

George Mason University – Fall 2011  
SPMT 320 Psychology of Sport

Day/ Time: T/R 10:30-11:45 am  
Professor: Mary Schumann, Ph.D.  
Phone Number: 703-585-3281 or 703-716-4644  
Office hours: T 9:30-10:30 am or by arrangement  
Office: Aquia Bldg, Room 337.

Location: Nguyen Engineering Building 1107

E-mail: [mschumal@gmu.edu](mailto:mschumal@gmu.edu) or [mfschumann@aol.com](mailto:mfschumann@aol.com)

Prerequisites: None

*Course Description:*

This course will review the major social / psychological theories utilized in current sport psychology research. The practical applications of these theoretical constructs will be emphasized through discussion of techniques used to maximize participation and healthy behavior in sport.

*Course Overview*

The course will be presented in three components. The first section will introduce major social/psychological theories that explain sport behaviors. Motivation, learning principles as they affect coaching, self-efficacy and communication are examples of constructs that will be explored. The second section of the course will discuss intervention strategies and techniques. This will emphasize the practical applications of sport psychology such as mental training, goal setting and imagery. In the final section of the course issues such as injury, staleness and burnout, and findings from exercise psychology. Throughout all of this theoretical information, experiential exercises will be woven into each class, to teach and demonstrate the power of using the mind to control the body.

*Course Objectives*

At the completion of this course the students should be able to:

1. Identify and explain major theoretical frameworks used in sport psychology research, specifically the application of mindfulness to the improvement of human performance.
2. Critically evaluate current research.
3. Learn intervention strategies for sport performance enhancement.
4. Employ a number of methods using mindfulness to increase awareness and attention.
5. Conduct an applied research project utilizing a theoretical framework and a quasi-experimental design.

*Required Readings*

1. Williams, J.M. (2009). Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co.
2. Online postings on blackboard.

*Evaluation:*

Students are held to the standards of the George Mason University honor code. You are expected to attend all class sections, actively participate in class discussion, and fulfill assignments. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the specified due date or **no credit will be given**. Only students with emergencies, documented medical excuses, or University sponsored functions (discussed with the professor in advance) will be considered for exception. Please see the professor for individual clarifications. All written work must be typed and follow APA guidelines. It is recommended that students make copies of all submitted work.

**PLEASE be PRESENT**—this means no texting, emailing or facebook during class. If you have a situation in which you must be available (emergency) please see me before class. 20% of your grade is based on participation.

**Requirements:**

1. Participation grades will be based on active, thoughtful participation in class discussions and exercises, as well as online written entries to queries about some of the exercises done in class. These entries will not be lengthy, but are there to solicit honest feedback about what you learned in doing the exercises.
2. There are 2 papers. One is a journal article review papers and will consist of a 2 to 3 page, typed paper related to the current topics being discussed. The paper should include a brief summary of the article and a discussion of a theoretical construct discussed in the readings or in class and your personal experience or reaction to this idea. Journals should be current. There is also a movie analysis paper which will be described in more detail in this document.
3. The final project will consist of the application of a psychological intervention to a specific problem an athlete is struggling with. The study will be written up and presented in class.
4. Two exams will be administered. The format of the exams will be multiple choice, short answer and essay response.
5. This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 100 possible points.

<u>Requirements</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>
Participation	20	A+ = 98 -100, A = 94 -97, A- = 90 - 93
Assignments (2)	15	B + = 88 - 89, B = 84 - 87, B- = 80 - 83
Project	25	C + = 78 - 79, C = 74 – 77, C- = 70 –73
Exams (2)	40	D = 60 - 69 F = 0 - 59

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading / Assignment Due</u>	<u>Practice:</u>
August 30	Introduction		mindful eating
September 1	Sport Psychology	Ch. 1	5 minute breathing
6	Motor skill learning	Ch. 2	chip a ball
8	Reinforcement	Ch.3	body scan
13	Motivation	Ch. 4	Using intention
15	Self-fulfilling Prophecy	Ch. 5	negative thoughts
20	Movie – The Dhamma Brothers		5 min thought & breath
22	Leadership	Ch. 6	what kind of leader
27	Group Cohesion	Ch. 7	concentration
29			
October 4	<b>Exam # 1</b>		
6	Project discussion		letting go of tension
11	No Class – Columbus Day break		
13	Increasing Awareness	Ch. 10	body awareness
18	Goal setting	Ch. 11	contemplate a goal
20	Arousal & performance	Ch. 12	sing & heart rate
25	Relaxation and Energizing Techniques	Ch.13	relaxation exercise
27	Movie:		Summary of final project (1 page)
November 1	Implementing a Psychological Skills Training Programs	Ch. 17	music exercise
3	Injury	Ch. 23	imaging wellness
8	Staleness & burnout	Ch. 22	reflection on energy
10	Exercise psychology	Ch. 25	using intention and imagination
15	Projects		5 minutes breath clear
22	Projects		imagery exercise
24	No Class- Happy Thanksgiving!		
29	Projects		music
December 1	Projects		music
6	Projects		music
8	Projects		music

**Other Information**

- All students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code.
- Students with disabilities: students having documentation on file with the Disability Support Services Office should bring this to the attention of the professor.
- The department's website is:  
<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/hfr/HFRNetAnnouncements.htm>

Journal Article Review Papers: Choose a topic of interest that relates to subjects covered in the class. Choose an article from one of the following journals and write a brief summary of the findings of the study/article, discuss how it relates to class topics and why you are interested in this topic. Be critical of the research or findings.....do the conclusions drawn make sense? Was it a good study and why? How could it be better?

**Sport Specific Journals:**

- ACSM's Health and Fitness Journal - <http://www.acsm-healthfitness.org/>
- Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly - <http://www.humankinetics.com/products/journals/journal.cfm?id=APAQ>
- American Board of Sport Psychology Journal - <http://www.americanboardofsportpsychology.org/default.asp?pSec=10&pTyp=Cover&pID=1045>
- Athletic Insight – <http://www.athleticinsight.com/>
- British Journal of Sports Medicine - <http://bjsm.bmjournals.com/>
- Coaching Science Abstracts - <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/coachsci/search.htm>
- Human Movement Science - <http://www.elsevier.com/inca/publications/store/5/0/5/5/8/4/>
- International Journal of Sports Psychology - [http://www.swets.nl/backsets/catalogue\\_result\\_0047-0767.htm](http://www.swets.nl/backsets/catalogue_result_0047-0767.htm)
- Journal of Applied Sport Psychology - <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/tf/10413200.html>

Movie Analysis Paper

The purpose of this exercise is to have you apply what you have learned in this class as it relates to the psychology of sport as found in the movie you have chosen to see. Please discuss some of the psychological skills that have been covered in this class that are seen in the movie. The paper should be two to three pages in length. The movie must be one that deals with sports. You need to see the entire movie, while noting the various psychological aspects as seen in the movie (motivation, leadership, etc.). The following list of movies, while not complete, would prove to be acceptable. If you would like to review a different film, please run it by me.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Rocky               | Blue Chips            |
| Million Dollar Baby | A League of Their Own |
| Remember the Titans | Chariots of Fire      |
| The Natural         | Bull Durham           |
| Rudy                | The Rookie            |
| Hoosiers            | Miracle               |
| Coach Carter        |                       |

What your analysis should include:

- Introduction to the movie
- A. Why you picked it
- B. The movie's plot
- II The psychological skills addressed
- III Conclusion

## FINAL PROJECT: MENTAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Get a taste of what it might be like to be a Sport Psychologist. The text discusses many psychological training methods that are typically used to improve performance. Pick a chapter in our text's *Part Two Mental Training for Performance Enhancement* or a chapter in *Part Three: Implementing Training Programs* and create a unique training program. Use the training program on another person (client).

Your program should be focused on at least two psychological skills (e.g., Arousal Regulation, Imagery, et cetera). Your program must conform to the following requirements:

You may only work with someone that you know.

- You must submit your program to me at least one week before you intend to start working with the person. You may not begin the program until I have approved your techniques.
- Your program must be based on the techniques discussed in our text OR learning in class (mindfulness exercises for example)
- Your program should span 6 to 8 weeks and should include at least one meeting with you and your client each week. During these meetings you should work on the psychological skills, but also seek feedback on the effectiveness of your program from your client. You should include some measure of how well the program works (can be a crude measure or rating scale).
- Your written report must include:
  - An introduction that includes background information (e.g., a short bio of your person, your reason for selecting the particular psychological skills that you did, your reason for selecting this particular person, what you hoped to achieve by doing the program with this person, et cetera),
  - A body in which you give a detailed account of your procedures and techniques
  - A conclusion in which you reflect on the program, telling what you learned, an exit interview with your client in which they give their reaction to your program, and lastly you should give an objective evaluation of your client (e.g., What do they do well? Poorly?).
- Your written report should be between 7 to 9 double-spaced typed pages.
- You should provide your client a copy of your final report; also, you will present your findings from your project to the class at the end of the semester.