



Secret of the Winning Mind: Lessons from Sports Psychology

Course Instructor: Maria Zafar

Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences (JIBS)

4 Credit Course

SPRING SEMESTER 2026

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Office hours:

Classroom:

The information provided herein is by the Course Coordinator. The following information contains the official record of the details of the course.

PART I

Course Title: Secret of the Winning Mind: Lessons from Sports Psychology	
Course code	BE-E-0075
Course duration	1 Semester
Number of credit units	4
Level	PG
Pre-requisites	Nil
Pre-cursors	Nil
Equivalent courses	Nil
Exclusive courses	Nil
Class timings	

PART II

Course description

Due to our fast-paced lifestyle, anxiety is inevitable, stress looms large and there is constant pressure to maximise performance. This course aims at helping students learn about combatting performance anxiety, advancing efficiency to excel in deliverables, and emerging as the ‘real winner’ in any field. Students will also learn to apply psychological principles in sports. This is intended to help them develop an in-depth understanding of sportspersons’ situations, psychological pressures, demands, expectations, trauma, and challenges. Students will be briefed about the role and impact of performance anxiety and stress considering the volatile nature of sports careers. Additionally, the interactive classroom discussions will aid familiarization with and understanding of group dynamics, wellbeing, and leadership.

Course aims

1. To develop an understanding of the scope and perspectives of sports psychology
2. To learn about the different social psychological and cognitive dimensions in sports
3. To explore the fundamental concepts of motivation, performance anxiety, psychological pressures, and challenges
4. To appreciate individual differences and inculcate ways of improving general wellbeing

Course intended learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Foster an understanding of the psychological aspects that guide sports performance
2. Develop theoretical and empirical understanding of sports psychology relevant concepts (e.g., motivation, performance anxiety)
3. Apply learnings from/about sports psychology to relevant situations of daily life (e.g., dealing with anxiety, burnout) to enhance own wellbeing

Course format

This class will be taught using a combination of a lecture format, in-class discussions, case studies, and experiential and practical exercises. Students will be introduced to basic theoretical concepts on the topic for the week, while readings on the topic will supplement learning from the lectures. Students will be expected to engage in in-class activities and/or presentations. Other assessments will include written assignments, quizzes, and case study analysis.

Assessments

The breakdown of marks for the course will be as follows:

Component of evaluation	Marks
In-class quiz	10
Reflective memos submitted after each in-class activity	20
Class presentation (individual or group)	10
Class participation (attendance + engagement in classroom activities/discussions)	10
End semester exam (closed book and timed)	50

Grading

Letter Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Points	Interpretation
O	80 and above	8	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 to 79	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability.
A	70 to 74	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing material and originality in thinking and presentation.
A-	65 to 69	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 to 64	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 to 59	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 to 54	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials, and poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 to 49	2	Pass 1: Pass with basic understanding of the subject matter.

P2	40 to 44	1	Pass 2: Pass with rudimentary understanding of the subject matter.
F	Below 40	0	Fail; Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course.

Course outline and readings

Unit 1: Introduction to Sports Psychology

- Definition, history, scope of sports psychology
- What do sports psychologists do?
- Pre-requisites for sports psychological interventions

Readings

Cox, R. H. (2012). *Sports Psychology: Concepts and Applications* (7th Edition). McGraw Hill.

Weinberg, R,S; Gould, D. (2019). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (7th Edition). Human Kinetics.

Unit 2: Emotional Experience and Burnout

- Motivation: Types and strategies, flow state, passion, and confidence
- Exploring emotional experiences, aggression
- Psychological pressures, performance anxiety, stress, and burnout

Readings

Cox, R. H. (2012). *Sports Psychology: Concepts and Applications* (7th Edition). McGraw Hill.

Matsumoto, D., Konno, J., & Ha, H. Z. (2009). Sport psychology in combat sports. In R. Kordi, N. Maffulli, R. R. Wroble, & W. A. Wallace (Eds.), *Combat Sports Medicine* (pp. 41-53). Springer.

Weinberg, R,S; Gould, D. (2019). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (7th Edition). Human Kinetics.

Unit 3: Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Clutch performance
- Does perfectionism exist?

- Mental and physical health in a technologically evolving world

Readings

Burrows, K., Cunningham, L., & Rauker-Herman, C. (2021). *IOC Mental Health Elite Athletes Toolkit*. Switzerland: International Olympic Committee.

Johnson, A., Dey, S., Nguyen, H., Groth, M., Joyce, S., Tan, L., ... & Harvey, S. B. (2020). A review and agenda for examining how technology-driven changes at work will impact workplace mental health and employee well-being. *Australian journal of management*, 45(3), 402-424.

Swann, C., Crust, L., Jackman, P., Vella, S. A., Allen, M. S., & Keegan, R. (2017). Performing under pressure: Exploring the psychological state underlying clutch performance in sport. *Journal of sports sciences*, 35(23), 2272-2280.

WHO Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour. (2020). Geneva: World Health Organization.

Williamon, A., & Antonini Philippe, R. (2020). Wellbeing in and through performance: perspectives from sports and music. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 399.

Woessner, M. N., Tacey, A., Levinger-Limor, A., Parker, A. G., Levinger, P., & Levinger, I. (2021). The evolution of technology and physical inactivity: the good, the bad, and the way forward. *Frontiers in public health*, 9, 655491.

Unit 4: Social Support and Maximising Performance

- Competition versus cooperation
- Athlete-coach-parents' relationship
- Psychological skills training

Readings

Cox, R. H. (2012). *Sports Psychology: Concepts and Applications* (7th Edition). McGraw Hill.

Hammermeister, J., & VonGuenthner, S. (2005). Sport psychology: Training the mind for competition. *Current Sports Medicine Reports*, 4(3), 160-164.

Matsumoto, D., Konno, J., & Ha, H. Z. (2009). Sport psychology in combat sports. In R. Kordi, N. Maffulli, R. R. Wroble, & W. A. Wallace (Eds.), *Combat Sports Medicine* (pp. 41-53). Springer.

Weinberg, R.S; Gould, D. (2019). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (7th Edition). Human Kinetics.

Unit 5: Conclusion and recap

- Success versus failure

- The winning mindset
- Personal reflections: Who is a real winner?

Readings

Borum, R. (2008). A Winning Mindset. *Mental Health Law & Policy Faculty Publications*. 550.

Hammermeister, J., & VonGuenthner, S. (2005). Sport psychology: Training the mind for competition. *Current Sports Medicine Reports*, 4(3), 160-164.

Classroom conduct

You are expected to be punctual to classes and maintain classroom decorum. Students arriving after a ten-minute window from the designated start time will be refused entry/attendance. You are expected to participate in classroom discussions and activities. Each individual brings a perspective that we value, so you are welcome to share your thoughts in the class: do so respectfully and with openness to other perspectives that may differ from yours.

Attendance policy

Students are expected to attend all classes (100% attendance). If you are unable to attend a class, it is expected that you would inform the course instructor, orally or in writing, the reason for your absence. A minimum of 75% attendance is mandatory, failing which, you would not be permitted to take the final exam or end term exam.

Use of electronics in the classroom

I would encourage you to not use mobile phones, laptops, or tablets in the classroom. Note taking should be in the traditional pen and paper style.

Plagiarism policy

Plagiarism is not acceptable. Please refrain from copying and pasting paragraphs and sentences from your reading materials. This includes copying someone's words, structure, grammar, ideas, thoughts, and phrases and passing them as your own. Too many quotes are not acceptable.

What is acceptable? Using one quote which is not more than 40 words with proper citation. Use citations wherever appropriate. Present the content you read from your reading materials in your own words. The source should always be acknowledged in your written material and presentation. All submissions will be checked electronically for plagiarism.

AI policy

Regardless of the institute's policy regarding AI usage, in this class, your submissions are expected to have zero AI-written content. All submissions will be checked electronically for AI content.

Safe space pledge

Some parts of this course may discuss a range of issues that might result in distress for some students. To make sure that all students collectively benefit from the course, and do not feel troubled due to either the contents of the course or the conduct of the discussions, it is incumbent upon all within the classroom to pledge to maintain respect towards our peers. This does not mean that you need to feel restrained about what you feel and what you want to say. Conversely, this is about creating a safe space where everyone can speak and learn without inhibition and fear.

Disability support and accommodation requirements

JGU endeavours to make all its courses accessible to students. All students with a known disability needing academic accommodations are required to register with the Disability Support Committee dsc@jgu.edu.in. The Committee has so far identified the following conditions that could possibly hinder student's overall well-being: physical and mobility related difficulties; visual impairment; hearing impairment; medical conditions; specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia; mental health.

The Disability Support Committee maintains strict confidentiality in its discussions. The students should preferably register with the Committee in the first week of the semester as disability accommodation requires early planning. DSC will approve and coordinate all the disability related services such as appointment of academic mentors, specialized interventions and course related requirements such as accessible classrooms for lectures, tutorials, and examinations.

Centre for wellness and counselling services

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