systems with respect to empirical research on and theories of normal development,
3. Assess the reliability of coding systems,
4. Demonstrate an understanding of observational assessment through the construction and application of an observational coding system, and
5. Demonstrate direct observation, scientific writing and group work skills.

## **COURSE AIMS**

FRHD\*3180 is the first of a two course sequence on the measurement of children's behaviour, development, and performance. The first course is a required course in the Child, Youth & Family Program and emphasizes skills of direct observation, assessment of normally developing children, and observation-based screening instruments. The second course of the sequence, FRHD\*4180 Assessment and Intervention, focuses on traditional, standardized assessment, and atypical development.

Direct observation is an important strategy for collecting information in the natural and social sciences, the latter including child and youth development and early childhood education. Observational methodologies have long been a cornerstone of basic research in child development. The work of Jean Piaget is one familiar example. Observation-based assessment is a critical skill in applied professions involving individual assessment, environmental assessment, program planning and evaluation. It is also the foundation of traditional, standardized assessment. Students who intend to work with children whether in schools, clinics, or treatment centres will all be expected to conduct systematic observations as part of their job requirements.

A theoretical background for planning, conducting, and evaluating observational assessments will be provided during lectures and as a part of course readings. The course emphasizes the study and assessment of social behaviour and social competencies of normal preschool age children using a variety of methods based on observation of spontaneous behaviour in naturalistic settings. The final portion of the course deals with observation-based standardised instruments including developmental screening and assessment of home and school environments and screening for conduct disorder in elementary school.

The skills in this course are of importance to students in both research and applied streams in the program and can be used to advantage in the employment market. Students who anticipate entering **applied professions** will wish to emphasize their observational skills as they apply to the assessment of young children's development. Namely:

- Experience with a variety of observational assessment techniques,
- Exposure to several developmental screening instruments, and
- Task analysis of children's behaviour and the development of assessment instruments.

Students who anticipate applying to **graduate school** will wish to emphasize their research experience. Namely:

- Mastery of specific methodologies and theoretical concepts,

- Field experience and laboratory work, and
- Experience with developing an observational coding system, conducting analysis, and report writing.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE:**

This is a laboratory course involving a combination of lecture, seminar discussion, and hands on observation and assessment labs. An opportunity to develop observational and reporting skills will be provided using in-class videotape demonstrations and observation labs at the CCLC. A major component of the course is a semester-length project (LAB 3) in which students develop and implement an observational system of their own and submit a written report evaluating the reliability and validity of their coding systems.

#### ***Lectures & seminars:***

The course is comprised of two lectures and one seminar class per week. Lecture periods will be used for a variety of purposes including lectures, practicing observational techniques using videotapes, explanation of lab exercises, feedback on reports, and discussion of readings. During seminars, further instructions on lab exercise will be given and students will participate in group peer sessions.

#### ***Lab assignments:***

Students will participate in three laboratory exercises requiring observations of preschool children. Labs 1 and 2 will be based on videotaped interaction presented in class, and Lab 3 will take place in the CCLC. These lab projects will be submitted for evaluation in the form of written reports. In class we will cover the necessary background information and practise the techniques to be used. You will be provided with a set of instructions outlining the details of the assignment.

For Lab 3, students will be gathering and analyzing data using an observational coding scheme of their own design; this is a group project consisting of teams of 2-3 persons with observations conducted in the CCLC. Students will have the option of observing either toddlers (18-30 months) or preschooler (30 months to 5 years).

### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**

Academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, is a serious offence at the University of Guelph. I will not tolerate academic misconduct and will follow the disciplinary guidelines set forth by the university should any violations occur. Please consult the Undergraduate Calendar at: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml> for offences, penalties, and procedures relating to academic misconduct.

### **ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION:**

For further information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration, please refer to the Undergraduate Calendar at: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

## COURSE EVALUATION:

### Lab 1 (10%):

#### ***Operational Definitions***

- Due Wednesday October 7, 2015 by 3:30pm
- Online submission of assignment via Courselink dropbox.

### Lab 2 (15%):

#### ***Play Scale Observation Brief Lab Report***

- Due Wednesday Nov 4, 2015 by 3:30pm
- Online submission of assignment via Courselink dropbox.
- Original observation checklists (rough work) to be handed in during lecture.

### Lab 3 (30%):

#### ***Observational System Group Project***

- Due Friday Dec 4 by 3:30PM
- Online submission of team report via Courselink dropbox.
- Original observation checklists & kappa calculations (rough work) to be handed in to Instructor
  - **LAB 3 Self and Peer evaluations** due 3:30—4:20 Friday Dec 4, 2015.
  - Your individual contribution to your group is assessed by the peer evaluations which may modify your individual grade for Lab 3. Computation of this grade includes peer assessment by lab team members— each team member **must** complete the peer evaluation form available on course website. **Hand in, all peer evaluations for your group stapled together and folded for anonymity self and peer evaluations.**
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### Quizzes (30%):

#### ***In-Class Quizzes – 2 x 15% each***

- Quiz #1 – Wednesday October 21, 2015
  - Textbook – Units I, II, III, IV, V, VIII
  - Lectures – Weeks 1 to 5
- Quiz #2 – Wednesday Dec 2, 2015
  - Textbook – Units VI, VII, IX, X
  - Lectures – Weeks 7 to 12
- Details:
  - 25 Multiple choice questions
  - 30 minutes allotted
  - Observational principles, lectures, and text

### Seminar Contributions (15%): three components:

- Conceptual Coding System group presentation(5%)
- Coding System group presentation (5%)
- Peer audience participation (5%) You will be evaluated on your active contributions to the other groups in your seminar. Your

contributions include feedback and discussions during seminar peer sessions.

**FRHD\*3180 F12 COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Week	Topic	Readings & Notes
1 Sept 14/16	<p><b>Introduction to Observation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing vs. observing</li> <li>• Traditional assessment vs. direct observation</li> <li>• <i>Video exercise: Assessing development by direct observation</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No seminars this week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit I</li> </ul>
2 Sept 21/23	<p><b>The Problem of Perspective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positivistic &amp; interpretive perspectives on objectivity</li> <li>• Bias &amp; inference</li> <li>• <i>Video exercise: Inference</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS: Sec 1,2,3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the labs</li> <li>• Setting up Lab 3 groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit II &amp; IV</li> </ul>
3 Sept 28/30	<p><b>Levels of Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mon: <i>Exercise 1 – Continuous narrative recording</i></li> <li>• Units of analysis &amp; observation units</li> <li>• Operational definitions for observation categories</li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS: Sec 1,2,3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing operational definitions (Lab 1 explained)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit III</li> <li>• Exercise 1: Sept 24</li> </ul>
4 Oct 5, 7	<p><b>Sampling Behaviour:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mon: <i>Exercise 2 – Event recording using operational definitions</i></li> <li>• Wed Continuous, event &amp; time sampling</li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play Observation Scale (Lab 2 explained)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit V</li> <li>• <b>Lab 1 Due: Oct 7</b></li> </ul>
5 Oct 12/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mon: <b>No class Holiday</b></li> <li>• Wed: <i>Video observations for Lab 2</i></li> </ul> <p>• <b>SEMINARS:</b> No seminars this week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit VIII</li> </ul>
6 Oct 19/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mon: <b>Time Sampling</b></li> <li>• Wed: <b>Quiz # 1</b> (1<sup>st</sup> 30 minutes); Lab 2 &amp; Presentations explained</li> </ul> <p>• <b>SEMINARS:</b> The art of report writing &amp; Lab 3 questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quiz #1: Oct 21</b></li> <li>• <b>Return Lab 1</b></li> <li>• CCLC observations</li> </ul>

Week	Topic	Readings & Notes
7 Oct 26/28	<p><b>Developing Coding Systems:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steps of development</li> <li>Introduction to category development</li> <li><i>Video exercise: Coding development</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS: Sec 1,2,3.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lab 3 peer sessions – Part 1 Conceptual Coding System Presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B&amp;W Unit VI</li> <li>CCLC observations</li> </ul>
8 Nov 2/4	<p><b>Reliability:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliability, unreliability &amp; error</li> <li>Calculating kappa (for Lab 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS: Sec 1,2,3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lab 3 peer session – Part 1 Conceptual Coding System presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B&amp;W Unit VII</li> <li><b>Lab 2 Due: Nov 4</b></li> <li>CCLC observations</li> </ul>
9 Nov 9/11	<p><b>Environmental Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mon Ecological perspective measuring children’s environments HOME Observation for Measurement of the Environment Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale <i>ECERS-r</i></li> <li>Wed: <i>Video exercise: Using the ECERS-r</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS: Sec 1,2,3.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lab 3 peer session - Part 2 Complete Coding System Presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B&amp;W Unit IX</li> <li>CCLC observations</li> </ul>
10 Nov 16/18	<p><b>Developmental Screening:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screening vs. diagnostic assessment</li> <li>Stages of assessment</li> <li>ASQ 3 Ages and Stages Questionnaire</li> <li><i>Video exercise</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS: Sec, 1,2,3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lab 3 peer session - Part 2 Complete Coding System Presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B&amp;W Unit X</li> <li><b>Return Lab 2</b></li> <li>CCLC observations</li> </ul>
11 Nov 23/25	<p><b>Screening for Behavioural Disorders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Externalizing &amp; internalizing problems</li> <li>Outcomes of screening</li> <li>Systematic Screening for Behaviour Disorders</li> <li><i>Video exercise: Using the SSBD</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS: Sec 1,2,3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lab 3 peer session - Part 2 Complete Coding System Presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CCLC observations</li> </ul>
12 Nov 30 Dec 2,4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mon: Methods for Indirect Observation</li> <li>Wed: <b>Quiz #2 (30 minutes), Lab 3 consultations</b></li> <li>FRI (time period rescheduled from Oct 12): <b>Hand in Lab 3 MINS 233 during class time 3:30-4:20. Also hand in, stapled together, participation self evaluation and self and peer assessment)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructor &amp; TA will be available for LAB 3 consultations during seminar times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Quiz #2: Dec 2</b></li> <li><b>Lab 3 due: Dec 4</b></li> <li><b>Lab 3 self &amp; peer assessment Dec 4</b></li> </ul>

**Note:**

This is a tentative schedule. The schedule for the topics may change based on the pace we cover the material. All attempts will be made to follow this schedule; however, due to various unknown factors there may be changes. Any changes will be announced during lecture periods and an announcement will be posted on the Courselink site.

**Late assignments:**

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week following the due date and will receive a penalty of 10% per day EXCEPT under documented grounds for compassionate consideration. Assignments submitted more than one week late without documented grounds will receive a grade of zero. If you know you are going to be handing an assignment in late, you must contact your instructor and teaching assistant to inform them when you will be submitting your assignment.

**Grades:**

After you receive a grade on Courselink, please review your feedback. Any inquiry or dispute over the grade must be made within two weeks from the date they are posted. If you fail to protest any grade during this time limit, changes to the grade will not be considered. Grades will be based on the Grading Procedures outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar at:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-grds-proc.shtml>

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- As per university regulations, all students are required to check their University of Guelph email account on a regular basis.
- The course instructor and teaching assistant are available for inquiries outside of scheduled classes via email on weekdays only. We will respond to your email within 48 hours between Mondays and Fridays.
- Please do not leave your inquiries until the day before your assignments are due as you may not get a response in time.
- I appreciate you using an appropriate subject line and greeting in your email. For example, "Subject: FRHD\*3180 Lab 1 question. You may address me as Professor Kuczynski; however messages without a subject line or unprofessional greetings like 'hey' and may not be answered.

**YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- I expect you to be an active learner in this class. You are responsible for reading and understanding the course outline. Questions about information available on the course outline will not be answered by either the instructor or the TA.
- Use the discussion boards on the Courselink site to ask questions that your fellow students may be able to answer.
- Prepare yourself for each class by doing all the required readings.
- Come to class on time and stay until the end of the class period.
- Check the Courselink site regularly for important announcements and to obtain class materials.
- Be a responsive and responsible team member to your group. The group assignment runs over the course of the semester and you will need to work well together in order to be successful. Respond to emails, attend group meetings, contribute to the discussion, follow through and get your part of the work done, and be flexible!
- Within two weeks of grade postings, check Courselink and email the instructor or TA to question any grades, clarify any feedback, and/or correct any potential errors (otherwise the posted grade will stand).
- Use Courselink to communicate with other students and the instructor. Please use email for confidential inquiries.



- Complete course requirements with integrity.

**MY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Clearly communicate course content, expectations and requirements.
- Be prepared for every class.
- Be available to communicate with students about course content, individual lab assignments, and the group lab assignment.
- Respond to emails within 48 hours between Monday and Friday.