

Course Title	: Sports Psychology in Practice
Course Code	: SCE4009
Recommended Study Year	: Year 4
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Sectional Approach
Class Contact Hours	: 3 hours per week
Category	: Major Electives
Discipline	: Sports
Prerequisite(s)	: SCE4006 Foundation of Sports Psychology for Coach
Co-requisite(s)	: NIL
Exclusion(s)	: NIL
Exemption Requirement(s)	: NIL

Brief Course Description

This course is an advanced course that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical training in sports psychology for both individuals and teams. Students will develop foundational counselling and communication skills essential for effective support to the client, including the athlete, coach, parents and other stakeholders. The course covers team talk techniques and explores contemporary issues such as body image disturbance, eating disorders, burnout, and self-confidence through detailed case studies. Emphasizing applied learning, students will analyse and report on a selected team's or athlete's psychological profile, culminating in a comprehensive individual final report. A practicing sports psychologist will be invited to share their experience and provide guidance to the students. This course prepares students to have the basic practical skills to assist the sports psychologist in handling cases in real sporting environments.

Aims

The course aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of psychological principles applied to sports settings. It focuses on enhancing athletic performance, mental resilience, and motivation through evidence-based techniques. Students will develop evidence-based techniques in psychological assessment, intervention strategies, dealing with team communication quagmires, preparing them to support the client effectively working with sports psychologists.

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply counselling and communication skills grounded in sport psychology principles in structured consultations, demonstrating mental skills support, and maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries;
2. Critically analyse athlete or team psychological issues using relevant sports psychology theories and case evidence to identify key influencing factors.;
3. Evaluate and justify evidence-based psychological support strategies for athletes or teams using evidence and professional reasoning; and
4. Synthesise case analysis, rationale, and recommendations in a clear, professionally structured written report that sports coaching counterparts can understand and use.

Indicative Content

1. Basic counselling and communication skills
 - a. Emotional analysis and assessment
 - b. Stress management and anxiety reduction
 - c. Mental skills support
2. Core sports psychology theories
 - a. Confidence building and self-efficacy
 - b. Team dynamics and cohesion

- c. Leadership and coaching psychology
- 3. Sports psychology justifications
 - a. Stress, burnout and contemporary clinical issues (e.g. Eating Disorders, Negative Body Image, etc.)
 - b. Injury rehabilitation and psychological recovery
- 4. Report writing and documentation
 - a. Proper process report format and case presentation
 - b. Ethics and professional practice

Teaching Method

The course is conducted through a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, classroom discussions, case studies, role-plays and workshops. Instructors use real-life examples to explain key concepts and encourage students to actively engage in learning by researching relevant information. Students are expected to demonstrate basic counselling and communication skills to provide mental skills support to a client during in-class discussion and role-play exercises, while instructors will offer immediate feedback as part of formative assessment. Lectures are supported by pertinent reading materials, which students are expected to review prior to each session. In the format of a group project, students will analyse and discuss case materials, such as the case of eating disorders or burnout, to develop evidence-based sport psychology justifications and design a support programme with execution demonstration in a group project setting. A practicing sport psychologist will be invited to share professional insights and provide formative feedback. For the final assessment, each student will select a case, conduct an independent analysis, and submit a written process report to record simulated client sessions in the form of a summative assessment, to build up the practical skill to assist a sports psychologist in real sporting environments.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

In-class participation and discussion assess students' understanding and ability to apply the counselling and communication skills and embed the theories, concepts and knowledge of sports psychology into coaching practice. Instructors will offer immediate feedback as part of formative assessment. (LOs 1-2)

Group project provides the opportunity for students to integrate and apply the knowledge concepts and principles of sports psychology and psychological approaches in sports. Students are required to search for and study the case materials on a particular topic, such as eating disorders or burnout, and design an evidence-based support programme with execution demonstration in a formative assessment approach. (LOs 1-3)

An individual case study with oral presentation and written process report requires students to show their understanding of the concept and knowledge in sports psychology. This individual case study will serve as the summative assessment of practical competence to assist a sports psychologist in real sporting environments. (LOs 1-4)

Learning Outcome	In-class participation and discussion	Group project	Individual case study
1. Apply counselling and communication skills grounded in sport psychology principles in structured consultations, demonstrating mental skills support, and maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries	✓	✓	✓
2. Critically analyse athlete or team psychological issues	✓	✓	✓

using relevant sports psychology theories and case evidence to identify key influencing factors			
3. Evaluate and justify evidence-based psychological support strategies for athletes or teams using evidence and professional reasoning		✓	✓
4. Synthesise case analysis, rationale, and recommendations in a clear, professionally structured written report that sports coaching counterparts can understand and use			✓

Assessment

In-class participation and discussion: 20%

Group Project: 40%

Individual case study: 40% (Presentation 20%, Final report 20%)

Required/Essential Readings

Thompson, M., & Nash, C. (Eds.). (2026). *Case Studies in Sport Coaching and Development: Practice Meets Theory*. Taylor & Francis.

Moffat, Z. L., & McCarthy, P. J. (2024). Process reports in applied sport psychology: A tool for professional development. *Journal of Sport psychology in action*, 15(2), 70-81.

Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (2019). *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (7 ed.). Human Kinetics. Nicholls, A. R. (2017). *Psychology in Sports Coaching: Theory and Practice* (2 ed.). Routledge.

Cremades, J. G., & Tashman, L. S. (2016). *Global practices and training in applied sport, exercise, and performance psychology*. Taylor and Francis.

Andersen, M. B. (Ed.). (2005). *Sport psychology in practice*. Human Kinetics.

Recommended/Supplementary Readings

Henriksen, K., Huang, Z., Bartley, J., Kenttä, G., Purcell, R., Wagstaff, C. R., ... & Schinke, R. (2026). The role of high-performance sport environments in mental health: An international society of sport psychology consensus statement. *International journal of sport and exercise psychology*, 24(2), 269-291.

Tod, D., Hutter, R. V., & Eubank, M. (2017). Professional development for sport psychology practice. *Current opinion in psychology*, 16, 134-137.

Chan, D. K. C., Lee, A. S. Y., Hagger, M. S., Mok, K. M., & Yung, P. S. H. (2017). Social psychological aspects of ACL injury prevention and rehabilitation: An integrated model for behavioral adherence. *Asia-Pacific journal of sports medicine, arthroscopy, rehabilitation and technology*, 10, 17-20.

Rees, T., Alexander Haslam, S., Coffee, P., & Lavalley, D. (2015). A social identity approach to sport psychology: Principles, practice, and prospects. *Sports medicine*, 45(8), 1083-1096.

Cropley, B., Hanton, S., Miles, A., & Niven, A. (2010). Exploring the relationship between effective and reflective practice in applied sport psychology. *The Sport Psychologist*, 24(4), 521-541.

Meyer, B. B., & Fletcher, T. B. (2007). Emotional intelligence: A theoretical overview and implications for research and professional practice in sport psychology. *Journal of applied sport psychology*, 19(1), 1-15.

Danish, S. J., & Male, B. D. (1981). Toward an understanding of the practice of sport psychology. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 3(2), 90-99.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations and Coursework. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.
- (5) Students must adhere to the University’s guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents “*Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University*” and “*Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments*” can be found here: <https://www.ln.edu.hk/cital/generative-artificial-intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices>.