

**RPTM 297F**  
**Fall, 2014**

**Mental Training for Golf**

Monday 6:15 – 7:15pm

August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 (note - no class October 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>)

**Location**

10 Life Science Building

**Instructor:**

David Yukelson, Ph.D., Director of Sport Psychology Services

Morgan Academic Support Center for Student-Athletes

301 Bank of America Career Services Center, Penn State University

865-4396, ([y39@psu.edu](mailto:y39@psu.edu)) Office Hours by Appointment

**Course Description**

This course is designed to teach golfers mental preparation strategies and mental focusing skills associated with performance excellence in golf. Drawing from sport psychology literature, specific areas that will be addressed include the psychology of excellence and peak performance states, motivation and intrinsic incentives for playing golf, mental preparation and self-regulation skills to perform with more confidence, full focus, consistency, and composure. Specific applications will include pre-shot routines, effective course management skills, playing the game one shot/round at a time, and refocusing techniques. In addition, stress and its impact on concentration and self-confidence will be discussed, along with teaching considerations for the potential club professional (e.g., for those of you PGM students).

The key to mental training is to create the ideal mental and emotional state of mind that will allow an individual to compete with confidence and perform at peak on a more consistent basis. Like physical skills, mental skills are learned and require practice to be perfected. The goals of the course are to teach golfers skills from which to be more confident, focused, and in control of what they are trying to accomplish in performance situations, and to recognize the same mental training skills that help an individual succeed in sport are transferable to other areas in life as well.

***Texts (Optional)***

Coop, R. & Fields, B. (1993). Mind over Golf. New York: Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Valiante, G. (2013). Golf Flow. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics

Rotella, R. (1995). Golf is Not a Game of Perfect. New York: Simon and Schuster Books

Rotella, R. (2008). Your 15<sup>th</sup> Club: The Inner Secret to Great Golf. New York: Simon and Schuster Books

Gallway, T. (1997). The Inner Game of Golf (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). New York: Random House

Nilsson, P., & Marriott, L. (2005). Every Shot Must Have a Purpose. Gotham Books

Other (a mental training book of your choice – must get approval from Dr. Yukelson before proceeding)

**Evaluation:** Evaluation will be based on the following: **comprehensive book review** (read one of the aforementioned books above – detailed critique beginning with summary of what the book was about, chapters and key concepts that stood out most to you and why, then bring it all together with specific application of ideas learned from reading the book to you and your golf game – particularly the mental side of things; **mental training assignment** (research a topic of interest regarding the mental side of golf that will help you be a better and/or instructor, write up 2-3 page paper summarizing key findings and how you will apply this information in the future), **mental training journal/project** (choose from topics listed in mental training handout, or design your own mental skills assessment journal – I am looking for 6 “quality” entries plus an integrative summary statement at the end reflecting on what everything you have written about means to you – as an alternative **create an innovative you tube project** capturing through video how you might teach mental skills to a fairly skilled golfer – check with instructor for guidance and direction before starting), **final exam** (reflections on key concepts learned in class, develop an individualized mental preparation and tournament focusing plan to help you perform at your best while competing, and a refocusing composure plan to help get back on track quickly). Homework assignments and class participation/attendance make up rest of the grade.

Comprehensive Book Review (due October 6 <sup>th</sup> )	20%
Mental Training Assignment (due November 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	15%
Mental Training Journal or You tube project (due November 17 <sup>th</sup> )	20%
Final Exam	30%
Homework Assignments/Class Participation	15%

Note: this is a "hands on" experiential course so attendance at all class meetings is required. Your final grade will be lowered if you have 2 or more unexcused absences or fail to complete homework assignments.

## Course Outline

### **I. Getting Started: Introduction and Overview**

- The Psychology of Performance Excellence applied to golf and life
- Why golf demands so much mentally and emotionally
- Understanding the personal meaning you attach to your sport experience (golf)
- Taking responsibility for your mental game

### **II. Mental Skills Training: Mastering the Inner Basics of Peak Performance**

- Getting to know your own patterns: What is it like when you are playing great golf? What is it like when you are not performing so great? How can you achieve optimal performances on a more consistent basis?
- The importance of self-awareness, self-understanding, and self-control
- Using goals effectively to maximize performance (SMART Goals, Process/Performance Goals)
- Personal performance goals: focus on the process of improving and playing your best golf
- Self-regulation skills (relaxation, anxiety and energy management, affirmations, positive mind-set)
- Centering Techniques and diaphragmatic breathing: (clears tension and mind clutter, stay in the present)
- Mindfulness training: Staying focused and in the present (one shot/hole at a time)
- The skill of focus: much more than simply concentration
- The importance of a solid pre-shot routine: Plan, commit, ready, trust
- Composure and refocusing: Learning how to let go of frustration and mistakes quickly
- Trust and Confidence: The Essence of what it is all about
- Visualization and performance planning: programming your mind and muscles for success
- Successful Self-Talk: Positive mindset and skills for overcoming stinking thinking
- Effective Course Management Skills: decision making and emotion management under pressure
- Mental toughness: managing peak performance under pressure
- Emotional Traps: Overcoming anger, fear, doubt, frustration
- Self- Assessment: Post shot routines, mental training logs, and personal feedback sheets
- Ongoing Learning: Always positive lessons and perspectives

### **III. Other Topical Areas of Interest Related to Golf**

- Discussion of Coop's 7 Habits of Highly Effective Golfers
- Valiante's Ten Keys to Flow on the course
- Doc Rotella's 15<sup>th</sup> club – believing in yourself
- Doc Rotella's Ten Commandments: Play to play great
- Doc Rotella's Golf is not a game of perfect
- Smart Golf (Owens and Kirschenbaum, 1998): Play to your own personal par
- Gallway's Inner Game of Golf (self1/self2, non-judgmental learning, biofeedback hum exercise)

### **IV. Teaching Considerations for the Club Professional**

- Handling the multiple demands of being a club professional
- Motivating and impacting individuals of all skill levels
- Building a good practice routine within your students
- Applying mental skills into your teaching methods
- Communicating your knowledge in an effective manner
- Getting high handicappers to see the big picture and enjoy the game
- From practice tee to 1<sup>st</sup> tee