

**Eastern Illinois University**  
**Course Proposal**  
**EIU 4103G, Physical Activity and Mental Wellness**

**1. Catalog Description**

- a. Course level: 4103G
- b. Title: Physical Activity and Mental Wellness
- c. Credit: 3-0-3
- d. Term to be offered: F, S, Su
- e. Short title: Phys. Act. Ment. Well.
- f. Course Description: Various theories and psychological constructs will be examined in this course to determine the impact of exercise upon an individual's behavior, mood, personality, motivation, and psychological well-being. Students will be given the opportunity to examine the role of exercise in improving mental wellness and how psychosocial benefits can shape physical activity interventions
- g. Prerequisite: Physical Education majors are excluded
- h. The course is writing intensive.

**2. Student Learning Objectives:**

- a. In accordance with the goals of general education, students will:
  - Integrate, summarize and synthesize information from scholarly sources of various exercise science disciplines and from interdisciplinary materials (writing, critical thinking)
  - Formulate an understanding of exercise adherence and models of individual health behavior related to various psychological factors (critical thinking)
  - learn and communicate potential negative psychological outcomes resulting from chronic maladaptive exercise behavior (writing, critical thinking, and speaking)
  - develop an understanding of several psychophysiological mechanisms which explain mental health benefits from physical activity (critical thinking)
  - learn to communicate findings from scholarly sources in oral and written form in the area of exercise and psychological benefits (writing and speaking)
  - learn the importance of improved physical and psychological health in understanding interpersonal and cross-cultural interactions (citizenship)
  - utilize their skills and viewpoints acquired within their major field to bear upon exercise behavior and its importance to improving quality of life at the individual and social level (critical thinking)
- b. As students become more familiar with the comprehensive benefits of exercise, students will also
  - learn how exercise benefits individuals in their daily lives
  - learn how exercise behavior impacts other areas of human behavior such as motivation and self-esteem
  - learn how basic health behavior models can be applied to an exercise setting
  - learn about various motives individuals have for exercising or not exercising

- 3. Course Outline:** There are four major units in the course, that are based on *Physical Activity and Mental Health*, a primary text source for this class. Based on two 75-minute class meetings a week, for fifteen weeks, these units will fill 10 weeks. The twelfth week will be devoted to assessment, specifically, the TASKS test, and the last two weeks and finals period will be reserved for oral presentations. Throughout the course students will be

expected to draw relevant connections between exercise, psychological well-being and their major disciplines.

### **Week 1**

#### Introduction to psychological concepts related to exercise behavior

- Definitions
- Theoretical approaches to behavior change
- Attitude and exercise participation
- Psychological principles such as reinforcement and motivation in promoting physical activity
- Readings: “Methodological Concerns”, “Prevention of a Sedentary Lifestyle” *Physical Activity and Mental Health*

### **Weeks 2 and 3**

#### Unit 1: Major Benefits of Physical Activity

This unit will focus on exercise adherence and motivation issues. Major considerations will be discussed regarding diversity-lifestyle issues and implication for chronic health related problems within these populations. This foundation provides the base for comprehension of further noted psychological benefits. Discussion will be targeted to those chronic disease states which benefit from exercise and psychological factors which influence this relationship.

- Readings: “Exercise Prescription for Psychological Benefits”, “Exercise Adherence”, *Physical Activity and Mental Health*
- 1<sup>st</sup> article summary/presentation

### **Weeks 4 and 5**

#### Unit 2: Health Behavior Promotion

Major theories and application of health behavior change are reviewed related to structured exercise and physical activity. Emphasis will be on how detrimental health behaviors (lack of exercise, overeating) are linked with affective, interpersonal and intrapersonal stress. Emphasis will be on cross-cultural variation of how these behavior patterns affect psychological and physical outcomes. This unit will also examine how leadership and communication influence participation in and adherence to exercise programs.

- Readings: Outside Reading Assigned

### **Weeks 6-9**

#### Unit 3: Psychological Benefits of Physical Activity

This unit will explore various findings which evidence improvement in psychological functioning and psychological well-being associated with physical activity. This unit will examine specific benefits of physical activity in conditions such as self-esteem, mood, anxiety and depression, and examine the role of exercise compared with other treatment modalities. Finally, a review of physical adaptations from exercise will be discussed in their role within improving psychological well-being.

- Readings : “Drug Therapy”, “Depression”, Anxiety”, “Self-Esteem”, “Mechanisms”, *Physical Activity and Mental Health*
- Short term paper due
- 2<sup>nd</sup> article summary/presentation

### **Weeks, 10, 11, and 13**

#### Unit 4: Maladaptive Physical Activity Patterns

This unit will explore reasons why physical activity may be problematic with certain conditions such as overtraining, obligatory exercise, eating disorders, substance abuse, and muscle

dysmorphia, body dissatisfaction, and compliance issues. and examining psychological theories which attempt to account for circumstances under which maladaptive exercise patterns occur. The relationship between regular physical activity and certain special populations (children, older adults) will also be covered.

- Readings: “Psychological Problems and Exercise”, “Personality and Exercise, “Special Populations”, *Physical Activity and Health*

#### **Week 12**

Assessment Activities – through General Education – The TASKS Test

- Cultural Impact Paper due

#### **Weeks, 14, 15, and Finals Week**

Project Presentations

- Term paper due – Week 15

### **4. Evaluation of Student Learning**

- a. Writing skills will be evaluated through several methods. Students will have designated outside readings for this course. From these readings, students will write two article summaries and applications of these readings and share these with the class through handouts and an oral presentation. There will be a five-page essay based on class work and library research, due in week 8 that will serve as an introduction for the term paper. The larger paper will include both library work and the collection of sample data from several subjects related to various psychological benefits of physical activity or exercise. Communication ability and skills will be evaluated based on weekly class discussions and the oral presentations of research. Critical thinking and understanding of course material will be evaluated throughout the course in the grading of content and quality of written and oral work. In addition, a five page cultural impact essay will be turned in during week 12. The essay will focus on the specific psychological impact of exercise within a specified cultural group and rely on students’ own cross-cultural viewpoints.
- b. The five page paper (short paper) will be returned to the student after preliminary evaluation for revision and expansion into the research paper. In addition, students will be advised to consult with the instructor often during the writing process. 60% of the course grade will be based on written assignments, as indicated below:

Quizzes	10%
Article Summaries / Presentations	10%
Short Paper	10%
Term Paper	30%
Cultural Impact Paper	10%
Discussion	20%
Presentation	10%
Total:	100%

### **5. Rationale**

- a. Senior Seminar
- b. Prerequisite: 75 hours completed (undergraduate)
- c. This course does not duplicate any current offerings
- d. Course will not be required in any majors other than general education senior seminar.

## 6. Implementation

- a. Initial Instructor: William Russell
- b. Primary Text:  
Morgan, W.P. (Ed.) (1997). *Physical Activity and Mental Health*. Madison, WI: Taylor & Francis.

Library Readings on Reserve Including:

- Maddux, J.E. (1997). Habit, health, and happiness. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 19, 331-346.
- Wolf, E.M., & Akamatsu, T.J. (1994). Exercise involvement and eating disordered characteristics in college students. Eating Disorders, 2, 308-318.
- Pope, H.G., Gruber, A.J., Choi, P., Olivardia, R., & Phillips, K.A. (1997). Muscle dysmorphia: An underrecognized form of body dysmorphic disorder. Psychosomatics, 38, 548-557.
- Brown, D.R. (1992). Physical activity, aging, and psychological well-being: An overview of the research. Canadian Journal of Sport Sciences, 17, 185-193.
- Treasure, D.C., Lox, C.L., & Lanton, B.R. (1998). Determinants of physical activity in a sedentary, obese female population. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 20, 218-224.
- Turner, E.E. Rejeski, W.J., & Brawley, L.R. (1997). Psychological benefits of physical activity are influenced by the social environment. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 19, 119-130.
- Kavussanu, M., & McAuley, E. (1995). Exercise and optimism: Are highly active individuals more optimistic? Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 17, 246-258.
- Iannos, M., & Tiggeman, M. (1997). Personality of the excessive exerciser. Personality and Individual Differences, 23, 775-778.

## 7. Community College Transfer

Not applicable

## 8. Date Approved by Department

## 9. Date Approved by College

## 10. Date Approved by CAA: 10/19/00