

OVERVIEW FOR GENERAL COMPS (2020, UPDATED)

NOTE, COVID-19 PROTOCOL:

TIMING: You will receive questions via Canvas on Monday morning at 9am EST of the scheduled exam week, and answers are due on Friday by 12pm noon EST. Once started, each question will be open for 3 hours (or a longer time per any Office of Disabilities Services accommodations), then a response must be submitted via Canvas. These can be taken any time during the week.

MATERIALS: Now all testing will be "open book," including books notes, internet, etc., just not peers. We will ask for an attestation to not communicate with peers about the content of the exam during the exam week. A reminder that all sources must be appropriately cited.

NOTE: Generally, as you will see below, the structure and procedures of the 2020 General Comps exam will very closely parallel those of recent exams, with the exception that Question 3 ("Community Psychology") in the exam was is changed for the clinical students in the 2016 exam to the "Systems Theory & Analysis" course, and continues with this latter course.

To: Students Taking General Comps

Subject: Procedures for General Comps

2020 Dates

General Comps: Sent out Monday, July 13th and due Friday , July 17th

I. GENERAL COMPS, QUESTIONS 1-4

Students will have three hours for each of the four questions. A question may be answered only during the period in which it is started.

Summary:

Question 1 -- Research

Question 2 -- Foundations (CB & Psychoanalytic)

Question 3 -- Systems Theory & Analysis

Question 4 -- Legal and Ethical Issues

1. Communication About the Comps:

Communications about General Comps will take place via emails that go through the General Comps Sakai web site, which Julie Skorny has set up. If you have questions about your membership on the site, check with Julie. All the responses to emailed questions will be sent to the Sakai list, so everyone will have access to these responses and they will be available in the

Email Archive on the Sakai site. This Overview document will be placed on the Sakai web site in the Resources section and on the GSAPP Website under Current Students.

2. Faculty Coordinators: Jamie Walkup, Susan Forman, Kristen Riley, Ryan Kettler

The general exam will be coordinated by the committee above, with the help of the other faculty. The Program Directors will review and approve the questions.

3. Questions and Courses:

Question 1 is linked to two courses: "**Statistical Methods and Design Analysis**" and "**Advanced Statistics and Research Design.**"

Question 2 is linked to two of the "**Theoretical Foundations of Intervention**" courses—
Psychoanalytic and Cognitive-Behavioral.

Question 3 is linked to the **Systems Theory & Analysis** course.

Question 4 is linked to the **Professional Ethics, Standards, and Career Development** course.

4. Number of Question Options Per Area: There will only be one question option in each of the four areas.

5. Past Exams: Questions from past exams and answers to past exam questions will not be available.

6. Citations in answers: What is expected is that you provide a few relevant and key references in the text at appropriate points to link your answer to the scholarly and scientific literature. For example, in the Professional Ethics question, you might cite "(Fisher, 2017)" on one of her important explanations and interpretations of a key ethical principle. Any text directly quoted from any source should be noted as such. No references list is required.

7. Integrity Statement: Students must paste an "integrity statement" at the end of Question 4. Copies of the appropriate integrity statement will be distributed with Question 4, the last question of the exam. The integrity statement will say:

Concerning Questions 1-4 of the General Comprehensive Exam, I have neither given information to nor received information from others concerning these questions, nor discussed these questions with anyone.

I understand that the above sentence is clarified by the following: Before I saw Questions 1-4, I was able to consult any written source relating to the topic and discuss it with any others. However, once I picked up (or saw) the actual questions, I was not able to talk to anyone else about them.

Also, I understand that I am not to share the questions (including the article) with students who will take the Exam in the future, and I promise not to do so.

8. Page Limits: The page limits for each question, which will be specified on the question, are as follows: "**Limit your answer to no more than six pages (10-point) double-spaced.**"

9. Time Keeping. Please keep track of time during comps; you will be allowed three hours per question.

10. Faculty Presence: Julie will be available by phone or email during business hours the week of the exam. Should you have technical difficulties outside of business hours, please email Julie or members of the comprehensive exam committee and reasonable accommodations will be considered.

11. Grading:

1. Faculty graders will be assigned by the Comps Committee. Criteria for assignment to faculty will be expertise as well as overall workload. To insure proper grading, be certain to provide the information requested for each answer so that it can be properly used in assigning graders to your exam.

2. The full details of grading procedures are provided in the Student Handbook. Briefly:

- If an answer is graded 1, 2, or 2.5 by the first reader, it is satisfactory.
- If an answer is graded 3 or 4 by the first reader, it is read by a second reader. If the second reader confirms the first and grades a 3 or 4, the answer is unsatisfactory. If the second reader grades a 1, 2, or 2.5, it is read by a third reader. The third reader's grade determines whether the answer is satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- a) All four questions graded satisfactory: pass the exam without remediation.
- b) One question only graded satisfactory, written retake of entire exam at a regularly scheduled comps testing date in the future.
- c) Two (or three) questions graded satisfactory, two (or one) responses graded unsatisfactory:
 - i) For each unsatisfactory question that is graded 3&3 or 3&4 by the two readers, the question has to be remediated with an individual faculty member.
 - ii) For each unsatisfactory question that is graded 4&4 by the two readers, the question requires a written re-take at a regularly scheduled comps testing date in the future.

3. The faculty will aim to complete the grading by mid October. All students will be notified of their individual results by letter at the same time.

4. Faculty graders have a space for comments in addition to assigning number grades to each answer. These comments, together with the original answers, will be available for review by the student after all the grading is completed. The graders sign their answers.

5. The student answers do not have names on them. Thus the faculty grading is done without knowledge of who the student is.

12. More About the Questions

1. Research Critique. Question #1 will follow the same format as the parallel question in recent exams. Specifically, this question will present you with a research article and ask you

questions about it, as listed below. The format reflects the perspective taught by Nancy Fagley in her statistics courses. Nancy also shares this perspective with the other instructors of these courses. There will be a different article for each of the two programs.

Here is the format of the question

1. Introduction, purpose, and rationale: Is a convincing theoretical/empirical rationale for the study provided? Is the purpose clearly and consistently stated, etc.? Is the introduction logical, consistent, clear and adequate, and does it lead succinctly to the expressed purpose and rationale? Is the literature coverage appropriate and put to good use?
 2. Method, design, measurement, and procedures: What are the independent and dependent variables? Consider the technical adequacy and appropriateness of assessment procedures, measurement instruments, etc. Does the methodology (design, sample size, sampling procedures, etc.) avoid confounds, adequately control for rival hypotheses and threats to valid inference? What did the researcher(s) do to avoid, minimize, or control for bias in the research?
 3. Data analysis, results, conclusions, and implications: Are data analyzed appropriately? Are the results reported appropriately? Do the stated conclusions follow from the data, and are they appropriately expressed? Are limiting factors carefully considered? What else could have caused the findings? What other explanations are there for the findings?
 4. Overall contribution: Did the study answer the original question? Are the results basically sound? Can the findings be believed or is the study seriously compromised? If compromised, what might be some alternative explanations for the findings? If basically sound, what is the major finding?
2. CB & Psychoanalytic Foundations. Question #2 will deal with integrative aspects of the two Foundations courses, Cognitive-Behavioral and Psychoanalytic, which every student is required to take. The question will be organized around a case study that can be viewed from the perspective of each of the two courses.

In answering the Foundations question, students also have the opportunity to employ advanced course work in each of the two areas as they might choose; they are not restricted to what is contained in the Foundations courses. On the other hand, the use of advanced work is not required. Since the question spans two courses, it will require reflective and integrative thinking. Again, the question will give the students a case study to analyze, and they will need to analyze it in terms of cognitive-behavioral theory and psychoanalytic theory. Then students will be required to contrast the theories on a few dimensions.

3. Systems Theory & Analysis. This question will be drawn directly from the Systems Theory & Analysis course. Students will be asked to apply the principles of systems theory in designing an intervention to deal with a systems problem.
4. Legal and Ethical Issues. This question will be drawn from the Professional Ethics, Standards, and Career Development course.

*** Clinical and School Students are strongly encouraged to refer to APA's (2010) *Ethical*

Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, and (at least a summary of) the *New Jersey Psychology Licensing Law*.

*** School Students are also encouraged to refer to materials associated with *IDEIA*, *ADA*, and/or the *NJ Administrative Code*.

*** More specifically, this question will address: (a) the nature of the legal and ethical issues with which professional psychologists grapple, (b) the strategies and procedures professional psychologists bring to dealing with these issues, and (c) the larger social, political, cultural, and economic context in which these issues exist and develop. You will be asked to answer this question from the perspective of professional psychology of your particular program: clinical psychology or school psychology.

13. Comp Boxes: “Comp Boxes” consist of material that past students have put together to study for the General Comps. Some faculty believe that using comp boxes is not necessary and may even be distracting. In studying, faculty encourage you to focus on the material in the reading lists from relevant courses.

14. Comps Groups: “Comps Groups” are self-created groups of students who work together to prepare for Comps. While many students prefer them, other students prefer to study on their own.