

George Mason University – Fall 2016  
SPMT 320-001  
Psychology of Sport

Day/ Time: T/R 10:30-11:45 pm  
Professor: Mary Schumann, Ph.D.  
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Office hours: Tuesday 12:00-1:00 pm or by arrangement

Location: Krug Hall 7

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.

*Nature of Course Delivery*

Face to face

*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. (2015). Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co.
2. Selk, J. (2009). 10-Minute Toughness .
3. Online postings on blackboard. There will be a few 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. 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 paper in which you apply a technique from the applied book.
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>
Class Participation/Journals	20	A+ = 98 -100, A = 94 -97, A- = 90 - 93
Assignments (2)	16 (8 each)	B + = 88 - 89, B = 84 - 87, B- = 80 - 83
Final Project	24	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 & Motor Skill Learning	Ch. 2	5 minute breathing
Sept.	1	History of Sport Psychology	Ch. 1	(Class Not Meeting - Choice of TED talks)
	6	Positive Approach to coaching	Ch.3	<b>TED talk paper</b> body scan
	8	Motivation	Ch. 4	Using intention
	13	Self-fulfilling Prophecy	Ch. 5	<b>Paper #1</b> negative thoughts
	15	Self -efficacy	see readings	free writing: confidence
	20	Leadership	Ch. 6	what kind of leader
	22	Group Cohesion	Ch. 7	concentration
	27	Communication	Ch. 8	deep listening
October	29	Exercise Psychology	readings will be posted	
	4	<b>EXAM # 1</b>		
	6	Mindset, Attribution and perception	Readings on BB	How we explain things
	11	NO CLASS - FALL BREAK		
	13	Goal Setting	Ch. 11	<b>Paper #2</b> contemplate a goal
	20	Managing Stress in Sport	Ch. 12	sing & heart rate
Nov.	25	Using Imagery In Sport	Ch.13	relaxation exercise
	27	Self-Talk	Ch. 14	self-talk exercise
	1	Concentration	Ch. 15	focus exercise
	3	Psych Skills Training Program	Ch. 16	self-regulation
	8	Injury	Ch. 22	visualization of injury
	10	Projects: troubleshooting		
	15	Staleness & burnout	Ch. 21	5 min breathing
	17	Career Transition for Athletes	Ch. 23	your future self
	22	<b>EXAM #2</b>		Pre-exam exercise
	24	NO CLASS _ THANKSGIVING		

	29	Projects
Dec	1	Projects
	6	Projects
	8	Projects
Dec	13	<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            Cheating or attempted cheating
- Stealing                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.

**TED talks:** (assignment for Sept 1st)

Choose one of the following TED talks related to sport:

1. Diana Nyad [Extreme swimming with the world's most dangerous jellyfish](#)
2. David Epstein [Are athletes really getting faster, better, stronger?](#)
3. Billie Jean King [This tennis icon paved the way for women in sports](#)
4. Gonzalo Vilariño [How Argentina's blind soccer team became champions](#)
5. John Wooden [The difference between winning and succeeding](#)
6. Aimee Mullins [Changing my legs - and my mindset](#)
7. Matthew Williams [Special Olympics let me be myself — a champion](#)

Watch the TED talk, and do a short write up 2 pages, double spaced, discussing what you thought. First, tell me a little about yourself (year in school, major, why you chose to take this class). Then reflect on the talk. Did it change how you think about sport? How? Did it challenge you or inspire you? Have paper copy ready to hand in next class.

**Paper 1: 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>

## Paper #2: Choice between applied topic or a theoretical discussion topic

Choose a **technique chapter** that you find particularly interesting or helpful in the 10 Minute Toughness book. I would like you to apply the techniques in the chapter to yourself in some area of performance over a period of a couple weeks (does not have to be sport, but can be). Write a 3-4 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.

OR.... choose a **theory of psychology** that you are particularly interested in. Explore the psychological theory of your choice. These theories pertain to, but are not limited to: personality, learning, motivation, self-efficacy, self-regulation, communication/reinforcement, leadership, self-fulfilling prophecy, and cohesion. Write a 3-4 page paper about your reasoning for choosing the topic, your reflections about this theory, the application to sport and or your interests.

## 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 6 to 8 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.

## **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).
- h. The Office of Student Support staff helps students negotiate life situations by connecting them with appropriate campus and off-campus resources. Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone (703-993-5376). Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community (<http://studentsupport.gmu.edu/>) and the staff will follow up with the student.

## **PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

