

California State University, Northridge  
Department of Recreation and Tourism Management

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I. Course

RTM 402: Play Theory and Critical Thought (3 units)

II. Course Description

This course examines the historical and current theories of play and the relevance to the profession today using a critical thinking model. Students are required to analyze, synthesize and evaluate theories and to examine their impact on the provision of service to individuals across the lifespan with diverse needs.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate critical thinking including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in the fields of play, leisure, recreation, parks, and/or tourism through a variety of pedagogies.
2. Students will practice and self-assess progress towards mastery of the standards and competencies of appropriate accrediting body(ies) through continual self-assessment and portfolio development.

IV. Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course the student will have developed an:

1. Understanding of the conceptual foundations of play for all populations and settings. (8.01)
2. Understanding of the affective, cognitive, physical and social significance of play, from an historical perspective for all populations and settings. (8.02)
3. Understanding of the significance of play throughout the life cycle relative to the individual's values, behaviors, and use of resources. (8.04)
4. Ability to apply the critical thinking process to play behavior.

V. Course Content

<u>Week</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1	Course Overview Definition of Terms
2-4	Definitions of Play, Recreation, and Leisure <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Levy</li><li>b. Moore</li><li>c. Arnold</li><li>d. Barnett</li></ol> Observations
5	Critical Thinking
6	Classical Theorists

7	Sutton-Smith
	Ellis
	Finney
8	Csikszentmihalyi
9	Freud
10	Erikson
11	Piaget
	Tolan
12	Social Learning
13	Sociological
	Anthropological
14	Individual Meetings with Professor
15	Review
	Portfolio Discussion
	Individual Meetings
16	Final

#### VI. Texts

Tolan, Finney & Walker. (1996) Play across the life span. Northridge, CA: CSUN.  
Available at ASAP Printing, 9250 Reseda Blvd., Suite 6, Northridge, CA  
91324. 818-700-7999  
Selected Articles

#### VII. Method of Instruction

Students will play a major role in their quest for knowledge and understanding. To this end, the course will be utilizing lecture-discussion, cohort learning, class discussions, assigned readings, Applied Concepts of Play Assignment (Play Log), Conceptualization, Application and Analysis Reviews, Synthesis and Evaluation Assignments, Written Synthesis and Evaluation, and an Examination.

#### VIII. Method of Evaluation/Learning Opportunities

1. Play Log: Select a specific cohort and record in writing 15 detailed anecdotal observations of members of the cohort in play. Utilize the following categories to establish an observation instrument: Entry Number, Date, Time of Day, Elapsed Time, Environment, Gender, Age, Description of Behavior, and Analysis. Analysis is to be done using Levy's three components: Intrinsic motivation, suspension of reality, and internal locus of control. Quality of the assignment will be assessed by the depth of understanding demonstrated in the Analysis. Due September 8, 2008 (SLO #1, SLO #2, OBJ #3)

2. Five Reviews using Conceptualization, Application, Analysis and Synthesis

Consult and cite a minimum of one scholarly sources/theories/models of play per review. Students should use specific data bases to search, e.g. PsychLit, ERIC. Summarize the discussion of each source. Discuss the major concepts identified by the author and demonstrate how those concepts are linked together.

1st Review Due September 15, 2008

2nd Review Due September 29, 2008

3rd Review Due October 20, 2008

4th Review Due November 10, 2008

5th Review Due November 24, 2008

(SLO #1, OBJ #4)

3. Written Synthesis and Evaluation

Review the observation in the Play Log many times. Identify the major concepts which emerge from the 15 observations, e.g., risk behavior, solitary activity. Group the observations by these major concepts. All 15 observations must be in one or more group; some may be in more than one group. Discuss the theories which explain each group. Use individual observations as examples (application). Finally, discuss the value of this information to the recreation profession/professional. The paper should include both an introduction, which introduces the major concepts, and a conclusion which summarizes the paper. Due December 8, 2008 (SLO #1, SLO #2, OBJ #1, #2, #3, #4)

4. Examination – December 15, 2007 8-10 pm (SLO #1, SLO #2, OBJ #1, #2, #3, #4)

XI. Evaluative Process

Play Log	10 points
5 Reviews (9 points each)	45 points
Final Synthesis	10 points
Final Examination	20 points
Class Participation/Absences	<u>15 points</u>
	100 points

90 – 100 = A  
 80 – 89 = B  
 70 – 79 = C  
 60 - 69 = D  
 59 and below = F

**Grading Criteria**

Grade	Characteristics of Work
A	Outstanding. Work demonstrates a superior level of proficiency. It must show depth of thought, analysis and integration of knowledge. Uses the texts and other literature and research to support ideas. Maintains a level of excellence throughout demonstrating creative thinking and evidence of engagement in the subject matter. Explores ideas extensively and in-depth.
B	Very Good. Demonstrates a good grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical thinking and analysis, reasonable understanding of issues, and evidence of familiarity with the texts. Explores ideas in some depth.
C	Satisfactory. Meets the requirements of the assignment and demonstrates overall understanding of the subject matter and competence. Deals with the subject matter in a cursory manner.
D	Barely meets requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates only superficial familiarity with the subject matter with little critical thinking.
F	Does not meet the requirements of the assignment. Lacks evidence of understanding and familiarity with the subject matter.

**Note: Papers that treat the subject in a cursory manner without depth and detail or contain significant writing and proofreading errors earn the grade of "C".**

Absence Policy – Your participation is important for you and for other class members. Therefore:

1. Each student will have ONE free absence.
2. 3 points will be deducted from the total points in the course for each subsequent absence up to a total of 15 points.
3. This policy is in effect regardless of the reason for the absence.
4. In the event it is necessary to miss a class, the student is responsible for the information discussed in class.

Late Papers – Each learning opportunity is designed to facilitate the critical thinking process and the understanding of play as it relates to human development, health and professional service. Therefore, it is important that the student complete all learning opportunities. Points for late papers will be reduced by 10 percent.

X. Responsibilities of the Student

The professor is available as a resource. The student is encouraged to seek guidance and assistance and initiate requests for individual appointments. It is the student's responsibility to do the following:

1. Make an individual appointment to discuss any concerns or questions with the professor;
2. Read assigned material in a timely manner;
3. Come to all class meetings on time;
4. Come to all class meetings and participate in class discussions;
5. Study a minimum of 3 hours for every hour in the classroom;
6. In the event it is necessary to miss a class, the student is responsible for the information discussed in class.
7. Use APA format for all written work as appropriate (not the play log).

Student Etiquette

1. Cell phones must be turned off in the classroom.
2. Computers may be used to take notes in the classroom, but NOT for email, web surfing or any other purpose.
3. Discussion in class is very important to the learning of all students. Therefore, do not talk unless you have something to share with the entire group.

Student Discipline

Inappropriate conduct by students or by applicants for admission is subject to discipline as provided in Sections 41301 through 41304 of Title 5, California Administrative Code. Some of these sections are as follows:

41301. Expulsion, Suspension and Probation of Students.

Following procedures consonant with due process established pursuant to Section 41304, and student of a campus may be expelled, suspended, or placed on probation or given a lesser sanction for one or more of the following causes which must be campus related:

- A. Cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a campus.
- B. Forgery, alteration or misuse of campus documents, records, or identification of knowingly furnishing false information to a campus (Appendices, CSUN catalogue).

## **Department of Recreation and Tourism Management**

### ***Purpose of a Professional Portfolio:***

In today's business world, portfolios are frequently utilized by employees as well as employers. There are two primary functions for this business tool:

- During the interview process, prospective employees can use this tool to demonstrate skill sets and knowledge during the interview process as it relates to the job they seek. Employers on the other hand utilize the tools as a means to evaluate and verify the degree to which this prospective employee "fits" the position as advertised.
- A portfolio can also be useful during the performance/promotion review process. Again, each party can find value with this tool, for it documents the skill sets and knowledge attained since the last review.

The portfolio is designed to provide the students in the Recreation and Tourism Management Department with documentation to show prospective employers the quality of work the student/graduate can do, as well as, the variety of professional experiences in which the student has participated.

### ***What Is a Portfolio?***

You may want to think of your portfolio in metaphorical terms as a "tool box". Inside your toolbox are various types, styles and sizes of instruments that you have mastered that can be used to facilitate the successful undertaking of a job. All jobs are not the same, and therefore all "tool boxes" do not have the same tools within them. A brain surgeon and a plumber use different tools to accomplish their respective tasks. Therefore, a "tool box" or portfolio is a documented collection of skill sets and knowledge you have honed or mastered; allowing you to demonstrate to a prospective employer how well you measure up to a advertised position.

A portfolio is a collection of one's best work and should also contain some personal reflection related to these works. Portfolios are very individual and should represent the creator in the most excellent light. The portfolio should not be just a collection of papers and experiences but rather documentation of a synthesis of work based on skills and knowledge sets that students have acquired.

### ***How Do I Put My Portfolio Together?***

Students should select the work of which they are most proud and demonstrate acquisition and development of specific skills and knowledge sets for their portfolio. Certainly, revisions based on professor feedback will strengthen each individual work. Faculty in each of your courses will lead a discussion with the class reviewing potential skill sets related to the course learning outcomes that can become exciting portfolio items. Some work, whether academic or practical, has significant impact on the student's professional growth. It is these works that should include a written reflection.

As you proceed through your education program within our department you will master many skill sets; most of these will be based on NRPA Accreditation Standards as well as CSUN Student Learning Outcomes. You will find these items identified on your course outlines you receive from the faculty in our department.

A small sample of these might include:

- Event Planning
- Budgeting
- Group dynamics
- Working with a diversified team
- Team building
- Basic statistics
- Evaluation
- Hard copy promotional materials

- Power point oral presentations
- Ability to evaluate, analyze and synthesize concepts and other written/oral materials

Indeed, you may attain, refine, or master these skills and knowledge in multiple classes. And you may also gain skill sets and knowledge from application, work, or other “hands-on” experiences while here at CSUN.

The challenge is to develop a strategy that demonstrates your skill sets and knowledge in an organized and easily read document that best represents you and your unique abilities for your career objectives. Employers will not spend a lot of time during an interview process reading all the details found in the papers you wrote for your classes. Therefore, just a collection of papers from classes would not be considered an effective portfolio. However, a logical grouping of skill sets and knowledge identified on a cover page with a brief description regarding how you gained these skills and knowledge as reflected in the papers attached would. Indeed, you would have many of these skill set/knowledge groupings within your portfolio. Finally, you may want to identify how you were introduced to a skill/knowledge in a particular class, refined the skill/knowledge in a second class, and mastered the skill/knowledge in a third or fourth class.

In the end, you want a document that demonstrates your skill sets and knowledge sets which essentially represents and *sells* you; and also reflects clearly how you and your abilities “fit” the specific job/position for which you are applying.

### ***Ways in Which Employers Use Portfolios***

- ☒ **Hiring:** Portfolios are useful for employers to view during the recruiting process as visual samples of your work. For each interview it is important that the pages you share are related to the position you would be applying for.
- ☒ **Consultation:** When working within the organization – you might be trying to “sell” an idea to a manager or a group of managers. The use of a visual example of how this has worked elsewhere can help to provide clarity for the management team and create credibility for your work.
- ☒ **Performance Review:** During either the semi-annual or annual performance review process, a portfolio provides an on-going record of your work. It can assist you in drafting your appraisal, or providing input for your appraisal to your manager.
- ☒ **Promotion:** When applying internally for a new position, it serves again as an effective recruiting tool. Many adults are visual and portfolios assist in bringing your experience to life in a way that a resume cannot.