

Theories in Sport Management

SPM5936 | Class # 30582 | 3 Credits | Spring 2024

Connect with SPM



COURSE INFO

INSTRUCTOR **George B. Cunningham, PhD**
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Preferred Method of Contact: email

OFFICE HOURS [Wednesday / Thursday, 10:00-11:00, on [Zoom](#)].

**MEETING
TIME/LOCATION** Monday, Periods 3-5, [UST 0105](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar introduces first- and second-year Ph.D. students to relevant theories surrounding key research areas in the sport management field. It exposes students to the key concepts of theory, the process of theory development, and the application/extension of theories in sport management, helping students to critically evaluate emergent research topics in sport management and develop theoretically based research models.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Enrolled in the PhD in HHP – Concentration in Sport Management program.

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

All materials will be available on Canvas.

COURSE FORMAT

The course is structured into three-hour blocks and includes lecture, class discussion, and presentations. Assessments include class participation, writing assignments, and presentations.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Define theory, explain theory's major elements, and summarize its importance in academia.
2. Summarize approaches to developing theory.

3. Overview major theories used in sport management research.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. Complete and submit all readings and assignments on time (all times in Eastern).
2. Remain proactive with any personal circumstances that potentially interfere with your ability to meet a deadline. University guidelines pertaining to excused absences and late assignments are available [here](#).
3. Contact me within three (3) days of a deadline with any questions or concerns about your grade.
4. Contact me with other questions at g.cunningham@ufl.edu, or attend the [Zoom](#) office hours.

COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The course is delivered completely online so attendance is not a part of the final grade. As noted in the following sections, your preparation for the course and participation in the course activities, including assignments and discussions, will impact your grade.

PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.

Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor..

MAKE-UP POLICY

A student who is absent from class or any required class-related activity because of illness should contact their instructor, if feasible, as early as possible prior to the missed class or activity. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered during an excused absence. Students should contact their college by the deadline to drop a course for medical reasons. Students can petition the Dean of Students Office to drop a course for medical reasons. The university's policy regarding medical excuse from classes is maintained by the Student Health Care Center. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>."

ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting their Get Started page at <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a

professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

GETTING HELP

HEALTH & WELLNESS

- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575
- Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-1575
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) - Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies) <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>
- Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- Student Complaints On-Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> On-Line Students Complaints: <http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/>

CIVILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Inclusion is a UF core value, as we “celebrate differences in identities, thoughts, and abilities, and seek to provide equitable access to opportunity.” Freedom and Civility are also core values, as we “embrace the freedom to inquire and express ideas without condemnation, and to show respect for the right of others to do the same.”

We should all (instructor and students, alike) seek to uphold these core values in the course. Some of the topics we discuss will be challenging, and students will be asked to reflect on why they hold their particular views or positions. Part of the learning process involves growth and encountering new ideas and concepts. Thoughtful, critical thinkers use evidence to support their positions – not endorsing a view because they have always done so. Through the learning process, let us sustain the UF Core Values and embrace our differences while ensuring we have an equitable, inclusive learning environment.

For suggestions or concerns, please reach out to Dr. Christine Wegner, christinewegner@ufl.edu.

University of Florida Core Values

Inclusion: Celebrate differences in identities, thoughts, and abilities, and seek to provide equitable access to opportunity.

- Excellence is only possible by including people who bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Our growing diversity enhances discovery and innovation. It is reliant on freedom and civility. It enriches the UF community. It is rooted in stewardship. It is the connective tissue for all of our Core Values.

Freedom and Civility: Embrace the freedom to inquire and express ideas without condemnation, and to show respect for the right of others to do the same.

- We are a community that affirms and embraces openness to an inclusive range of viewpoints. An open-minded culture is the foundation of freedom of expression and affirms our commitment to academic freedom, which is rooted in mutual respect of others. We encourage curiosity in research, scholarship and exploration, and we create the conditions where inquiry can flourish. We should guard others' right to express themselves as unequivocally as we expect that right for ourselves.

GRADING

Evaluation Components (Number of each)	Points Per Component	Approximate % of Total Grade
Participation in Discussions (14)	5 pts each x 14 = 70	70 / 260 = 27%
Weekly Reflection Papers (14)	10 pts each x 14 = 140	140 / 260 = 54%
Theory Paper (1)	50 pts each x 1 = 50 pts	50 / 260 = 19%

Participation in Discussions. As a seminar course, students are expected to actively contribute to the class and discussions. Doing so includes reading the materials beforehand, responding to questions posed by the presenters, and asking questions of the presenters.

Weekly Reflection Papers. The speakers for each class will provide readings for that week. Students should write a 3-4 page summary and critique of the readings and the speaker's presentation. This should include *brief* summary of the articles/presentation, general comments concerning the material, and an integration of the information gleaned from the articles into a general framework. The latter two portions of the assignment are the *most critical* portions of the paper. The paper should also contain a separate page containing the references to the articles cited within the text. Citations and references within the paper should be made according to the guidelines of the *American Psychological Association Publications Manual* (7th ed.). Students should be prepared to discuss their integration of the literature to the other class members. Papers should be submitted via Canvas. See the course schedule for due dates.

Theory Paper. The Theory Paper allows students to reflect on elements that will be on their comprehensive exam (see the following section for further discussion of the exam): The first portion of the paper should focus on general theory, including (a) a definition of theory is and theory's role in research; and (b) an explanation of

the importance of theory development and testing in research. In the second section, students should focus on the field of sport management, including (c) an analysis and critique of three (3) theories used in the field; and (d) a critique of those theories and possible alternative approaches. In the final section, they should reflect on their own research interest, including (e) specific strategies and approaches to contribute to the theory development in their sub-discipline. The paper should also contain a separate page containing the references to the articles cited within the text. Citations and references within the paper should be made according to the guidelines of the *American Psychological Association Publications Manual* (7th ed.). The paper should be submitted via Canvas. See the course schedule for the due date.

[LINK TO COMPREHENSIVE EXAM](#)

Each PhD student must complete a comprehensive exam, and SPM Theories are included as a section. The competencies for that section include:

The purpose of the SPM Theories section of the Comprehensive Exam is to assess students' broader understanding of theory, the field of sport management, and theoretical application within the field. While becoming an expert in a particular topic is part of the requirement of the PhD, becoming literate about one's chosen field is an important part of academic life. Scholars in SPM may be asked to teach courses that are tangentially or largely unrelated from their sub-discipline. They may also be asked to review (or collaborate on) work that may utilize a very different theoretical lens than their own. Further, in order to fully understand how a particular topic fits within and contributes to the broader field of sport management, a scholar must have a sufficient understanding of the field as a whole. Therefore, in order to pass this section, students will demonstrate the following outcomes:

General Theory

SLO1: Students will be able to define what theory is and theory's role in research.

SLO2: Students will be able to explain the importance of theory development and testing in research.

The Field of Sport Management

SLO3: Students will be able to analyze and critique other theories used within the field outside of their sub-discipline.

SLO4: Students will explain the historical evolution of research in Sport Management.

SLO5: Students will critique this evolution as a field built predominantly within white/Eurocentric ideologies and institutions and explore its resistance through the use of alternative theories or frameworks.

The Relationship between the Field and Their Own Work

SLO6: Students will evaluate the role of their sub-discipline within the overall field.

SLO7: Students will discuss specific strategies and approaches to contribute to the theory development in their sub-discipline as well as in the field of sport management.

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

January 8 (re-scheduled for January 11, from 2:00-3:00, via [Zoom](#))

COURSE ORIENTATION & OVERVIEW

THEORY AND ITS FOUNDATIONS

Readings:

Kerlinger, F. N., & Lee, H. B. (2000). *Foundations of behavioral research* (4th ed.). Ft. Worth, TX: Harcourt. (Chapter 1)

Sutton, R. I., & Staw, B. M. (1995). What theory is *not*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40, 371-384.

Weick, K. E. (1995). What theory is *not*, theorizing *is*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40, 385-390.

DiMaggio, P. J. (1995). Comments on "What theorizing is *not*". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40, 391-397.

Bacharach, S. B. (1989). Organizational theories: Some criteria for evaluation. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 496-515.

Corley, K. G., & Gioia, D. A. (2011). Building theory about theory building: what constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 36(1), 12-32.

Assignments:

January 12, 11:59 pm.* Weekly Reflection Paper 1

*Note different date and time from the remainder of the assignments.

(Continued on following page)

January 15

NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

(Continued on following page)

January 22

THEORY BUILDING PROCESS

Readings:

Mintzberg, H. (2005). Developing theory about the development of theory. In K. G. Smith & M. A. Hitt (Eds.), *Great minds in management: The process of theory development* (pp. 355-372). New York: Oxford.

Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2007). Constructing mystery: Empirical matters in theory development. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1265-1281.

Cunningham, G. B., Fink, J. S., & Doherty, A. J. (2016). Developing theory in sport management. In G. B. Cunningham, J. S. Fink, & A. J. Doherty (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of theory in sport management* (pp. 3-8). London, UK: Routledge.

Locke, E. A. (2007). The case for inductive theory building. *Journal of Management*, 33, 867-890.

Cronin, M. A., Stouten, J., & Van Knippenberg, D. (2021). The theory crisis in management research: Solving the right problem. *Academy of Management Review*, 46(4), 667-683.

Lachance, E. L., Thompson, A., Bakhsh, J. T., & Parent, M. M. (in press). Sport management or the management of sport? Reframing the theory debate. *Sport Management Review*.

Assignments:

January 24, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 2

(Continued on following page)

January 29

THEORIES AND THEIR APPLICATION IN SPORT MANAGEMENT

Readings:

Cunningham, G. B., Fink, J. S., & Zhang, J. J. (2021). The distinctiveness of sport management theory and research. *Kinesiology Review*, 10(3), 339-349.

Chelladurai, P. (2016). Leadership. In G. B. Cunningham, J. S. Fink, & A. Doherty (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of theory in sport management* (pp. 143-154). Routledge.

Cornwell, T. B. (2016). Sponsorship-linked marketing. In G. B. Cunningham, J. S. Fink, & A. Doherty (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of theory in sport management* (pp. 203-212). Routledge.

Funk, D. C., & James, J. D. (2016). The psychological continuum model. In G. B. Cunningham, J. S. Fink, & A. Doherty (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of theory in sport management* (pp. 247-262). Routledge.

Hylton, K. (2016). This way... this explains my reality: Critical race theory in sport and leisure. In G. B. Cunningham, J. S. Fink, & A. Doherty (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of theory in sport management* (pp. 321-331). Routledge.

Fort, R. (2016). Fort and Quirk: A look back and a look forward at competitive balance theory. In G. B. Cunningham, J. S. Fink, & A. Doherty (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of theory in sport management* (pp. 384-393). Routledge.

*Note, students can access the full book, [Routledge Handbook of Theory in Sport Management](#), by accessing the publisher site using a UF Internet.

Assignments:

January 31, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 3

(Continued on following page)

February 5

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH: Alison Doherty (Western University)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

February 7, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 4

(Continued on following page)

February 12

LEADERSHIP IN SPORT: Joseph Cooper (University of Massachusetts Boston)

Readings:

Cooper, J. N., Newton, A. C., Klein, M., & Jolly, S. (2020). A call for culturally responsive transformational leadership in college sport: An anti-ism approach for achieving equity and inclusion. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 65.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2020.00065>

Cooper, J. N., Keaton, A. C., Mack, M. N., Flowers, R., & Herman II, J. L. (2023). A new paradigm for sport education programs: an equity-minded and anti-ism framework. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1-25.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2023.2217835>

Cooper, J. N. (2022). Anti-Racism as a New Paradigm for 21st Century Sport Organizations. In J. N. Cooper (Ed.), *Anti-racism in sport organizations* (pp. 1-15). Center for Sport Management Research and Education. ([Link](#))

Assignments:

February 14, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 5

(Continued on following page)

February 19

SPORT ECONOMICS: Pamela Wicker (Bielefeld University)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

February 21, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 6

(Continued on following page)

February 26

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN SPORT: Jackie Mueller (Loughborough University London)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

February 28, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 7

(Continued on following page)

March 4

LABOR AND DEMAND IN SPORT: Tarlan Chahardovali (University of South Carolina)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

March 6, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 8

(Continued on following page)

March 11
NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

(Continued on following page)

March 18

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN SPORT: Marvin Washington (University of Alberta)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

March 20, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 9

(Continued on following page)

March 25

SPORT ECOLOGY: Jessica Murfree (University of Cincinnati)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

March 27, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 10

(Continued on following page)

April 1

SPORT CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: Katie Sveinson (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

April 3, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 11

(Continued on following page)

April 8

SPORT GOVERNANCE: Shannon Kerwin (Brock University)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

April 10, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 12

(Continued on following page)

April 15

COMMUNICATION AND SPORT: Andrea Geurin (Loughborough University London)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

April 17, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 13

(Continued on following page)

April 22

SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT: NaRi Shen (University of Michigan)

Readings:

The readings will be posted in Canvas the week prior to the presentation.

Assignments:

April 24, 11:59 pm.

Weekly Reflection Paper 14

(Continued on following page)

April 22

THEORY PAPER

Assignments:

May 1, 11:59 pm.

Theory Paper Due

(End of Course Schedule)