Psychology of Peak Performance

Semester: Spring 2017
Copenhagen
Credits: 3
Days: Monday & Thursday
Time: 13.15-14.35
Room: V23-201

Major Disciplines: Organizational Behavior, Psychology

Course Information and Purpose

1. Instructor Information:

   Instructor:
   **Jørn Ravnholt Petersen**


   Psychology Program Director:
   **Carla Caetano, Ph.D.**

   DIS Contact:
   Psychology Program Assistant:
   **Kate Giddens**
   Email: kg@dis.dk
   Phone: +45 33 76 57 64

   Guest Lecturer
   **Lars Rosshen DIS Psychology Faculty**


   - Topic: Understanding the importance of recognizing psychopathology, Addictive and unhealthy (body image, eating disorder, depression, alcohol, drug abuse) behavior and the referral process

Psychology of Peak Performance I DIS – Study Abroad in Scandinavia
Related Majors: Leadership Studies, Organizational Behavior
2. Course Description:

Prerequisites: A course in Psychology at the university level.

What is Peak Performance? How is it developed, enhanced and maintained? This course will explore the development and maintenance of optimal performance in diverse domains such as business, the performing arts as well as in sports, the military, or any other sphere of action with a performance component. Using theoretical perspectives and research findings from Performance Psychology, this dynamic field will be supplemented with Scandinavian and European case examples as regards application.

Emphasis will be given to motivation, personality, teamwork, imagery, self-talk, stress management and other domains pertaining to peak performance. Human factors as well as the effect of cultural values and expectations (with examples from a Scandinavian context) will be explored as regards individuals, teams, and groups. Both difficulties in achieving success as well as methods for optimizing success will be considered.

3. Objectives:

- Be able to describe what psychology of peak performance is and understand major developments in the history of psychology of peak performance in relation to other fields of psychology, when applied to multiple performance settings.
- The role of psychological characteristics in facilitating the pathway to peak performance, and understanding effects of competition and cooperation on human behavior, and how feedback and reinforcement affect learning and performance.
- Understand how a person’s psychological makeup influence individual behavior in multiple performance contexts, and describe how psychological techniques help people perform more effectively.
- Synthesize theoretical perspectives and practical approaches in order to cope with injuries and performance setbacks.
- Recognize critical concerns of performance environments, and understand potential negative effects in pursuit of peak performance.

Regarding application

- Explore and identify from the research of psychology of peak performance how psychological techniques may be applied to students’ own lives and their study goals, explore and experience psychological techniques and review relevant research supporting the practice.

Course Components


2. Articles and Other Media on Canvas: See selected reading list after course schedule

3. Approach to teaching:

Each session begins with a short systematic lecture of the themes in question. The presentation will cover both theoretical and research (and when significant also historical) issues involved, while taking account of contemporary challenges in everyday performing life. This initial presentation will help to frame the subsequent discussion in the class, which will deal with the texts that the student has read in preparation for the session. The student can expect a lively and systematically oriented teacher who will attempt to make the issues both engaging and relevant to a contemporary peak performance setting while maintaining a substantial theoretical level and the necessary applied and practical perspective with references to American and European/Danish Perspectives where applicable.
4. Field studies:
   - Exact Locations To Be Announced – examples include visiting The Royal Danish Ballet Company, the National Wrestling Center or The Royal Music Conservatory. These field studies will include an opportunity to interview a “world class performer” (See class assignment for details).

5. Expectations of the students:
   Complete all reading assignments prior to coming to class in order to contribute to class discussions and group activities. These activities will require you to:
   - Draw upon your own experiences with performance
   - Use group interactions and observations from targeted performance arenas in Denmark and apply this to theory, research, and practices of Psychology of Peak Performance
   - Create a log of own reflections throughout the course.
   - Work independently and be active in group work

6. Class Representatives: Each semester DIS looks for class representatives to become an official spokesperson for their class group, addressing any concerns that may arise (in academic or related matters), suggesting improvements and coming up with new ideas. Class representatives are a great way for DIS faculty to ensure better and timelier feedback on their courses, assessments and teaching styles, and as such perform an invaluable role in connecting student needs with faculty instruction during term time. Class Representatives will be elected in class at the beginning of the semester.

Assignments and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods of Evaluation</th>
<th>How evaluated</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Engagement (11%)</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Ongoing Start Jan. 27th</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes (9) weekly mind maps (9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Paper 1 &amp; 2 (15% each)</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Fri. Feb. 24th</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fri. Apr. 7th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Class Performer Interview Assignment</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Fri. Apr. 28th</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Fri. May 5th</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation and Engagement: (20%)
   - Students are expected to be actively engaged in discussions and have the ability to translate theory and research into an understanding of daily peak performance. Students are expected to have completed class readings in preparation for class discussion. **Weekly mind maps** (1 page) will be expected (9 total) that integrate theory, research or application of diverse topics related to the Psychology of Peak Performance. Further instructions will be given in class.
Short Paper Assignments 1 & 2: (30% Total)
**Due Date:** 1st paper – Friday Feb. 24th, 2nd paper – Friday Apr. 7th

- Three “topic-application papers” (3 pp +/- 1 page, 12 pt font and db. spaced - without title and reference page – APA style). References should be specified with type and amount, where the student apply the core concepts of one or more topics of peak performance to everyday performance situations, and analyze the different perspectives through theory and research. Further instructions will be given in class.

World Class Performer Assignment: (20%)
**Due Date** Friday Apr. 28th
Students will be expected to conduct an interview with a world class performer (music, dance or sport) concerning peak performance. The interview will consist of a series of questions based on readings from this course. Findings from the interview should be integrated with literature and key areas for future research considered. Further guidelines will be given in class. (5 pp +/- 1 page, 12 pt font and db. spaced - without title and reference page – APA style).

Final Paper: (30%)
**Due Date**: Friday May 5th.
- A final paper (8-10 pages, 12 pt font and db. spaced - without title and reference page – APA style) synthesizing theoretical perspectives and practical approaches to cultivate new set-up for peak performance in self chosen performance area. Further instructions will be given in class.

To be eligible for a passing grade in this class you must complete all of the assigned work.

Disability and resource statement: Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Academic Support ([acadsupp@dis.dk](mailto:acadsupp@dis.dk)) to coordinate this. In order to receive accommodations, students should inform the instructor of approved DIS accommodations within the first two weeks of classes.

Policies

**Attendance**
You are expected to attend all DIS classes when scheduled. If you miss a class for any reason please contact the faculty no later than the day of the missed class. If you miss multiple classes, the Office of Academic Support and the Director of Student Affairs will be notified and they will follow-up with you to make sure that all is well. Absences will jeopardize your grade and your standing at DIS. Allowances will be made in cases of illness, but in the case of multiple absences, you will need to provide a doctor’s note. Students should be punctual and attend all classes. Missing classes without a legitimate excuse will result in a lower final grade.

**Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and Violating the Rules of an Assignment**
DIS expects that students abide by the highest standards of intellectual honesty in all academic work. DIS assumes that all students do their own work and credit all work or thought taken from others. Academic dishonesty will result in a final course grade of “F” and can result in dismissal. The students’ home universities will be notified. DIS reserves the right to request that written student assignments be turned in electronic form for submission to plagiarism detection software. See the Academic Handbook for more information, or ask your instructor if you have questions.

**Policy on late papers:** Late papers will be accepted, but your grade for the paper will be reduced by half a point for each day that it is late.
Policy for students who arrive late to class: This policy will be decided upon by the instructor. See section on participation.

Use of laptops or phones in class: Students are allowed to use computers in the classroom, but if they choose to do so, they are required to sit in the front two rows of the class. It is important to read all required material in order to get full benefit from the classes. Cell phones are to be shut off during class and texting/SMS'ing etc. during class will have a negative impact on your participation grade.
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Welcome to Psychology of Peak Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, January 19th</strong>&lt;br&gt;Class 1&lt;br&gt;Topics to be covered today:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Welcome to Psychology Of Peak Performance&lt;br&gt;- Course Outline and assignments&lt;br&gt;- Using Canvas with this course&lt;br&gt;- Structure of classes&lt;br&gt;- History of Psychology of Peak Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required Readings</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textbook:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Monday, January 23rd**<br>Class 2<br>Topics to be covered today: |
| - Different models of Peak Performance<br>- Psychology of Peak performance in Scandinavia - Denmark |
| **Required Readings** |
| **Canvas:** |

| **Thursday, January 26th**<br>Class 3<br>Topics to be covered today: |
| - Identification of mental skills and behaviors<br>- Factors influencing development and performance<br>- Psychological characteristics as determinants of performance |
| **Required Readings** |
| **Canvas:** |
### Monday, January 30th

**Class 4**

**Topics to be covered today:**
- Examining environmental and stage-related differences in skills and behaviors.
- The difference between competition and cooperation, and why competition can be both good and bad.

**Required Readings**

**Textbook:**

Please note that while this reading as been assigned before you should review this reading as we will be discussing it in class again with a different perspective.

**Recommended Readings:**

**Textbook:**

**Canvas:**

### Thursday, February 2nd

**Class 5**

**Topics to be covered today:**
- Learn about participants – personality and motivational perspectives
- Major approaches to understand personality
- Motivation and its components
- Achievement motivation and competitiveness

**Required Readings**

**Textbook:**

**Recommended Readings:**

**Canvas:**

---

**Core Course Week- No Classes**

Monday February 6th — Saturday February 11th
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, February 13th</th>
<th>Topics to be covered today:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 6</td>
<td>• Understand psychology of being in transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Models of transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Influence of transitions on peak performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Readings**

**Textbook:**


---

**Thursday, February 16th**

**Class 7**

**Topics to be covered today:**

• Discussion regarding preparation, prospects and limits
• Issues in the practice of peak performance

**Required Readings**

**Canvas:**


---

**Monday, February 20th**

**Class 8**

**Topics to be covered today:**

• Understand arousal regulation through increased self-awareness
• Multimodal anxiety reduction techniques
• Coping strategies to deal with competitive stress
• On-site relaxation tips

**Required Readings**

**Textbook:**


**Canvas:**


---

**Field Study**

**TBA**

**Date:** Wednesday February 22nd

**Time:** 8:30-12:30

**Location:** TBA

**Objectives of field study:** World Class Performer Interview Assignment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics to be covered today:</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday,</td>
<td>Definition of imagery and the effectiveness of imagery in enhancing performance</td>
<td>Textbook:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 9</td>
<td>Factors influencing the imagery effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Textbook:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, February 24th</td>
<td><strong>Short Paper 1 Due</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Travel Break / Long Study Tour</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Saturday February 25th—Sunday March 5th</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, March 6th</td>
<td><strong>Topics to be covered today:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 10</td>
<td>- How to work with self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sources of (sport) confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How expectations affect performance and behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Canvas:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, March 9th</td>
<td><strong>Topics to be covered today:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 11</td>
<td>- What goals are and types of goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Principles of goal setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Common problems in goal setting and how to overcome them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Canvas:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, March 13th</td>
<td><strong>Topics to be covered today:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 12</td>
<td>- “Best” concentration and self-talk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Different types of attentional focus and some attentional challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required Readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Textbook:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Theme 3: Group Perspectives

**Thursday, March 16th**  
**Class 13**

**Topics to be covered today:**
- Group and team dynamics
- Theories of group developments – group structure
- Effective team climate

**Required Readings**

**Textbook:**

**Canvas:**

---

**Travel Break / Long Study Tour**  
**No class**  
**Saturday March 18th—Sunday March 26th**

---

**Monday, March 27th**  
**Class 14**

**Topics to be covered today:**
- Group cohesion vs. “I”
- Relationship between cohesion and peak performance
- Strategies for enhancing cohesion

**Required Readings**

**Textbook:**

**Canvas:**

---

**Thursday, March 30th**  
**Class 15**

**Topics to be covered today:**
- Definition of leadership
- Interactional approaches to leadership
- Components of effective leadership

**Required Readings**

**Canvas:**
Monday, April 3rd  
**Class 16**

Topics to be covered today:
- Communication processes
- Sending and receiving messages effectively
- Breakdowns in communication and how to improve communications
- Dealing with confrontation and delivering constructive criticism

Required Readings
Canvas:

### Theme 4: Challenges and Interventions

**Thursday, April 6th**  
**Class 17**

Topics to be covered today:
- Psychology of injuries
- Psychological antecedents – predisposing people to injuries
- Psychological reactions to injuries… and setbacks
- Signs of poor adjustment to injury
- Implementing psychological skills in rehab

Required Readings
Canvas:

**Friday, April 7th**  
**Short Paper 2 Due**

**Monday, April 10th**  
**Class 18**

Topics to be covered today:
- Burnout, staleness and overtraining
- Causes, symptoms, treatment and prevention of burnouts

Required Readings
Canvas:

### Travel Break

**No Class**  
**Wednesday, April 12th—Monday April 17th**
### Field Study
**TBA**
**Date:** Wednesday April 19th  
**Time:** 13:00-17:00  
**Location:** TBA  
**Objectives of field study:** World Class Performer Interview Assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday, April 20th</th>
<th>Topics to be covered today:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Class 19             | - Doing Peak Performance in the coaching or instructing role  
|                      | - Ethical and practical considerations  
|                      | - Teaching general and performance-specific psychological skills  
**Required Readings**  
**Canvas:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, April 24th</th>
<th>Topics to be covered today:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Class 20          | - Understand the importance of recognizing psychopathology - I  
| Guest Lecturer    | - Addictive and unhealthy (body image, eating disorder, depression, alcohol, drug abuse) behavior  
| Lars Rossen       | - Referral processes  
**Required Readings**  
**Canvas:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday, April 27th</th>
<th>Topics to be covered today:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Class 21            | - Understand the importance of recognizing psychopathology - II  
| Guest Lecturer      | - Addictive and unhealthy (body image, eating disorder, depression, alcohol, drug abuse) behavior  
| Lars Rossen         | - Referral processes  
**Required Readings**  
**Canvas:**  

| Friday, April 28th  | World Class Performer Assignment Due |

---

**Psychology of Peak Performance** | DIS – Study Abroad in Scandinavia  
**Related Majors:** Leadership Studies, Organizational Behavior
## Theme 6: Future directions and challenges

### Monday, May 1st
**Class 22**

**Topics to be covered today:**
- **Peak Performance – so what?** Apply covered class material to an individual chosen situation - Create a Plan for Peak Performance

**Required Readings**
- **Canvas:**
  - TBA

### Thursday, May 4th
**Class 23**

**Topics to be covered today:**
- **Final Wrap-Up**

**Required Readings**
- **Canvas:**
  - TBA

---

**Finals Week May 8th to May 11th**

**No Final Exam**

**Final paper due at 3 pm**

**Friday, May 5th**

---

### Selected Reading List:

#### Selected chapters from textbooks – more to follow:

#### Selected research articles – more to follow: