

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Sports Management

SPMT 320-002 – Psychology of Sport
3 Credits, Spring, 2018

Time: Tues/Thursday 10:30-11:45 pm

Location: West 1007, Fairfax Campus)

Faculty

Name: Mary Schumann, Ph.D.

Office hours: Tuesday 12:00-1:00 pm or by appointment

Office Location: Thompson Hall Room 1409

Phone Number: 703-585-3281

E-mail: mschuma1@gmu.edu

Office hours: Tuesday 12:00-1:00 pm or by arrangement

Prerequisites/Corequisites: None

University Catalog Course Description

Psychological theories of personality, motivation, and anxiety explored in sport environment. Examines social-psychological research on audience effects, team cohesion, leadership, and fan behavior.

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 mental skills to control the body. This course is being taught in a **hybrid format**, with most classes being conducted face to face, and some being conducted asynchronously online (not during the class time). You will need to access the online content through blackboard using your computer.

Course Delivery Method

This course is being taught in a **hybrid format (25% online)**, with most classes being conducted face to face, and some being conducted asynchronously online. You will need to access the online content through blackboard using your computer.

Learner Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Identify and explain major theoretical frameworks used in sport psychology research.
2. Evaluate research in sport psychology (basic understanding).
3. Differentiate between intervention techniques to improve sport performance in order to apply knowledge.
4. Apply techniques to improve performance to self and others through practice and application to increase awareness and attention.
5. Conduct an applied research project utilizing a theoretical framework and a quasi-experimental design, or conduct a research paper on a topic within the course using peer reviewed journal articles.

Required Texts

1. Williams, J.M. (2015). Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance (7th 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.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy). Only students with emergencies, documented medical excuses, or University sponsored functions (discussed with the professor in advance) will be considered for exception. All written work must be typed and follow APA guidelines. It is recommended that students save copies of all submitted work.

PLEASE be PRESENT—NO PHONE USE DURING CLASS! Phones are collected in a basket at the door of class. You can pick it up on the way out. 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:

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 100 possible points.

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

Papers: (total of 15 points)

1. A journal article review paper 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. (worth 8 points)
2. There is also a paper in which you apply a technique to yourself from the applied book ***10-Minute Toughness***. (worth 7 points)

Discussion Board posts (total of 10 points):

This part of the class involves responding to discussion board prompts on blackboard that relate to material covered in class. In some instances, you are asked to view a TED talk and respond to a question. In another you are asked to try an experiment at home and reflect on the attempt in your post. In another you simply consider the issues in your own past experiences. These should be between 250 and 400 words as a guideline.

Exams:

Two exams will be administered, a midterm and a final. The midterm is administered online. The format of the exams will be multiple choice, and/or short answer and essay response. Each exam is worth 20 points (total of 40 points).

Final Project: (worth 20 points)

The student may choose among several options for the final project. They are a) applied sports psychology intervention with an individual; b) sports psych training plan for a team for those who are coaching; c) research proposal in sport psychology. There is detailed description listed at the end of the syllabus for each option.

- **Other Requirements**

You are expected to attend all classes. Athletes who are traveling are required to let me know ahead of time. Medical absences should be documented. 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.

- **Grading Scale**

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	>= 90%
B	80 – 89.99%
C	70 – 79.99% (Note: +/- grades will be assigned per GMU policy)
D	60 – 69.99%
F	< 60%

Professional Dispositions

not applicable

Class Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments	Activities
Jan 23 (Tu)	History of Sport Psychology	W & K Ch. 1		Intro to mindfulness

Jan 25 (R)	Introduction & Motor Skill Learning	W & K Ch 2		5 min breathing
	5 minute breathing			
Jan 30 (T)	Positive Approach to Coaching	W & K Ch 3		Mindful eating
Feb 1 (R)	Motivation	W & K Ch 4		Energy meditation
Feb 6 (T)	Self-fulfilling Prophecy	W & K Ch. 5	Paper 1 Due	Expectancy
Feb 8 (R)	Leadership	W & K Ch 6		
Feb 13 (T)	Self Efficacy	Readings posted		Loving kindness
Feb 15 (R)	Group Cohesion	W & K Ch 7		Group exercises
Feb 20 (T)	Communication	W & K Ch 8		Listening exercise
Feb 22 (R)	Peak Performance factors	W & K Ch 9		
Feb 27 (T)	Mindset, Attribution & Perception	Readings on Blackboard		How we explain things
Mar 1 (R)	Goal Setting (not on exam 1)	W & K Ch 11	Paper 2 Due	Goals

Mar 6 (T)	EXAM #1	ONLINE	
Mar 8 (R)	Managing Stress in Sport	W & K Ch 12	Sing & HR
Mar 13/15	No Class	Spring Break	
Mar 20 (T)	Using Imagery in Sport	W & K Ch 13	Visualization
Mar 22 (R)	Final Project work session	troubleshooting	
Mar 27 (T)	Using Self Talk	W & K Ch 14	TED talk
Mar 29 (R)	Concentration	W & K Ch 15	Focus exercise
April 3 (T)	Psychological Skills Program	W & K Ch. 16	Write about project
April 5 (R)	Movie -	TBD	reflection
Apr 10 (T)	Injury	W & K Ch 22	Imagery to heal
April 12 (R)	Staleness & Burnout	W & K Ch 21	Group exercise
April 17 (T)	When to Refer an Athlete	W & K Ch 19	Mindfulness

April 19 (R)	EXAM # 2	ONLINE	Pre exam exercise
April 24 (T)	Projects	Presentations	Mindfulness
April 26 (R)	Projects	Presentations	Mindfulness
May 1 (T)	Projects	Presentations	Mindfulness
May 3 (R)	Project	Presentations	
May 15 (T)	Projects	Presentations during exam block (10:30-1:15)	

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .

Details About Assignments:

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
- 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.

Paper 3 - TED Talk Reaction Paper

TED talks:

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.

OPTION 1: 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.
- Written Report = 15 points ; Presentation 10 points

OPTION 2: Mental Skills Training Plan

The overall purpose of Option 2 is to develop a sequential plan for mental skills teaching/consulting for those **who are currently coaching a team**. This option will go into explicit detail for three educational lessons to teach a group or team about 3 mental skills. Taking the time to plan and prepare your lessons is an important part of being a sport psychological consultant. You will choose the mental skills

based on the content in the W&K text and course discussions. Further, you will introduce the skills by tailoring the lesson/teaching the participants, the theory it is based on, and then you will go into importance of the mental skill/ what the mental skill is. Written Paper detailing Training Plans (15 pts.)

Presentation (10 pts.)

Option 3: Sport Psychology Research Proposal

The overall purpose of Option 3 is to give you a taste of what it might be like to be a Sport Psychology Researcher. Here, you will design a research proposal that could be conducted for participants in the area of sport and exercise psychology. Expanding on the sport psychology theories that most interest you, you will devise a research study that could help show evidence toward the advancement of knowledge in the field. This proposal can be basic or applied in nature, can use quantitative or qualitative methods/designs, can be on athletes, coaches, or any other participant in the sport world, and can be in the area of any

theory as presented in the first half of the semester or in the W&K text. The aim of this section is to give you an opportunity to think like a researcher.

Written Report - 15 pts

Presentation 10 pts