

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

Exercise Science 121 – Introduction to Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

This course provides an introduction to the theoretical and practical application of psychological factors associated with sport, exercise, and performance. Topics include historical and theoretical perspectives, current theories and research in cognitive, behavioral, and social-psychological factors related to concepts of understanding athlete, coach, and spectator behavior in the sport setting. Examination of factors and social constructs influencing exercise participation, management of unhealthy behaviors, and adherence to programs focused on therapeutic benefits that help enhance overall health. Outcomes associated with performance, techniques for optimizing performance, youth, aging, and gender issues, and applications in a variety of career settings will be discussed. *Also listed as PSY 121. Not open to students with credit in PSY 121.*

Prerequisite

None

Course Content

- 1) Foundations of Sport, Exercise, and Performance Psychology
 - a. Definition of field, theoretical concepts and related terms
 - b. Historical perspective
 - c. Current issues in the field
- 2) Scientific Inquiry in Psychology
 - a. Theory-based hypotheses
 - b. Researched-based hypotheses
 - c. Experimental method
 - d. Types and variations in research methodology
- 3) Theories of Personality and Performance
 - a. Research and theoretical approaches to studying personality
 - i. Social Learning Theory
 - ii. Biological Theory
 - iii. Interactionist Approach
 - b. Personality and performance
 - c. Personality assessment in sports
 - d. Specific sport population
 - e. Female athletes
 - f. Cultural considerations
- 4) Arousal, Stress, and Anxiety
 - a. Defining and measuring arousal and anxiety
 - b. Understanding stress and identifying sources of stress and anxiety
 - c. Correlating arousal and anxiety to performance
 - d. Managing arousal, stress, and anxiety to optimize performance
 - i. Drive Theory
 - ii. Inverted U Hypothesis
 - iii. Catastrophe Theory
 - e. Individual Zone of Optimal Functioning (IZOF) Model
- 5) Motivation and Behavior in Performance Context

- a. Defining terms and theoretical approaches
- b. Principles of reinforcement and approaches for influencing behavior
- c. Intrinsic motivation, effects of extrinsic rewards and flow
- d. Self-Determination Theory
- e. Achievement Goal Theory
- 6) Social Psychology of Sport and Exercise
 - a. Group cohesion, social facilitation
 - b. Theories and models for exercise behavior
 - c. Problems and determinants of exercise adherence
- 7) Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions
 - a. Psychological Skills Training (PST)
 - b. Team dynamics and cohesion
 - c. Models and ways to measure burnout
 - d. Psychological reactions to exercise and athletic injury
- 8) Sociocultural Considerations
 - a. Leadership and coaching
 - b. Aggression
 - c. Gender issues
 - d. Age and performance

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Explain the historical development and theoretical foundation of sport, exercise, and performance psychology
- 2) Compare and critique major psychological theories (e.g. cognitive behavioral, social identity, arousal theories) and their application to performance behavior.
- 3) Identify and evaluate methods of scientific inquiry and research design commonly used in the study of psychological phenomena related to physical activity and sport.
- 4) Analyze how cultural, social, and psychological factors influence individual and group behavior in sport and performance context.
- 5) Apply concepts from social psychology (e.g. group cohesion, social facilitation, attribution theory) to understand team dynamics and spectator behavior.
- 6) Examine and interpret findings from primary psychological research to evaluate claims and support evidence-based reasoning.
- 7) Discuss ethical considerations and limitations associated with conducting psychological research in sport and exercise settings.
- 8) Synthesize theoretical perspectives to explain motivation, arousal, identity, and behavior in diverse physical activity and performance domains.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Essays and objective exams covering theoretical frameworks and empirical studies
- 2) Critical analysis papers evaluating psychological theories and their evidence base
- 3) Application of psychological theories to case-based scenarios in sport and performance
- 4) Group or individual presentations exploring theoretical issues in cultural or social psychology in sport (mock trials/role play, case studies, portfolio)

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lecture
- 2) Discussion
- 3) Multimedia presentations

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) **Reading:** critical review of academic research articles
- 2) **Writing:** reflective essays linking theory and behavior.
- 3) **Other:** development of portfolio, case study and mock trial scenarios; analysis of theoretical models through current events or case studies.

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative example): Weinberg, R.S. & Gould, D. (2024). Foundations of sport and exercise psychology (8th Ed.) Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. ISBN:9781718207592.
- 2) Supplemental: None

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe, compare and evaluate major psychological theories relevant to sport, exercise, and performance.
- 2) Analyze research findings using social science methodology and apply them to behavioral phenomena in performance contexts.
- 3) Critically assess the role of cultural, social, and psychological variables in shaping individual and group performance.
- 4) Explain and demonstrate how social psychological principles can be used to interpret behavior in competitive, recreational, and occupational performance environments.