

George Mason University – Spring 2015  
SPMT 320-001  
Psychology of Sport

Day/ Time: T/R 12:00-1:15 pm

Location: West 1004

Professor: Mary Schumann, Ph.D.

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Office hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30 pm or by arrangement

Office: Aquia Bldg, Rm 337

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. Ungerleider, S.(2005). Mental Training for Peak Performance. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press
2. Online postings on blackboard. There will be additional readings.

*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	20	A+ = 98 -100, A = 94 -97, A- = 90 - 93
Assignments (2)	15	B + = 88 - 89, B = 84 - 87, B- = 80 - 83
Final 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>	
January	20	Introduction	mindful eating	
	22	Sport Psychology	5 minute breathing	
	27	Motor skill learning	chip a ball	
	29	Reinforcement	body scan	
Feb	3	Motivation	Using intention	
	5	Self-fulfilling Prophecy	negative thoughts	
	10		5 min breath	
	12	Leadership	what kind of leader	
	17	Group Cohesion	concentration	
	19	Project discussion, Peak Performance	Ch. 9 (not on Exam 1)	mindful visual observation
	24			
<b>Exam # 1</b>				
Mar	26	Increasing Awareness	Ch. 10	letting go of tension
	3	Mindfulness Acceptance Commitment	supplemental reading	
April	5	Goal Setting	Ch. 11	<b>Paper #2</b> contemplate a goal
	10,12	NO CLASS –SPRING BREAK		
	17	Arousal & performance	Ch. 12	sing & heart rate
	19	Relaxation and Energizing Techniques	Ch.13	relaxation exercise
	24	Using Cognitive Interventions	Ch. 15	self-talk
	26	Concentration	Ch. 16	focus exercise
	31	Implementing a Psych Skills Training Program	Ch. 17	breathing
	2	Movie		mindful movement
	7	Injury	Ch. 23	visualization of injury
	9	Staleness & burnout	Ch. 22	5 min breathing
14	Exercise psychology	Ch. 25	body scan	
16	<b>Exam # 2</b>			
21	Projects		pre-exam exercise	
23	Projects			

	28	Projects
	30	Projects
May	7	<b>Class during exam block 10:30 – 1:15</b>

**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](http://www.swets.nl/backsets/catalogue_result_0047-0767.htm)
- Journal of Applied Sport Psychology - <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/tf/10413200.html>

Second Paper:

Choose a chapter that you find particularly interesting or helpful in Part 2 of the Mental Training for Peak Performance book. I would like you to apply the techniques in the chapter to yourself in some area of performance over a period of a few weeks (does not have to be sport, but can be). Write a 2 to 3 page summary of what you learned in terms of its usefulness, how it relates to class material from the textbook, and whether you would use in the future.

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.