Jan Amos Komeński STATE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES in Leszno

Funded by the European Union

Course syllabus for ERASMUS+ incoming students

| Course Title | |
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| **Bodywork for Physical and Mental Health** | |
| Academic Teacher | Zuzanna Maćkowiak, PhD |
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| ECTS credits | 5 |
| Number of hours | 120 |
| Course code | INT-IZKFF-BPMH-26 |

**Course description**

This interdisciplinary course introduces students to body-oriented practices supporting physical health, emotional regulation, stress reduction, and overall wellbeing. The course combines theoretical foundations with experiential learning through movement, breathwork, somatic awareness, relaxation techniques, posture education, therapeutic touch, and mindfulness-based body practices.

Students explore the relationship between body and mind, including the role of movement, fascia, nervous system regulation, breathing, and embodied awareness in maintaining health and preventing stress-related disorders. Practical sessions focus on developing body awareness, resilience, self-regulation, and healthy lifestyle habits.

**Learning outcomes - course content**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain the relationship between physical and mental health through body-oriented approaches.
- Describe basic principles of somatic education, relaxation, breathwork, and therapeutic movement.
- Identify the physiological and psychological effects of stress on the body.
- Apply basic bodywork and relaxation techniques safely and appropriately.
- Demonstrate improved posture, breathing awareness, and movement coordination.
- Use body-awareness practices to support stress reduction and emotional balance.
- Work individually and in groups during experiential movement sessions.
- Demonstrate responsibility for personal wellbeing and healthy lifestyle habits.
- Reflect critically on embodied experiences and self-care practices.

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| • Communicate respectfully and effectively in intercultural and group-learning environments. |
| Student workload (self-study description) |
| Students are expected to engage in regular independent practice and reflection throughout the semester. Self-study activities include:<br>• Reading and analyzing course materials related to body–mind connection, stress physiology, somatic practices, and wellbeing.<br>• Practicing breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, stretching, mindfulness, and body-awareness methods introduced during classes.<br>• Maintaining a reflective journal documenting personal experiences, observations, and progress in body awareness and stress regulation.<br>• Preparing individual or group presentations related to bodywork methods supporting physical and mental health.<br>• Developing personal strategies for healthy lifestyle habits, recovery, and self-care.<br>• Reflecting critically on the practical application of bodywork techniques in academic, professional, and everyday contexts.<br>The self-study component encourages experiential learning, autonomy, self-reflection, and the development of lifelong wellbeing competencies. |
| Literature |

**Basic Literature**

1. Carr K, Feit MK. *Functional Training Anatomy*. Champaign (IL): Human Kinetics; 2024.
1. Bender L. *Vital Core Training: Improve Strength and Reduce Pain with Functional Movement*. Champaign (IL): Human Kinetics; 2024.
2. Brems C. *Therapeutic Breathwork: Clinical Science and Practice in Healthcare and Yoga*. Cham: Springer Nature; 2024
3. Starrett K, Starrett J. *Built to Move: The Ten Essential Habits to Help You Move Freely and Live Fully*. New York: Knopf; 2023.
4. Brown RP, Gerbarg PL. *The Healing Power of the Breath: Simple Techniques to Reduce Stress and Anxiety, Enhance Concentration, and Balance Your Emotions*. Boston: Shambhala Publications; 2023
5. LaDyne R. *The Mind-Body Stress Reset: Somatic Practices to Reduce Overwhelm and Increase Well-Being*. Oakland (CA): New Harbinger Publications; 2021.
6. Fogel A. *Restorative Embodiment and Resilience: Expanded Edition*. Berkeley (CA): North Atlantic Books; 2021.
7. Boyle M. *New Functional Training for Sports*. 2nd ed. Champaign (IL): Human Kinetics; 2016.

**Supplementary Literature**

1. Materials from WHO guidelines on physical and mental wellbeing
2. Selected current scientific articles from journals for example:

- Konrad A, Nakamura M, Tilp M, Donti O, Behm DG. Foam rolling training effects on range of motion: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Sports Med*. 2022;52(10):2523–35.
- Behm DG, Alizadeh S, Daneshjoo A, et al. Acute effects of various stretching techniques on range of motion: a systematic review with meta-analysis. *Sports Med Open*. 2023;9(1):107.
- Fincham GW, Strauss C, Montero-Marin J, Cavanagh K. Effect of breathwork on stress and mental health: a meta-analysis of randomised-controlled trials. *Sci Rep*. 2023;13:432.
- Glänzel MH, Rodrigues DR, Petter GN, Pozzobon D, Vaz MA, Geremia JM. Foam rolling acute effects on myofascial tissue stiffness and muscle strength: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Strength Cond Res*. 2023;37(4):951–68.
- Tortora S, Keren M. *Dance/Movement Therapy for Infants and Young Children with Medical Illness: Treating Somatic and Psychic Distress*. London: Routledge; 2022.

Papp ME, Lindfors P, Nygren-Bonnier M, Gullstrand L, Wändell PE. Effects of deep breathing exercises on stress, anxiety and autonomic function. *BMC Complement Med Ther*. 2021;21:252.