EXERSCI 711

Exercise and Performance Psychology
(15 Points)

(Semester 2, Newmarket Campus)

Who should take this course?

This course is designed for postgraduate students (BSc honours, MSc and PhD students) who are interested in how psychological states affect human motor control and performance. In particular, the course will examine how high-pressure circumstances affect the perception, selection and execution of goal-directed action.

In sports, athletes push themselves to the limits to reach the top. At work, people struggle to meet demanding deadlines. High levels of performance pressure can induce psychophysiological responses (e.g., stress, anxiety) that impair cognitive functioning and alter the deliberate control of movement. Whether it is in sports or at work, learning to improve performance under high-pressure circumstances, starts with understanding the pressure-performance relationship.

In this research-oriented course you will (i) be introduced to both classic and contemporary theories explaining the pressure-performance relationship; (ii) engage in critical discussion of recent empirical work; and (iii) learn to express your own scientific opinion in a response paper.

Learning aims

1. To gain awareness of how specific elements of a performance situation can induce high pressure.
2. To gain understanding of how motor performance may be influenced by psychological states associated with high-pressure.
3. To familiarize with and distinguish between different theories explaining the influence of high-pressure on performance.
4. To develop competency in critically assessing empirical evidence (as published in journal articles) and to express one’s scientific opinion in a response paper.
Learning and Teaching

One three-hour seminar per week.

The seminars consist of: i) in-depth lectures covering theory and empirical research on the pressure-performance relationship; ii) class discussions; and iii) tutorials to support working on course assignments (i.e., article reviewing and writing a response paper)

**Note.** To successfully complete the course, existing understanding of basic concepts covered in undergraduate courses about Sport Psychology (e.g., motivation, anxiety, attention, psychological skills), Movement Neuroscience (e.g., basic anatomy of the human brain, perceptual-motor control) and Research Methods (e.g., research design and statistics) is helpful. For students without prior coursework in these areas, additional study may be required.

**Teaching Staff**

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**Assessment**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Article Reviews</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Response Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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- Assignment 1 asks you to critically assess selected journal articles and to express your scientific opinion about these articles in a brief review report.
- Assignment 2 asks you to write a response paper (1500-2000 words) about a recently published journal article of your own choice.
- The Final Exam consists of 8-10 short answer questions and covers the content of all course lectures.

**Literature**

A reading list with selected journal articles will be placed in Canvas.