

RTM 352 – Play and the Human Potential Fall 2008

Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:45

class e-mail classfa08.16783-c@csun.edu

Contact Information

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Office Hours located in SQ200H
Monday & Wednesday 1:00-1:50,
Wednesday 6:00-6:50 pm,
Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-2:50,
and by appointment

Course Goals

The goal of this course is to expose students to the art and science of critical thinking including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in the fields of play, play theories, leisure, recreation, parks, and/or tourism through a variety of pedagogies.

Course Objectives

Course objectives include, but are not limited to, the following. Students will be able to:

- Investigate the nature of the play phenomenon.
- Analyze the influence of play in the development of human potential.
- Analyze the social implications of play in the context of culture.
- Apply play theory to one's own life.
- Apply play theories across the lifespan.
- Investigate the nature of the play phenomenon from international and multicultural perspectives.
- Demonstrate professional writing skills and mastery of written English.

Course Format

Both lecture and seminar format will be utilized for this class. The seminar format is intended to challenge and advance students to *think* and to try new ideas. Rather than straight lecture formats, emphasis will be placed on *professional dialogue* among course participants on selected theoretical issues. Readings will be selected for their ability to stimulate ideas and lead to an integrative understanding of theoretical issues related to the recreation, leisure, and play.

Tentative Course Outline

This course outline reflects the scope of the curriculum. Topics within major headings will be discussed in an integrated manner. International and multicultural perspectives will be integrated throughout topic areas.

I. Introduction to play theory

- A. Levy
- B. Arnold
- C. Moore
- D. Bateson
- E. Csikszentmihalyi
- F. Various classical theorists
- G. International and multicultural perspectives of theory

II. The nature of the play phenomenon

- A. Attention to stimuli
- B. Feedback
- C. Action and awareness
- D. Skill and challenge
- E. Pretense
- G. Varying Cultural Perspectives

III. Expression of the play experience

- A. Power
- B. Danger
- C. Freedom
- D. Cultural values as determinants of play behaviors

IV. Impact of the environment on the play experience

- A. Play objects
- B. Play settings
- C. Natural and constructed environments across cultures

V. Influence on Play on Human Potential

- A. Psycho-physiological
 - 1. Arousal and Optimal Level of Arousal; Internal Locus of Control
 - 2. Eustressor vs. distressor
- B. Cognitive
 - 1. Comprehension
 - 2. Problem solving
 - 3. Synthesis
- C. Moral Development
 - 1. Attitudes and values
 - 2. Leisure ethic

VI. Social implications of play

- A. Play in the context of the family
 - 1. Leisure trends and issues in the family

- 2. Family interaction patterns
- 3. Women's leisure – myth or reality?
- B. Play in the context of culture
 - 1. Play as the expression of cultural value
 - 2. Play as an enculturation process
- VII. Application of play concepts across the lifespan
 - A. Analysis and evaluation of personal play experiences.
 - 1. Cultural heritage
 - 2. Adult and childhood play patterns
 - B. Analysis and application of play concepts on development of human potential
 - 1. Effects of the environment on play patterns across the lifespan and across cultures
 - 2. Effects of play patterns on human potential

Assignments

1. Weekly Reading Assignments:

Each week you will be asked to read a section of the manual and discuss your thoughts about the reading, or take part in a play activity. You will be asked to write one to two questions pertaining to the reading and give detailed answers for the questions. The questions will be turned in at the beginning of class and used as a tool for attendance and participation.

2. Reflection Sections:

Each student will complete the reflection sections of the manual located after each chapter. It is recommended that you complete the reflection section upon completion or prior to each chapter. This will keep the assignment from becoming overwhelming. The reflection sections are designed to facilitate a self-discovery process wrapped in the play literature found in the manual. This is also an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the reading. The reflection sections will be discussed in our class lectures for further understanding. They are there to assist you in better understanding the theorists.

3. Family Cultural Heritage Paper

The first paper is “How Cultural Values and Play Values were Expressed in My Family.” The term “cultural” is used very broadly; it means any group of which you are a part e.g., family, religious, geographical, etc. The student is expected to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their own personal experience using the concepts from the readings. Include 2 research articles related to play and parent involvement. **NOTE: At least 2 references must be cited in this paper.** They can be the articles you will be submitting with your paper. Remember to cite the information throughout your paper in APA format. Included in your paper will be a Reference List in APA format. Articles must be submitted along with your paper.

4. The Effect of Play on Human Potential Paper Assignment

The second paper topic is “**Effect of Play on Human Potential.**” Each student will interview an individual of at least 65 years of age (family members are highly recommended) regarding play experiences across the lifespan and the various environments in which these play experiences occurred. Include 2 research articles related to play and adults. You can also search related subjects like leisure and seniors, active living, etc. Discuss what you have discovered through the articles you have found, the class manual, and your interview. Articles must be submitted along with paper. Include two citations within your paper relating the articles to your paper. Include a Reference List at the end of your document in APA format.

The student should prepare an interview guide in advance with questions with which relate to Levy’s three characteristics of play. Examples are given below:

1. When you were a child, what did you do when you could do anything you wanted to do (intrinsic motivation)? Adolescent? Adult
2. What did you daydream about (suspension of reality) as a child? Adolescent? Adult?
3. What were you doing when you felt very capable and confident as a child? Adolescent? Adult?
4. Where were your favorite places to play as a child? Adolescent? Adult?

These questions are examples only. The student should develop their own questions and allow about an hour or more for the interview.

5. Synthesis Paper

The final paper should discuss the following items:

1. Compare and contrast your play with the play of the person you interviewed.
2. Give specific examples of play in your life and the life of the person you interviewed which support theories explored throughout the semester.
3. What did you learn from the reflection sections of the class manual?
3. After having taken this class, what do you believe about play?
4. What is the importance of play for children, adolescents, and adults?
5. How has your attitude toward play changed, if at all?
6. How will you incorporate play in your life?
7. If you could give play advice what would it be?

EVALUATION:

1. 20 Reading written assignments (5 pts each) 100 points to be completed before class
2. In class activities (you must be present to receive the points) 15 points
3. Family Cultural Heritage Paper 40 points
4. Effect of Play on Human Potential Paper 40 points
5. Synthesis Paper 80 points

Total: 275 points

RTM 352 *Tentative* Course Calendar

T/TH	Topic	Due/Bring to class/Take action
8/26 8/28	Levy and Arnold p. 10-11, p. 22	Forward your CSUN email to your personal account.
9/2 9/4	Moore pp. 58-60	
9/9 9/11	Bateson and 1st Blatner & Blatner p. 65, pp. 70-71	
9/16 9/18	Blatner & Blatner 2nd & 3rd pp. 75-76, pp. 82-84	
9/23 9/25	In class play activity (5 points each day) TBA 1-2 pg. fun reading assignment	Family Cultural Heritage Paper Due 9/23
9/29 10/2	Blatner & Blatner 4 th ; Tolan pp. 90-91	Did you forward your CSUN email?
10/7 10/9	2nd and 3rd Finney reading only. No written assignment. TBA 1-2 pg. fun reading assignment	
10/14 10/16	Jest for the Health of It Kotulak pp. 142-144 TBA 1-2pg. fun reading assignment	
10/21 10/23	Csikszentmihalyi Flow activity	
10/28 10/30	In class play activity (5 points each day) TBA 1-2 pg. fun reading assignment	Effect of Play on Human Potential Paper Due 10/28
11/4 11/6	Gerson pp. 171-172	
11/13 11/18	1st Kelly-Byrne p. 180 2nd Kelly-Byrne p. 188	
11/20 11/25	Discuss interview questions; brainstorm. Stone p. 197; Read the last 3 articles; develop interview questions.	Start writing and thinking about final paper. Remember to cite articles in the readings.
12/2 12/4	In class play activity (5 points each day) TBA 1-2 pg. fun reading assignment	Synthesis Paper Due 12/2
12/9	Play article discussion	
12/11	12:45-2:45 pm	

General Course Guidelines

- Turn off all cell phones and pagers before entering the classroom. I reserve the right to deduct 5 points for each cell phone/pager interruption. A cell phone/pager interruption on an exam will result in a score of 0 on the exam. I also reserve the right to deduct 5 points for each text messaging or leaving class to answer a phone call.
- Make friends with someone in class to get handouts for you if you miss class.
- Roll is taken at the beginning of class and used to decide borderline grades.
- Failure to show up for an oral presentation will result in a **deduction of 10 points** per class meeting. I reserve the right to **deduct 5 points** for each tardy and cell phone interruption on the day of an oral presentation. Any legal documentation you may provide to substantiate said absence must be produced at the next date of attendance (police report, jail documentation, hospital admittance form, funeral card, doctor's note, tow receipt, NOT note from mom).
- Protect all of your work. If you have the same work as another person, you both will receive a zero and may be referred to the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs for disciplinary action.
- Please take all of your trash with you when you leave the classroom.
- Do **NOT** ask me to give you an incomplete when you don't fit the criteria: a major unforeseen circumstance that can be legally documented, passing work up until the time of the circumstance, and only missing a minority of the course work.
- I am here to help you with class work as well as personal challenges, but you need to come to me if you are having difficulties, I can't read your mind.
- **Failure to bring your course pack each day will also result in a 5 point deduction.**

Guidelines for Assignments

- Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be recognized by a grade of “F” on the assignment and will be reported to the appropriate campus authority. Please see pages 531 and 532 in the CSUN Catalog for the campus policy on Academic Dishonesty.
- Late assignments will not be accepted—don’t ask me to make an exception for you.
- Plan for those unforeseen problems by starting on your assignments early—I will gladly accept any assignment early. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. You or someone else **MUST** give them to me personally; they may **NOT** be emailed, faxed, or left in my box.
- Being absent is no excuse for a late assignment.
- Assignments that are not stapled will not be accepted—and will result in a grade of “0,” don’t ask me for a stapler—I am not your personal Office Depot.
- Assignments must be typed, double-spaced using black ink and white or ivory paper and a 12 font similar in appearance to this one (Times New Roman).
- Handwritten assignments will not be accepted—I can barely read my own writing, don’t expect me to read yours.
- Use a spell checker and have someone read your papers and give you input before you turn them in—give yourself the best chance for the best grade possible.
- CSUN provides a writing lab for students. The tutors will read your paper and give you input on how to improve it. I strongly suggest all students take advantage of this free service.
- Do **NOT** let them correct your APA formatting. They are English majors and use MLA style.
- Appointments are required for this service.
- Assignments must have your name at the top of the first page so I can give you credit for your masterpiece.

General Grading Guidelines for Written Assignments

An “A” paper demonstrates critical thinking and application of theory/concepts to the subject. Concepts/terms are defined properly. The paper is well conceived and executed, demonstrating proper use of written English. The paper fulfills all specific requirements listed. The source(s) is(are) relevant to the topic.

A “B” paper presents content clearly and displays a firm grasp of the material. Demonstrates some critical thinking. Most of the concepts/terms are defined. May contain some minor grammatical errors. The paper is well organized. The paper fulfills all of the specific requirements listed. The source(s) is(are) relevant to the topic.

A “C” paper displays a reasonable understanding of the material. Treatment of the topic is general and lacks detail. Concepts are defined and not linked to examples. May contain a few major and or minor grammatical errors. The paper fulfills most of the specific requirements listed. The source(s) is(are) fairly relevant to the topic.

A “D” paper demonstrates lack of clear understanding of the topic and a weak grasp of the material. Concepts are not defined, or defined incorrectly, or not linked to illustrative examples, or no concepts are given and the paper is merely a description. Reads poorly and contains major and minor grammatical errors. The paper does not fulfill the requirements listed. The source(s) is(are) not relevant to the topic.

Important things to know

Attendance and participation will be noted and used to decide borderline grades (grades within 1% of the next grade). It is *your* responsibility to be marked in if you arrive after I take roll. It is *my* perception of participation. Failure to bring your course pack each day is non-participation. Text messaging or leaving class to answer phone calls is non-participation.

I will excuse students from class to participate in religious or cultural holidays (yours, not someone else’s), however, if anything is due on that day it must be turned in prior to that class meeting and you must inform me of your absence prior to the absence

Please check your grades online periodically throughout the semester. You will need to send me a secret code (a word, short phrase, number, or any character that you can type on a standard English keyboard) to use to check your grades. Please do NOT email me after the semester ends to ask me to reconsider your grade unless I have made an error on the final exam/project grade.

Please do NOT email me to tell me that another person in your class got the next higher grade and only had ½% more than you or even ½% less (think about your attendance and class participation). If you have an 89.9% you have earned a B+. If you have *not* been absent and *have* participated in the class discussions, I will bump your grade up to an A-.

Back up all of your work on the computer. I am not responsible for computer or printer malfunctions or loss of electricity. Save all of your graded work until your grade for this class is posted to your record. In fact, you should save everything until your diploma is in your hand.

Grading Scales

I strongly suggest that all students check their grade progress periodically during the semester. Grades are posted at my website.

	B+ 87-89.9%	C+ 77-79.9%	D+ 67-69.9%
A 93%+	B 83-86.9%	C 73-76.9%	D 63-66.9%
A- 90-92.9%	B- 80-82.9%	C- 70-72.9%	D- 60-62.9%

If you decide you do not want to continue in this class, it is your responsibility to drop the class prior to the drop date. Failure to do so will result in a grade of “F” in the class.

To do well in this class, you must pay attention to the details

Use this as a checklist when you prepare your papers

- one inch margins all around
- left justify
- double-space entire paper
- use one font throughout, preferably Times New Roman
- use 12 point font throughout use bold, italics, and capitalization for emphasis only indent all paragraphs
- be clear and concise, but not overly brief
- does the text make sense?
- does the text flow in a logical order—general to specific?
- does each section stand alone?

Our Agreement

- By remaining on the official class roster and by continuing to attend this class, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the requirements set forth in the syllabus for this course.
- You also acknowledge that you are responsible for asking for clarification about assignments, exams, and due dates.
- You promise to turn off (not place on vibrate) your cell phone/pager before you enter the classroom so that you will not disturb other students.
- You will not leave class to answer or make calls.
- If you have an anticipated emergency that necessitates use of your phone/pager, you will inform me prior to class.
- You are in college because you want to learn.
- You will conduct yourself in a manner consistent with your status as a college student.
- You are in charge of your learning experience and understand that you can get no more out of it than you are willing to put in.
- You understand that my promise to you is that I will do my best to facilitate your learning experience.
- I will be available in person, by email, or by phone.