

SPM 7750 (26430): Theories in Sport Management

Spring 2026 (3 credits)

Department of Sport Management
College of Health and Human Performance
University of Florida

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Time: Wednesday: Periods 9-11 (4:05-7:05 PM)

Classroom: FLG 235

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Office Hours: Wednesday & Thursday (2:00-4:00 PM), or by appointment.

I. READINGS:

Required and recommended materials will be available on Canvas.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

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

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The course activities, assignments, and sequence are intended to provide opportunities for students to accomplish the following:

Course Learning Objectives	Learning Outcomes	Assessment Tool
1. Be able to define theory and explain the main element of a theory	Content knowledge Critical thinking	Reflection paper Class discussion
2. Explain and critique theories and concepts applied or developed in sport management and neighboring fields.	Content knowledge Discovery Critical thinking	Review of theories
3. Develop and present a theoretical framework or research model by applying/expanding relevant theories and concepts.	Content knowledge Critical thinking Communication	Conceptual paper/presentation
4. Demonstrate sufficient breadth of knowledge in theory in chosen specialization.	Content knowledge Critical thinking	Written exam

IV. COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS:

The course follows a seminar discussion format requiring students to be actively engaged in each session. Students will be assessed based on attitude and class contributions, a review of theories, a conceptual paper, and a final exam.

Class Discussion (Assignment 1 for Objective 1)

Students are responsible for conducting a critical review of assigned articles before class and engage in class discussions. To facilitate class discussions, students will be selected to lead discussion of the weekly articles. Discussion leaders should 1) raise thoughtful questions after sharing a summary of their articles, and 2) prepare a handout for classmates (two pages maximum). More details will be provided in class.

Reflection Papers (Assignment 1 for Objective 1)

Students will prepare a short reaction paper (two pages max) related to that week's readings and/or guest lectures. Although your critique of articles (and guest lectures) may include conceptual aspects, students need to focus on the quality of the methodology (suitability, strengths, and weaknesses) and offer alternative ways to solve targeted research problems. You may also integrate the ideas of several papers (or guest lectures) and discuss how they relate to each other. Reflection papers may source other papers that are not included in the Canvas. All reflection papers should be turned in to Canvas no later than **5:00 PM on the day before** class.

Review of theories for sport phenomenon of your interest (Assignment 2 for Objective 2)

Students will select a sport phenomenon and thoroughly review the theories espoused on that topic. The review should contain a description of the various theories on the topic, and the history of the advances made in the study of that topic. The student is also expected to compare and contrast the theories in terms of the definition implied in each theory, primary context and constructs of each theory, and the methodology used to advance each theory.

Develop a theoretical framework / research model (Assignment 3 for Objective 3)

This conceptual paper will (1) address specific research problems and questions, (2) critically evaluate key assumptions of the relevant theories proposed in sport management and neighboring academic fields, and (3) propose a new theoretical framework / research model by integrating the concepts or proposing new concepts. The proposed research could take the form of an analytical model or conceptual framework developed based on your synthesized knowledge pertaining to concepts / variables used in the theories. Students need to develop challenging research questions, solid propositions or hypotheses. Students will submit this paper in the last week of the semester and will make a presentation of their frameworks / models and share what they have learned with the class and future plan. The paper should focus on one of the following areas: marketing, consumer behavior, communication, finance, economics, law, sociology/development, organizational theory in sport business, human resource management, sport tourism.

Exam (for Objective 4)

Through this comprehensive exam, students will demonstrate (a) a clear understanding of concepts and key components of theory and theory development process and (b) sufficient breadth of knowledge in theoretical advancement in chosen specialization of sport management. The format will be essay type questions combined with short answers.

V. EVALUATION/GRADING SCALE:

The final course grade is based upon the student's overall performance and contributions in the following areas.

Evaluation (point):

1. Class discussion	20
2. Reflection papers	20
3. Review of theories for issue of interest + presentation	20
4. Theoretical framework / Model + presentation	20
5. Exam	20
Total	100

*The final conceptual paper and exam are used by each student's supervisory committee to assess the readiness of the student for continued Ph.D. studies in Sport Management.

Grading Scale:

A = 100-93	C(S) = 76-73
A- = 92-90	C-(U) = 72-70
B+ = 89-87	D+ = 69-67
B = 86-83	D = 66-63
B- = 82-80	D- = 62-60
C+ = 79-77	E = 59-0

VI. COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES:

In-Class Exercises/Participation/Attendance

Your attendance and participation are expected as a natural expression of your commitment to your academic major and, most importantly, your desire to succeed. In addition, active participation provides all students with the opportunity to learn from one other. University guidelines pertaining to excused absences are available [here](#) (Direct link is: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>).

Assignment Policies:

Assignments are due in class on the specified day. Anytime thereafter the assignment is considered late. It is your responsibility to turn in your assignments on time. Assignments turned in one day late will be deducted 20% of their grade.

All assignments and papers must be typed, proofread, and spell checked. All referencing and formatting of papers, including tables and figures, must be in APA form (7th edition; e.g., double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font, and list of references). Failure to do so will result in a lower score on the assignment. If you need extra help in preparing for classes, writing your papers, or any other type of academic development, please go to the Reading and Writing Center (<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>). They have excellent resources to help you.

UF Academic Policies and Resources

"This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#)." (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>)

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/>.

Disclaimer:

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

VII. TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE:

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	1/14	- Course Introduction - What is theory? Why does it matter?	-
2	1/21	- Theory and its foundation	Discussion / Reflection
3	1/28	- Theory building - The theoretical advancement in SPM Research	Discussion / Reflection
4	2/4	- Generating research ideas and research questions - Identification of gaps in theory-based research	Discussion / Reflection
5	2/11	- Theory vs. theoretical framework vs. research model	Discussion / Reflection
6	2/18	- Theory test and extension: Linking theory and method	Discussion / Reflection
7	2/25	- Critique / Evaluation of theories	Discussion / Reflection
8	3/4	- Review of theories for sport issues of interest	Review of theories of interest / Presentation
9	3/11	- Review of theories for sport issues of interest (cont.)	Discussion
10	3/18	SPRING BREAK	-
11	3/25	- Developing questions, propositions, hypotheses	Discussion / Reflection
12	4/1	- Guest speaker - Peer review of the conceptual paper draft - Discussion of exam	Reflection
13	4/8	- Guest speaker (Preparation for exam/conceptual paper)	Reflection
14	4/15	- Exam	-
15	4/22	Work on conceptual papers	Theoretical paper (draft)
16	4/24	Presentation of conceptual paper	Theoretical paper

Selected Articles:

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36, 247-271.

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

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

Chalip, L. (2006). Toward a distinctive sport management discipline. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20, 1-21.

Chelladurai, P. (2013). A personal journey in theorizing in sport management. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 22-28.

Colquitt, J. A., & Zapata-Phelan, C. P. (2007). Trends in theory building and theory testing: A five-decade study of the "Academy of Management Journal." *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 1281-1303.

Cunningham, G. B. (2013). Theory and theory development in sport management. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 1-4.

Daft, R. L. (1985). Why I recommended that your manuscript be rejected and what you can do about it. In LL Cummings and PJ Frost (eds), *Publishing in the Organizational Sciences*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 193-209.

Dick, A. S., & Basu, K. (1994). Customer loyalty: Toward an integrated conceptual framework. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 22, 99-113.

Doherty, A. (2013). Investing in sport management: The value of good theory. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 5-11.

Fink, J. S. (2013). Theory development in sport management: My experience and other considerations. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 17-21.

Matten, D., & Moon J. (2008). Implicit and explicit CSR: A conceptual framework for a comparative understanding of CSR. *Academy of Management Review*, 33, 404-424.

Mintzberg, H. (2005). Developing theory about the development of theory. *Oxford Handbook of Management Theory*.

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

Zeigler, E. F. (2013). Sport management must show social concern as it develops tenable theory. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21, 297-318.

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

