**University of Central Arkansas**

**Department of Psychology and Counseling**

In partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology

**Matthew Pickard, M.S.**

Will defend his doctoral dissertation

**“Diagnostic overshadowing, essentialism, and intellectual disability: Lay persons’ perceptions.”**

Advisors: Drs. Elson Bihm and Dong Xie

**Date:** Friday, January 13th, 2016

**Time:** 2:00

**Place:** Mashburn Building Rm 200

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited to attend.

Abstract

Diagnostic overshadowing has been demonstrated with professionals, but not with lay people. This study was designed to measure if lay people participate in diagnostic overshadowing within the intellectual disability field and, to investigate the potential relationship between essentialistic thinking and diagnostic overshadowing. It was hypothesized that essentialistic thinking could partially explain diagnostic overshadowing. Results indicated that lay people do not participate in diagnostic overshadowing as professionals do. Thus, the relationship between diagnostic overshadowing and essentialistic thinking could not be assessed. However, among psychiatric, social, and natural categories there were differences in terms of psychological essentialism, and the implications of these differences will be discussed.