

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Sports Management**

SPMT 320-002 – Psychology of Sport  
3 Credits, Fall, 2019

Time: Tuesday / Thursday 12:00-1:15pm  
Location: 121 East Building, Fairfax Campus

**Faculty**

Name: Canaan Bethea, M.S.  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Office Location: West Building Suite 2100  
E-mail: cbethea4@gmu.edu

**Prerequisites/ Corequisites:** None

**University Catalog Course Description**

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

**Course Overview**

This course will review the major social & psychological theories utilized in current sport and exercise psychology and applied sport psychology research. The practical applications of these theoretical constructs will be emphasized through discussion of techniques used by professionals in the field to maximize sport participation and enhance athletic peak performance

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 will be explored. Throughout this course, theoretical information and experiential exercises will be woven into each class, to teach and demonstrate the power of using mental skills to control the body.

**Course Delivery Method**

The course will be delivered through a face-to-face lecture format.

## **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.

## **Student Expectations**

Students are expected to engage by doing the following:

1. Arrive to class on time and be prepared to discuss the readings for the given day.
2. Actively listen to other students' contributions during discussions and group work.
3. Respect the opinions of other students, although disagreement is allowed.
4. Get to know your peers in class, because you may one day need them.
5. Not use laptops for work irrelevant to the course.
6. Not use cell phones for personal non-emergency texting, email, or other social media.

## **Required Textbook**

1. Williams, J.M. & Krane, V. (2015). Applied Sport Psychology: Personal Growth to Peak Performance (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co

## **Optional Textbooks**

2. Selk, J. (2009). 10-Minute Toughness. New York: McGraw-Hill.
3. Schumann, M. (2018). Game-Changing Coach: Mindful Strategies for Peak Performance. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse Publishing.
4. Online postings on blackboard. There will be a few additional readings as well as videos

## Course Performance 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 on blackboard by midnight on the specified due date or no credit will be given.** Assignments have been scheduled in advance to provide you with sufficient time to complete the assignment. 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 save copies of all submitted work.

## Grading Scale

<i>Points</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Grade</i>
93-100	93-100%	A
90-92	90-92%	A-
87-89	87-89%	B+
83-86	83-86%	B
80-82	80-82%	B-
77-79	77-79%	C+
73-76	73-76%	C
70-72	70-72%	C-
60-69	60-69%	D
Below 60	0-59	F

## Evaluation Outline

Participation & Attendance	20 points
Application Reflection Papers (2)	20 points
Exam One	20 points
Exam Two	20 points
Final Project	20 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

## Assignment Outline

Participation (20 pts. total)

- Attendance (10 pts.)
- Mental Skills Practice & Classroom Discussions (10 pts.)

Application Reflection Papers (20 pts. total)

- Podcast Application Reflection Paper One: 3 to 5-pages (10 pts.)
- Theory Application Reflection Paper Two: 3 to 5-pages (10 pts.)

Exams (40 pts. total)

- Exam 1 (20 pts.)
- Exam 2 (20 pts.)

Final Project (20 pts. total)

- Pick one of three options:
  - o Option 1: Mental Skills Training – MST Intervention
  - o Option 2: Mental Skills Training – MST Teaching Plan
  - o Option 3: Sport Psychology Research Proposal

## **Requirements: Assignments and Examinations**

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

### **Attendance & Participation** (20 points)

Participation is a major part of your grade. Some of that is because this is an application based class. One of our goals in this class is for you to learn to apply sports psychology theories and concepts. Your attendance, timely arrive to class, and active participation in class activities will be taken into consideration. Please notify the professor in advance about any conflicts with class

### **Application Reflection Papers** (total of 20 points)

#### **Podcast Application Reflection Paper One:** (10 points)

In a 3-5-page paper, you will reflect on a sports podcast

(More information is provided in the appendix)

#### **Theory Application Reflection Paper Two:** (10 points)

In a 3-5-page paper, you will reflect on theories learned in class

(More information is provided in the appendix)

### **Exams** (total of 40 points):

There will be two exams in this course designed to assess your understanding of course content. Both exams combined will count for 40% of your final grade in the course. Exams are not cumulative. The exams will consist of multiple choice, T/F, fill in the blank, and short answer questions.

### **Final Project:** (20 points)

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

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor.

### Class Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments	Activities
<b>Week 1</b> <b>T 8/27</b>	Introduction to Sports Psychology	n/a		Introductions
<b>R 8/29</b>	History of Sport Psychology	W & K Ch. 1		
<b>Week 2</b> <b>T 9/3</b>	Motor Skill Learning	W & K Ch 2		
<b>R 9/5</b>	Positive Approach to Coaching	W & K Ch 3 Game-Changing Coach		
<b>Week 3</b> <b>T 9/10</b>	Motivation	W & K Ch 4		Energy Meditation
<b>R 9/12</b>	Self-Fulfilling Prophecy	W & K Ch. 5		Expectancy
<b>Week 4</b> <b>T 9/17</b>	Leadership	W & K Ch 6	Podcast Application Reflection Paper Due	
<b>R 9/19</b>	Group Cohesion	W & K Ch7		
<b>Week 5</b> <b>T 9/24</b>	Communication & Final Project Update	W & K Ch 8	Discuss Final Project	Communication Exercise
<b>R 9/26</b>	Peak Performance Factors	W & K Ch 9		Mindfulness Exercise
<b>Week 6</b> <b>T 10/1</b>	Attentional Focus & Self-Regulation	W & K Ch 10		
<b>R 10/3</b>	Self-Efficacy & Attributions Final Project Planning	TBD	Get Approval for Final Project	Writing Prompt on Attributions and Self-Efficacy
<b>Week 7</b> <b>T 10/8</b>	Test Prep Day		Test Prep Day	
<b>R 10/10</b>	<b>Exam # 1</b>		<b>Exam # 1</b>	
<b>Week 8</b> <b>T 10/15</b>	<b>No Class</b>		<b>(Monday Classes This Day)</b>	
<b>R 10/17</b>	Goal Setting	W & K Ch 11		Goal Setting Exercise

<b>Week 9</b> <b>T 10/22</b>	Arousal / Stress Management	W & K Ch 12		Arousal / Stress Management Exercise
<b>R 10/24</b>	Imagery & Visualization	W & K Ch 13		Visualization
<b>Week 10</b> <b>T 10/29</b>	Positive Self Talk	W & K Ch 14		Self-talk
<b>R 10 /31</b>	Concentration	W & K Ch 15		Concentration & Focus Exercise
<b>Week 11</b> <b>T 11/5</b>	Choking	W & K Ch 15	Theory Application Reflection Paper Due	Brief Centering Exercise
<b>R 11/7</b>	Psychological Skills Program	W & K Ch 16		
<b>Week 12</b> <b>T 11/12</b>	Athletic Injury	W & K Ch 22		Mindfulness for Pain
<b>R 11/14</b>	Staleness & Burnout	W & K Ch 21		
<b>Week 13</b> <b>T 11/19</b>	When to Refer an Athlete Exercise Psychology	W & K Ch 19 W & K Ch 24		
<b>Week 14</b> <b>R 11/21</b>	Test Prep Day			
<b>Week 15</b> <b>T 11/26</b>	<b>Exam # 2</b>		<b>Exam # 2</b>	
<b>R 11/28</b>	<b>No Class</b>		<b>(Thanksgiving Break)</b>	
<b>Week 16</b> <b>T 12/3</b>				Sports Activity
<b>R 12/5</b>	Course Evaluation			Sports Movie
<b>Finals Week</b> <b>R 12/12</b>			Final Project Due	

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

### *Academic Integrity*

*Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code. This brief statement of the Honor Code is included here as a reminder of your commitment to abide by code this in your work in this course.* To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set for this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>)
- 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.
- Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.
- Religious holidays: A list of religious holidays is available on the [University Life Calendar page](#). Any student whose religious observance conflicts with a scheduled course activity must contact the Instructor **at least 2 weeks in advance** of the conflict date in order to make alternative arrangements.
- Privacy: Instructors respect and protect the privacy of information related to individual students. Instructors will take every possible measure to protect the privacy of each student's submissions, scores and grades.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.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/>**

## APPENDIX: Details About Assignments:

### **Podcast Application Reflection Paper One:**

Watch one of the follow TED talks, and do a write up discussing what you thought. Reflect on the talk. Did it change how you think about sport? How? What concepts did it make you think of from our readings? Did it challenge you or inspire you? This reflection should be 3 to 5 pages.

#### **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
8. Find a talk to write about and get it approved by the professor.

### **Theory Application Reflection Paper Two:**

Choose a **chapter** that you find particularly interesting or helpful and apply it to yourself. I would like for you to apply the techniques in the chapter to yourself in some area of performance over a period of a week or two (does not have to be sport, but can be). Write a 3-5-pages about summary of what you learned. Your reflection should include (but does not have to be limited to): a summary of least one theory discussed in class, your opinion of the theory, how useful the theory is in your life, and whether you would use the technique in the future.

**Both papers** should be typed in APA format (e.g., cover page, running head, headers, etc.). See the APA reference under course resources for additional information. Other guidelines: standard margins, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double space. You are required to submit your reflection papers electronically on the blackboard site under the provided sections.

## FINAL PROJECTS DETAILS:

### **OPTION 1: Mental Skills Training (MST) Intervention**

*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. If you are working with a minor (under the age of 18), you need to get written permission signed by their parent or guardian. A sample of this type of agreement will be on the Course Documents page on blackboard.

- You must submit your program proposal to me at least two weeks before you intend to start working with the person or team. You may not begin the program until I have approved your techniques.
- Your program must be based on the techniques discussed in class
- 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 paper / report must include:
  - An introduction that includes background information (e.g., a short bio of your person, your reason for selecting the psychological skills that you did, your reason for selecting this 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?).
- You will write your findings from your project in your final paper.

### **Evaluation Criteria for MST Intervention (20 pts.):**

- Introduction- quality and accuracy of participant description & theory citation/ literature review:
  - 1.....2.....3.....4
- Methods- specificity and appropriateness of assessments/ interviews used & procedures used:
  - 1.....2.....3.....4
- Results/ Discussion- indicate results and elaborate results relative to performance:
  - 1.....2.....3.....4
- Conclusion- provides thoughtful analysis of participant's performance & personal performance:
  - 1.....2.....3.....4
- Follows format, shows organized thought, APA style, and grammatically correct:
  - 1.....2.....3.....4

**OPTION 2: Mental Skills Training (MST) Teaching 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 the importance of the mental skill/ what the mental skill is.

Your paper should include a description of the plan; your team sample (who, what, why and when you will do the plan); details about how you plan to implement the psychological skills training, what your measures of outcome are/were, and how often you measured the results, a reflection on how the program went, what you would do differently next time, and any feedback you obtained from your team.

**Evaluation Criteria for the MST Teaching Plan (20 pts.):**

Quality and accuracy of theories/ citations & application of material presented:

1.....2.....3.....4

Specificity and appropriateness for level/sport; Shows thoughtfulness of contextual factors:

1.....2.....3.....4

Clearly identifies and uses 5 E's method for lesson plan:

1.....2.....3.....4

Provokes interest of participants & directly engages participants; Provides innovative activities:

1.....2.....3.....4

Follows format, shows organized thought, APA style, and grammatically correct:

1.....2.....3.....4

### **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/paper 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. You will need several sources from peer reviewed journals/articles or books as sources and these should be cited in a bibliography.

#### **Evaluation Criteria for the Research Proposal (20 pts.):**

Introduction- introduce topic, rationale for theory/ citations, indicate research question(s):

1.....2.....3.....4

Methods- specificity and appropriateness of methodology & procedures:

1.....2.....3.....4

Discussion/ Expected Results- discuss results, limitations/ future directions, & implications:

1.....2.....3.....4

Conclusion- provides thoughtful reflection on the research process:

1.....2.....3.....4

Follows format, shows organized thought, APA style, and grammatically correct:

1.....2.....3.....4