Purpose:

The goals of this course is to examine human behavior in the context of athletic pursuits. It is hoped that students will also gain a greater understanding of psychological science, theory, and practice by exploring its application to the domains of sport and exercise. Important themes include: understanding and maintaining a healthy orientation toward practice, achievement, and competition; encouraging personal growth for ourselves and others through athletic endeavors; and facilitating the pursuit of excellence. We will also examine group processes, leadership, and coaching. Other topics will include: techniques for performance enhancement; promoting wellness; psychopathology in sport; issues around race and gender in sport.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Discussion questions** – Each week, all students will formulate four questions (two for each chapter when there are two chapters due) for discussion from the textbook readings for that class. These will be due by noon on the day before each class. These will be graded on the following 3 point scale: 3 – thoughtful and reflect careful reading of the text; 2 – mildly thoughtful and relevant; 1 – complete but neither thoughtful nor carefully formulated. Late questions will not be accepted. This will make up 20% of your final grade.

2. **Self-directed goal setting/performance enhancement program** – Students will conduct a semester-long program designed to explore and achieve personal athletic or exercise-related goals. Based on the sport-psychology literature, students will formulate meaningful goals, track their progress, design interventions for performance enhancement, and write a report about their experience. Students will be asked twice during the semester to present tracking data and discuss their progress. This will be make up 39% of your grade.

3. **Exams** – There will be two exams, a mid-term and a final. Both will be multiple choice and will cover both assigned readings and material from lectures. This will make up 39% of your grade.

4. **Attendance/Class Participation** – Attendance will be taken in class. Consistent attendance and attentive participation in class will be helpful in two ways: both exams will contain question on material that will not be represented in the readings; there will be a class attendance/participation score, representing 2% of your grade, that will be enough to bump up borderline grades.

SCHEDULE:

**August 29**
No assignments due

Introduction to sport psychology
Review of basic psychological theories and methods
Begin discussion of goal-setting

**September 12**
Don’t forget, discussion questions due noon on the day before class!

Readings Due: Weinberg, Chapters 1 & 15

Harwood, *Goals: More than just the score*, from The Sport Psych Handbook (article handed out in class the previous week)

Goal setting and goal setting project
**September 19**
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapter 4
Balague, *Anxiety, from pumped to panicked*, from *The Sport Psych Handbook*
Gallwey, Chapter 1 – Reflections on the mental side of tennis

**Assignment due today!**  Goal setting program plan

Arousal, stress, and anxiety
Introduction to the inner game

**September 26**
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapter 6
Gallwey, Chapters 2 & 6

Feedback, reinforcement, and intrinsic motivation
Self-criticism, motivation, and the “two selves”

**October 3**
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapters 7 & 8

Group and team dynamics
Group cohesion

**October 10**
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapters 9 & 10

Leadership
Communication

**October 17**
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapter 11
Gallwey, Chapters 4 & 8

Psychological Skills Training

Guest speaker today: Jennifer Niebling, Head Coach, St. Michael’s College women’s basketball team

**October 24**
Mid-term exam
October 31
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapters 12 & 13
               Murphy, *Use of imagery in sport Imagery: Inner Theater Becomes Reality*, from *The Sport Psych Handbook*

Arousal regulation
Imagery

November 7
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapter 5
               Gallwey, Chapter 9
               Botterill, *Competitive Drive: Embracing Positive Rivalries*, from *The Sport Psych Handbook*

Cal Botterill
A healthy approach to competition

November 14
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapters 17 & 18
Assignment due: goal-setting program tracking data

Exercise and well-being
Exercise behavior and adherence

November 21
Readings due today: Weinberg, Chapters 19 & 20

Athletic injuries and psychology
Addictive and unhealthy behaviors

November 28
Readings due today: Chapters 21 & 22
Assignment due: goal-setting program final written reports

Burnout and overtraining
Children’s development through sport

December 5
Readings due today: Chapters 23 & 24

Aggression in sport
Character development and sportsmanship
December 8-16
Reading days and final exam

Congratulations on getting through another semester!