Course Number and Prefix: SES 589 Bridging Theory and Practice in Sports Coaching

Instructor: Mark Smith – mark.smith@unco.edu

Contact Information: Phone #’s (W) 970 351 1736 (C) 970 371 6196

Course Description: Examination of theoretical and applied concepts of sports coaching. Emphasis is placed on practical experience of coaching sport that concentrates on coach education theory and effective coaching practices.

Course Objectives: Each student will be able to:

1. Synthesize coaching theories and research perspectives as they relate to effective coaching practices of others and themselves.
2. Critique and synthesize current research perspectives and literature related to ethical coaching practices and outcomes.
3. Identify the philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of designing an appropriate and effective coach education program.
4. Analyze and identify trends in coaching research and literature related to coaching effectiveness and appropriateness.

The main goal of the course is for students to improve their own coaching practices through research and reflection. To achieve this goal the course has been divided into the following 2 four week units.

UNIT 1: Knowledge Retrieval and Utilization: 1/12/2015 – 02/14/2015 – 5 weeks

UNIT 2: Coach Education: The Current and The Future: 02/16/2015 – 03/13/2015

Final Paper: 05/05/2015

Course Outline:

The content of this course will cover 2 units. Each unit provides the participants with theoretical and practical components of coaching that will inform their own coaching practices. Comparisons will be drawn from the expertise coaching literature.

UNIT 1: Current Coaching Research: Identification, Synthesis and Representation

For over a decade researchers, educators and coaches have strived to understand what it takes to become not only a winning coach but one that individuals could consider an expert. Literature and research that has examined expertise has uncovered numerous characteristics that expert
coaches have and novice/beginner coaches do not. In addition, research examining coaching and coach education has rapidly increased in the past decade and is increasingly being used to inform practice. As current and future leaders of the field it is important that coaches increasingly utilize research to inform their own practices as well as the practices of coaches and players that they inspire and mentor. However, in order to instill change it is important to understand how to access and critique current knowledge. Therefore, this unit is divided into 3 parts:

1) **Knowledge Identification** – Everyone, understanding that the generation of new knowledge is important. However, it just as important to understand what “we” already know. Journal, books and websites are all valuable resources when determining what we already know and provide clues into what we still need to find out. During the first 4 weeks of the class, you will be asked to explore and identify academic source of knowledge that ultimately can inform you coaching practices.

2) **Knowledge Representation** – Identifying appropriate and accurate sources of knowledge is one aspect to knowledge development. Knowing how to appropriate represent and disseminate that knowledge to other is also important. Correctly citing your source of knowledge is therefore essential. In this aspect of the unit you will learn how to using APA to safely document and archive sources of information in papers and presentations, thus minimizing the risks of violating policies of academic integrity and being accused of plagiarism.

3) **Knowledge Synthesis** – Identifying sources of knowledge and understanding individual aspects of coaching research is important, but also limiting. Coaches that are able to view the sporting arena, in which they work, through a critical and holistic lens are the ones that are considered experts. In this section, you will be asked to take findings from individual research articles and find holistic patterns and meaning through synthesis. The synthesis will be in the form of a Trends Paper which is due at the end of the class.

**UNIT 2: Coach Education: The Current and The Future**

Training coaches in appropriate practices has been an increasingly discussed area of concern in recent years. The importance of professional development, certification and formal education programs has been at the forefront of coach development. In addition to formal education programs at universities, sport specific associations have increasingly sort to examine, redesign and implement content specific training and certifications programs for their coaches.

Readings (Week 6)
Project (Week 7 – 9)

**Course Requirements:**

The major purposes of this course are to provide the rationale, skills and knowledges with which to improve coaching practice through developing and implementing effective coaching behaviors and practices.

The following are some of the essential factors that constitute evidence of critical thinking, and indeed will inform an assessment of participants’ performance in all areas of the course.
Accurate and precise understanding of course topics: Posing questions that address the basic information contained in the readings (e.g., identify key beliefs and values espoused by the author). Demonstrate a sound understanding of the topics in lab based coaching practices will meet the requirements to receive a grade of C in this course.

Engagement with assigned readings, videos, guest speakers and class discussions. How do the readings/observations/teaching assignments/discussions connect with the topic at hand (e.g., incorporate and model effective coaching tenants in teaching assignments)? In addition, for the associated readings, students must pose questions that are textually implicit, thereby requiring analysis and interpretation of specific parts of the readings and text. For example, “What led the author to conclude that these specific strategies and techniques constitute effective teaching?” In terms of critical thinking, students must focus on understanding the reasons underlying someone’s particular beliefs or values related to coaching, including their own. Both understanding and engagement are required for B level work.

“Deep thinking” concerning the intersections of the material: How do one’s observations and experiences connect with class materials? Do these observations and teaching experiences confirm or contradict what is read and discussed? For instance, are there any emerging theoretical or practical tools for evaluating effective coaching? For the associated readings, another level of questioning is appropriate here; that is, much more open-ended questions that frequently go beyond the readings. Such questions are intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue, or perhaps an ethical dilemma. For example, is it even ethical that coaches teach values and that the programs choose which values to teach? The student must now ask whether the evidence or reasons offered in support of beliefs and values is adequate and justified. Further, students must state and defend their own views, supported by reasons and evidence. Success with “deep thinking” as well as accurate observation and teaching episodes are required for A level work.

Grading Scale and Assignments

| Class Readings/Discussion Board | 20% | A = 100-90 |
| Knowledge Retrieval | 30% | B = 89-80 |
| Coach Education Project | 25% | C = 79-70 |
| Trend/Position Paper | 25% | F = below 69 |

Class Reading/Discussion Board: Each student’s attendance, preparation and contribution are necessary for everyone to enjoy the full value of this class. This means that each student reads the assigned material, keep notes and participate in class discussions in a thoughtful, active and reflective manner. The class is designed to be highly interactive, but to have that environment be a safe one the rights and opinions of others must be respected, and disagreements (which are inevitable) must be supported with reason. Everyone has the right to offer an opinion and everyone has the right to refuse from expressing an opinion. Ultimately, disagreement does not mean that anyone devalues the person. Argue with ideas, not individuals.
**Knowledge Retrieval:**

3 quizzes (35 points total)  
4 assignments (44 points total)  
Identification of a research topic in sports coaching (End of Week 3)  
Initial Reading List (End of Week 4)  
Annotated Bib (End of Week 5)

**Trends Paper:** Based on articles collected from your reading list and expanded through your annotated bibliography, you will be expected to generate a paper addressing the following:

1. What you’ve learned about your topic from the identified articles  
2. What are the major similarities in your articles?  
3. What are the major differences in your articles?  
4. Based on these articles, what are the gaps in the literature?

*Due: May 5, 2015*

**Coach Education Project:** This project is designed for practicing coaches you integrate knowledge of appropriate and expert coaching practices and the current literature related to coach education programs to critique and design a state of the art coach education program for a sport specific content area of their choice. *(Due: March 13, 2015)*

**Student Expectations/Course Policies:**

Although we do our utmost to provide you with valuable knowledge and experiences, little can be gained unless you are making a concerted and noticeable effort to be a self-motivated, responsible, and active learner. In an effort to guide the goal of responsibility, motivation and participation, we offer the following as class operating guidelines:

1. **Participate with effort.** This asks that you are prepared and put forth a solid and consistent effort in class. This includes giving input and feedback during lectures, discussions, and group work as well as producing graduate level work. Do what you have to do to be ready.

2. **Take initiative for yourself.** Most of your learning will be the result of your own initiative, not the prodding of instructors or rewards (or threats) of grades. You alone must be responsible for creating value for yourself in this course. How well you do will in a large part will be the result of how well you are able to carry on without direct supervision. Taking initiative means asking questions when material, concepts, or expectations are not clear. (It is OK not to know, but it not OK to continue not knowing.) It also means doing reading and work outside of class. For this class, reading beyond the assignment is necessary to achieve markedly superior work.

3. **Help others.** The ultimate success and reward for each of you depends on your ability to help and support your classmates in their learning and in their attempts to be responsible for their own learning. This also includes creating a safe learning environment; that is, one in which the confidentiality of one another’s sharing is respected, where complaints are directed only to someone (and received only by someone) who can do something about the situation, and where differences of opinion and healthy debate are prized.

**UNC's Policies** - UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. For additional information, please see the Dean of Student’s website, Student Handbook link  
http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html
Disability Support Services: Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. (updated per DSS 8-24-09)

Honor Code. All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community’s academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

NOTES

- You are responsible for all tasks and for being prepared for class activities
- The instructor reserves the right to penalize late work, and refuse to accept late work.
- UNC’s policies and recommendations for students’ rights and responsibilities will be followed.