

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

**FRHD\*3180: Observation and Assessment**  
**COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2016**

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<b>Office hours:</b>	By appointment	<b>Office hours:</b>	By appointment
<b>Lecture:</b>	Monday & Wednesday 3:30 – 4:20pm – THRN 1307		
<b>Seminar (lab):</b>	Sec 01            CRSC 403	Monday 4:30 – 5:20pm	
	Sec 02            MCKN 307	Wednesday 4:30 – 5:20pm	
	Sec 03            MCKN 226	Wednesday 4:30 – 5:20 pm	
<b>Observations:</b>	Child Care and Learning Centre (CCLC) – TBD		

#### **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, lesson plans, and links to further resources. Your assignments will be submitted through the Dropbox function. Marks and feedback will also be released on the site. Please familiarize yourself with this website as soon as possible and visit it regularly throughout the semester.

#### **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**

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 research. 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 such as developmental screening and assessment of home and school environments.

The skills in this course are of importance to students in both research and applied streams in the program and can be used as an 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 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 several laboratory exercises requiring observations of preschool children. One will be based on videotaped interaction presented in class, and the others 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 4-5 persons with observations conducted in the CCLC.

***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>

**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 5, 2016 by 3:30pm
- Online submission of assignment via Courselink dropbox.

### Lab 2 (15%):

#### ***Play Scale Observation Results Section***

- Due Wednesday November 2, 2016 by 3:30pm
- Online submission of assignment via Courselink dropbox.
- Original observation checklists (rough work) to be handed in during lecture.

### Quizzes (30%):

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

- Quiz #1 – Monday October 17, 2016
  - Textbook – Units I, II, III, IV, V, VIII
  - Lectures – Weeks 1 to 5
- Quiz #2 – Wednesday November 30, 2016
  - Textbook – Units VI, VII, IX, X
  - Lectures – Weeks 7 to 12
- Details:
  - 25 Multiple choice questions
  - 30 minutes allotted (3:30 to 4:00pm)
  - Observational principles, lectures, and text

### Lab 3 (30%):

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

- Due Friday, December 2 by 4:30pm
- Online submission of team report via Courselink dropbox.
- Original observation checklists & kappa calculations (rough work) to be handed in to Instructor/TA by 4:30pm.

**Note:** Computation of this grade includes peer assessment by lab team – each team member **must** complete the peer evaluation form available on course website.

### Peer Sessions (10%):

You will be evaluated on your group's Conceptual Coding System & Coding System sessions.

### Participation (5%):

This component of your grade is separate from your contribution to your own lab 3 group. Your grade for this component will incorporate your contributions to the peer sessions groups (i.e. asking/responding to questions posed in seminar) and will be evaluated by your teaching assistant.

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

- As per university regulations, all students are required to check their University of Guelph email account on a regular basis. All email communication will occur through this account.
- 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.
- 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. Feel free to address me by my first name; however messages without a subject line or greeting, or greetings like 'hey' or 'hey you' are unprofessional and may not be answered. For example, "Subject: FRHD\*3180 Lab 1 question, Hi Victoria" would be appreciated.

## **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.
- Engage you and make you feel like you are actively learning; I want this to be an enjoyable experience for all of us!
- 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.

**FRHD\*3180 F16 COURSE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings &amp; Notes</b>
<b>1</b> Sept 12/14	<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>
<b>2</b> Sept 19/21	<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:</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>
<b>3</b> Sept 26/28	<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:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing operational definitions Workshop (Lab 1 Tutorial)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit III</li> <li>• Exercise 1: Sept 26</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> Oct 3/5	<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>• Continuous, event &amp; time sampling</li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play Observation Scale Workshop (Lab 2 Tutorial)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit V</li> <li>• Exercise 2: Oct 3</li> <li>• <b>Lab 1 Due: Oct 5</b></li> </ul>
<b>5</b> Oct 10/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mon: <b>No class – Thanksgiving holiday</b></li> <li>• Wed: Time Sampling</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 VIII</li> </ul>
<b>6</b> Oct 17/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mon: <b>Quiz # 1</b> (1<sup>st</sup> 30 minutes); Lab 3 explained</li> <li>• Wed: <i>Video observations for Lab 2</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab 3 initial peer sessions - Conceptual Coding System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quiz #1: Oct 17</b></li> <li>• <b>Return Lab 1</b></li> <li>• CCLC observations</li> </ul>
<b>7</b> Oct 24/26	<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:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab 3 initial peer sessions - Conceptual Coding System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit VI</li> <li>• CCLC observations</li> </ul>
<b>8</b> Oct 31 Nov 2	<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:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Report Writing Workshop (Lab 3 Tutorial)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit VII</li> <li>• <b>Lab 2 Due: Nov 2</b></li> <li>• CCLC observations</li> </ul>

Week	Topic	Readings & Notes
9 Nov 7/9	<p><b>Environmental Assessment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological perspective &amp; measuring children’s environments</li> <li>• HOME Observation for Measurement of the Environment</li> <li>• Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale</li> <li>• <i>Video exercise: Using the ECERS-r</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab 3 second peer sessions - Coding Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;W Unit IX</li> <li>• CCLC observations</li> </ul>
10 Nov 14/16	<p><b>Developmental Screening:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening vs. diagnostic assessment</li> <li>• Stages of assessment</li> <li>• Denver Developmental Screening Test</li> <li>• <i>Video exercise: Using the Denver</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab 3 second peer sessions - Coding Systems</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 21/23	<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:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab 3 second peer sessions - Coding Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCLC observations</li> </ul>
12 Nov 28/30 Dec 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mon: Methods for Indirect Observation</li> <li>• Wed: <b>Quiz #2</b> (1<sup>st</sup> 30 minutes); Lab 3 question &amp; answer session</li> <li>• Friday (class rescheduled from Oct 10): Hand in Lab 3, no lecture</li> </ul> <p><b>SEMINARS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No seminars this week; however, Instructor &amp; TA will be available in their offices for drop in help during seminar times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quiz #2: Nov 30</b></li> <li>• <b>Lab 3 due: Dec 2</b></li> <li>• <b>Lab 3 self &amp; peer assessment (online): Dec 2</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.