

George Mason University – Fall 2013
SPMT 320-001 Psychology of Sport

Day/ Time: T/R 10:30-11:45 pm
Professor: Mary Schumann, Ph.D.
Phone Number: 703-993-5212 or 703-585-3281
Office hours: W 1:30-3:00 pm or by arrangement
Office: Aquia Bldg, Rm 337 (can meet at PWC also)

Location: University Hall 1204

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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 (6th 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. 15% 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 | 15 | A+ = 98 -100, A = 94 -97, A- = 90 - 93 |
| Assignments (2) | 20 | 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 | 27 Introduction | | mindful eating |
| | 29 Sport Psychology | Ch. 1 | 5 minute breathing |
| Sept. | 3 Motor skill learning | Ch. 2 | chip a ball |
| | 5 Reinforcement | Ch.3 | body scan |
| | 10 Motivation | Ch. 4 | Using intention |
| | 12 Self-fulfilling Prophecy | Ch. 5 | negative thoughts |
| | 17 | | 5 min breath |
| | 19 Leadership | Ch. 6 | what kind of leader |
| | 24 Group Cohesion | Ch. 7 | concentration |
| | 26 Project discussion, Peak Performance | Ch. 9 (not on Exam 1) | |
| Oct. | 1 Exam # 1 | | |
| | 3 Increasing Awareness | Ch. 10 | letting go of tension |
| | 8 | | |
| | 10 Goal Setting | Ch. 11 | contemplate a goal |
| | 15 NO CLASS COLUMBUS DAY BREAK | | |
| | 17 Arousal & performance | Ch. 12 | sing & heart rate |
| | 22 Relaxation and Energizing Techniques | Ch.13 | relaxation exercise |
| | 24 Using Cognitive Interventions | Ch. 15 | self-talk |
| | 29 Concentration | Ch. 16 | focus exercise |
| | 31 Implementing a Psych Skills Training Program | Ch. 17 | breathing |
| Nov. | 5 | | |
| | 7 Injury | Ch. 23 | |
| | 12 Staleness & burnout | Ch. 22 | |
| | 14 Exercise psychology | Ch. 25 | |
| | 19 Exam # 2 | | |
| | 21 NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING | | |
| | 26 Projects | | |
| | 28 NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING | | |
| Dec | 3 Projects | | |
| | 5 Projects – | | |
| | 17 Projects - Class during exam block | 10:30 – 1:15 | |

Honor Code: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

Students are expected to be familiar with and to follow the **GMU Honor Policy**. **All work should be your own and should be cited properly using APA format**. Students should be advised that the honor code specifically applies to and has enforced disciplinary procedures for:

- Plagiarism
- Stealing
- Cheating or attempted cheating
- Lying (to administration or faculty) or falsifying documents

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Student with disabilities, who need academic accommodations, have to contact the instructor and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Journal Article Review Paper: 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
- 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
- C. The psychological skills addressed—connect it to class material
- D. 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 two weeks 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.