Syllabus

Course Description

This course provides students with knowledge of the theories, research and practices of sports psychology. The course addresses interests of students pursuing psychology in clinical, educational, sport, and other applied settings as well as students interested in pursuing such sport activities as athletics, physical education, training, coaching, sport media, physical therapy, parenting, and/or those of the observer-commentator-fan. Basic concepts and research in biopsychology, personality, cognition, emotion, and social psychology are applied to sport. Subject populations studied include youth, female and male, recreational, health/fitness-oriented, elite, and disabled athletes. The focus will include an exploration of counseling for problems of athletes, educational and training programs for enhancement of performance, and research/scholarship on the psychological issues related to sport.

This course develops a dialogue between science and lay experience/expertise. The writings and thought of athletes, coaches, trainers, physicians, and observers are compared and contrasted with those of psychological theoreticians, researchers and practitioners. The aim of this dialogue is to demonstrate how scientific and lay experts can learn from and enhance each other’s perspective and effectiveness.

This course considers the interrelation between sports and human life. Our general knowledge of human life contributes to our knowledge and practices in sport psychology, and also sport offers insights that are valuable in other areas of human life and for general psychology. The good sport psychologist understands that sports are vehicles for human potential and enrichment. Special attention is devoted to the connections between sport and spiritual experience, ethics, character development, parenting, business and personhood.

Required Texts (E=Electronic; B=Bookstore)


Recommended Readings


(For additional recommended readings on specific topics, see the “Extended Recommended Reading List”.)

Examinations

There will be two examinations, a mid-term and final. Each will cover half of the course material.

Term Paper/presentation

Each student will write a term paper and make a class presentation based on it. The general focus is the interrelation between the psychological science and the common sense or expert practitioner’s experience of sports. Each student will choose a work from the popular press about sport, a sport experience, or an athlete/coach and compare/contrast it with the psychological research and theories that are relevant to its subject matter, including at least one scholarly article or research-based book by a professional sports psychologist (see extended reading list for examples). Students may feel free to use the textbook and assigned class readings, but at least two independent sources, one popular and one scientific are to be featured in the paper. Ideally, the student would develop criticism and enhancement of lay/expert experience/practice by science and vice versa. Possible popular texts that might be used in this project are listed directly below.


**Written Reading Log: Due each class.**

Students will keep a *reading log* with an entry (1 page double spaced) for each reading assignment, one on the *textbook* and one on the *supplementary reading* (15 in all). Each entry includes two parts. **First,** select the most interesting or most disagreeable contribution to sport psychology in the reading (e.g., theory, method of study, research finding, or professional practice in each of the two assigned texts). Explain the contribution as if you were helping someone who had not read the text to understand it, and then state what makes it interesting or disagreeable to you. You are encouraged to include a reflection, an example from observation or personal experience, a practical application, or a connection to other ideas/scholarship in this course or other courses. **Second,** identify what, in your view, is the most difficult item in the reading and state what makes it difficult. Each class session will begin with students sharing/reading their logs. Reading logs will be turned in each class and feedback will be given the next day.

**Grades**

The final grade will be calculated by averaging 4 grades: each of the two exams, the term paper, and reading log, each counting for one quarter of the final grade. The final grade will be modified (up to five points) according to the quality of class participation and contribution to the classroom discussions.
# Schedule of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Tests, Papers due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T 5/26</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 5/27</td>
<td>Weinberg &amp; Gould, Ch. 2 (Personality); Wolff, Ch. 1 &amp; 2 (Goal Setting, What Experts Say)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 5/28</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 3 (Motivation); Murphy &amp; White, Ch. 1 (Spiritual Underground) &amp; 2 (Mystical Sensations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 6/1</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 4 (Arousal); Stein &amp; Hollwitz, Hillman, 1-16 (Hooliganism)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 6/2</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 5 (Competition and Cooperation); Wolff, Ch. 3 &amp; 4 (Reports from the Field, The Parent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 6/3</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 6 (Reinforcement and Intrinsic Motivation); Murphy &amp; White, Ch. 3 (Altered Perceptions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 6/4</td>
<td><strong>No Class.</strong> W &amp; G, Ch. 7 (Group Dynamics); S &amp; H, Schenk, 17-33 (Ball/Play) &amp; Greene, 34-47 (Archetype of the Game)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 6/8</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 8 (Team Cohesion); Wolff; Ch. 5, 6, &amp; 7 (The Coach, Pressure, Motivation)</td>
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<td>T 6/9</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 9 (Leadership); S &amp; H, Ullyot, 136-148 (Atlanta’s Sisters) &amp; Ullyot &amp; Meyers, 149-161 (Archetypology and Elite Women Runners)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 6/10</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 10 (Communication); Murphy &amp; White, Ch. 4 (Extraordinary Feats)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 6/11</td>
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<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>M 6/15</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 11 (PST); Wolff, Ch. 8, 9, &amp; 10 (Gifted Child, Mind/Body, Alternatives)</td>
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<td>T 6/16</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 12 (Arousal Regulation); Murphy &amp; White, Ch. 5 (Sport and Mysticism)</td>
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<td>W 6/17</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 13 (Imagery); S &amp; H, Heyman, 188-201 (High Risk Sports) &amp; Odell, 235-242 (Hero Archetype)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 6/18</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 14 (Self confidence); Gardner &amp; Moore (A Mindfulness-Commitment-Based Approach to Athletic Performance Enhancement)</td>
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<td>M 6/22</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 15 (Goal Setting); Smith et al., 119-151 (The Carolina Way)</td>
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<td>T 6/23</td>
<td>W &amp; G, Ch. 16 (Concentration); Loehr &amp; Schwartz (The “Corporate Athlete”)</td>
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<td>W 6/24</td>
<td><strong>Presentations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Term Paper Due</strong></td>
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<td>R 6/25</td>
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<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
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**Professor Availability**
Office: LL 609A, DE 215, by appointment (212 6366301; wertz@fordham.edu).


