RPM 101: Recreation and Leisure

Unit 2 Section 1: A Current View of Recreation and Leisure

OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW

This unit addresses the following objectives:

1. Discuss the varied views and perceptions of what leisure and recreation are and what purpose each serves.
   
   What would you consider to be a leisure or recreational activity? What do your peers consider to be a leisure or recreational activity? What do your readings consider to be a leisure or recreational activity? Are there any that surprise you? What would not be considered a leisure or recreational activity and why not?

2. Identify primary motives for participation in recreation and leisure activity.
   
   Why do people engage in recreation and leisure activities? As you consider the readings, your own activities, as well as those of your peers, are there some reasons that you hadn’t thought of before?

3. Identify and discuss the dominant social factors that are currently influencing the recreation and leisure-service professions.
   
   Some or all of these factors will influence you when you are on the job in this profession or when you are considering a recreational or leisure pursuit. How do you feel about them? Given these factors, what changes would you make either in the system or how you would do things?

4. Identify and discuss the different types of leisure-service agencies responsible for facility development and activity program management.
   
   Have you ever thought about the leisure-service agencies that are behind your leisure activities? Thinking about your leisure activities from the point of view of the agencies behind them, what would you want from these agencies? What would you want to be sure they did or didn’t do?

The unit is divided into two sections (sections 1 and 2). Each section contains specific parts that contain online lectures and assignments to go with each lecture. Section 1 should be covered during week one of the course and Section 2 the following week.

Section 1 of this unit provides an introduction to the study of recreation, park, and leisure services, seen as vital ingredients in the lives of Americans and Canadians and as growing areas of career opportunity and professional responsibility. It outlines several unique characteristics of leisure involvement, such as the diverse forms of recreational involvement and play motivations shared by people of all ages and backgrounds. It presents important social trends and factors that have promoted the growth of the recreation and park movement during the 20th century. These
trends range from the increase of discretionary time and growing affluence to expanded interest in the creative arts and concern about the natural environment. Emphasis is placed on the development of the organized recreation system over the past several decades, with a discussion of different types of leisure-service agencies that are responsible for facility development and activity program management.

NOTE: I would suggest that each of you take a look at the assignments before you read the text and your online lecture so you can be thinking about how you will complete the assignments as you are doing the reading.
Part 1: The Importance of Studying Leisure and Recreation

Recreation and leisure constitute a major force in our national and local economies and is responsible for millions of jobs in such varied fields as government, travel and tourism, popular entertainment and the arts, health and fitness programs, hobbies, and participatory and spectator sports. Recreation includes an extremely broad range of leisure pursuits, including cultural entertainment or participation in the arts, membership in social clubs or interest groups, nature-related activities such as camping or hunting and fishing, attendance at parties or other special events, and fitness activities. The variety of recreational pursuits that may be considered leisure is enormous. Leisure, therefore, may be almost anything, anywhere, and anytime for someone.

Why is it important to study leisure and recreation?

We study leisure because it is important to people. It’s important because we need some freedom to become and to be ourselves. Leisure is important because we need to develop and maintain relationships with other people on more than a “have to” basis. It is important as we manage our schedules, develop our priorities, and seek to make our lives as full and rich as possible. The scope of leisure is also vast in terms of the use of time, the expenditure of financial resources, and its relationship to home, family, and community.

The common element in the examples of leisure and recreation-related activities found below is that each occasion has been chosen with some satisfaction anticipated.

Being able to choose from a variety of leisure activities suggests that:

- the wide variety of leisure may be seen as a kind of balance. Some activities are very active; some are more passive, some occur indoor versus outdoor, and some are done alone or with friends and family.

- leisure is both personal and social. The primary objective is to be with other people, to develop relationships, or self-development or self-expression.
Part 2: Social Factors Promoting the Recreation and Park Movement

Social factors have helped bring about the growth of recreation and leisure services in the U.S. and Canada. These factors include the following:

1. Increase in discretionary time

Not only is the list of activities that are leisure to some people endless, the amount of time spent on leisure also varies. A key development leading to the growth of the recreation movement is the increase in the amount of free or discretionary time in the 20th century. Prior to the ‘80s there was a growth of free or discretionary time. However, through the ‘80s and ‘90s, research has shown a reverse in this as workweek hours have increases for many of us. However, when you consider the increase in holidays, vacations, and early retirement, it is clear that leisure continues to present opportunities for greater numbers of people today.

2. National Affluence

As household incomes have increased, the total amount spent on varied forms of recreation and leisure has also increased over the years. As you can see from Table 1.1 (SEE BELOW), leisure has become a leading industry, exceeding $500 billion per year. This figure has doubled since 1990, and quadrupled since 1970. Estimates suggest that the average household spends about 8 percent of its income directly on leisure.

3. Commodification of Leisure (Leisure as a Profit-Seeking Business)

Leisure has become a commodity (product), meaning leisure has become “big business.” More and more complex, expensive forms of leisure by profit-seeking businesses such as Time Warner, Disney, professional teams, cruise ships, fitness centers, sport stadiums, etc., have been developed today. In cities throughout the U.S. and Canada, huge public fitness centers that include aquatic areas, aerobics, and dance rooms, and facilities for family play and other activities are being built with charges for membership that cost several hundred dollars each year.

4. Population Trends

There has been a steady growth in our population as well as in terms of diversity (e.g., race and ethnicity). As a result of growing waves of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and some third world regions, the nation’s identity as a primarily white society based heavily on northern European and English traditions is rapidly shifting. For example, Hispanics are now the largest minority in the U.S. The emphasis in popular culture, sports, and other leisure-related areas reflects these population changes. Major youth-serving organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, and YMCA and YWCA, recreation programming and staffing practices today reflect a strong multicultural emphasis.

5. Where People Live: Urbanization and Suburbanization

As immigrants came from impoverished European nations or migrated from rural regions to cities in the U.S. and Canada in search of better job opportunities, there was an increased need for
recreation opportunities for these individuals. Recreation emerged in the forms of playgrounds for kids, sports fields for youth and adults, parks throughout our communities, community centers, etc. For example, following World War II, there was a widespread move by millions of middle-class families away from the central cities to the suburban areas that surrounded them. These newly formed communities quickly developed recreation and park systems—often with extensive facilities and programs.

6. **Americans’ Loss of Innocence**

Since 9/11/01, Americans view the world differently. They became more concerned for their own safety. Airplanes did not fly, and the airline and travel and tourism industry lost over $40 billion. Education, recreation, and sports events were cancelled. Public park and recreation facilities increased their security.

7. **Influence of Technology**

Consider the use of technology in our leisure pursuits. Outdoor recreation uses expensive devices for skydiving, hang gliding, scuba diving, boating, hunting, fishing, etc. Computer dating, internet, video games, etc., have also increased. Table 1.1 shows a significant expansion of the computer electronic industry. Check out the amazing growth in the annual spending on computers, peripherals, and software from 1990 to 2000. It more than tripled from 8.9 billion in 1990 to 34.3 billion in 2000!

8. **Recreation’s Contribution to Health and Fitness**

There has been an increasing trend for exercise and physical fitness programs. People are more concerned about their health, vitality, and appearance. Therefore, participation in activities such as walking, swimming, aerobics, jogging, etc. has increased. Despite this, there is strong evidence that children and youth in the U.S. are increasingly obese and in poor physical condition.

9. **Environmental Concerns**

Growing national concerns about the need to protect the environment has occurred and therefore there is more protected open space in national parks, wildlife refuges, and wilderness areas. Outdoor recreational activities such as camping, biking, backpacking, boating, hunting, fishing, skiing, and mountain climbing depend heavily on parks, forests, and water areas operated mainly by public recreation and park agencies. As the environmental movement received strong support from many recreation advocates and organizations, it was recognized that activities such as fishing and hunting are just part of a bigger scene that requires clean and safe air and water, as well as wise use of the land. The first Earth Day occurred in 1970, and this event continues to be celebrated through the world. As a matter of fact, UNC Greensboro celebrates Earth Day on campus in April of each year.

**WEBLINK:** The web link below describes Earth Day at UNCG in April 2003.

[http://www.uncg.edu/iss/earthday03.html](http://www.uncg.edu/iss/earthday03.html)

10. **Therapeutic Recreation Service**
Another important aspect of the growth of recreation has been the increased awareness of the leisure needs of people with physical, mental, cognitive, and social disabilities. This trend began with a growing concern about children and youth with mental retardation in the early 1960s. The Kennedy Foundation worked in conjunction with the federal and state governments and professional organization in physical education and recreation to provide sports opportunities for people with mental retardation. Their efforts gave rise to the Special Olympics programs that are still in existence today.

11. **New Leisure Roles for Girls and Women**

The feminist movement challenged sexist beliefs and social customs where women were treated as second class citizens in marital and family life, education, careers, politics, and leisure opportunities. Women were barred from a variety of athletic, outdoor recreation, social and cultural involvements. During the ‘60s and ‘70s many of these inequities were corrected (Title IX changed the face of women’s sport). Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 is the landmark legislation that bans sex discrimination in schools, whether in academics or athletics.

**WEblink:** An in-depth description of Title IX is provided at the following web link:

http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/ge/aboutRE.html

12. **Decline of Family and Community Values**

Consider the increase in the number of children born out of wedlock, divorces and separations, and single parent households; alcohol and drug abuse; increase of violence, gangs, homelessness, gambling, and prostitution; and how this decline of family and community values has impacted recreation and leisure. Many of these activities have replaced more traditional forms of leisure, creating a challenge to recreation managers and leaders. With devastating examples of teenagers carrying out violent acts in American schools against other students and teachers during the late 1990s, a growing number of public and nonprofit leisure-service organizations have initiated innovative, comprehensive programs designed to serve these “at-risk” youth and to offer positive leisure and recreation alternatives.

13. **Growth of the Organized Leisure-Service Field**

A dramatic expansion in the number and influence of major types of organized recreation, park, and leisure-service sponsors has occurred over the past several decades. There are 10 major categories of leisure service providers that we will learn more about in this course, including:

- Government agencies
- Voluntary organizations
- Private-membership organizations
- Commercial recreation enterprises
- Employee recreation programs
- Armed forces recreation
- Campus recreation
- Therapeutic recreation services
• Sports participation and spectatorship
• Travel, tourism, and hospitality management
Part 3: Need for Professional Leadership

Within each field of specialization discussed in Part 2 of Unit 1, there is a growing need for qualified professional leadership.

Students in the Recreation and Park Management program at UNCG study the design, management, implementation, supervision, and expansion of recreation and park services for individuals and groups of all ages and backgrounds. Students are prepared with a broad range of skills related to working within therapeutic recreation, the arts, commercial recreation, sporting events, and outdoor recreation, to name a few. Specialty offerings in this growing field include:

- public recreation
- commercial/entrepreneurial recreation
- therapeutic recreation
- gerontology
- youth organizations
- resource management
- recreation and park administration

A variety of career opportunities exist in the recreation industry, including but not limited to:

- Aquatics Therapist
- Armed Forces Recreation Director
- Athletic Director
- Camp Director
- Campus Recreation Director
- Church Recreation Director
- Club Manager (Health/Fitness)
- Community Center Director
- Concert Promoter
- Convention Planner/Coordinator
- Correctional Therapist
- Employee Recreation Specialist
- Environmental/Cultural Interpreter
- Golf/Tennis Pro
- Inclusion/Integration Facilitator
- Intercollegiate Athletics Manager
- Meeting Planner
- Municipal Recreation Director
- Outdoor Recreator/Educator
- Park Ranger
- Prison Recreation Specialist
- Recreation Facility Manager
- Recreation Programmer
- Recreation Therapist
- Resort Activities Director
- Resort Manager
- Scouting
- Ski Instructor
- Sports Reporter
- Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
- Travel Agent
- YMCA/YWCA Instructor

WEBLINK: Check out the incredibly long list of career options in this field on the following weblink.

http://csc.dept.uncg.edu/students/majors/rpt.html
Unit 2 Section 2: Basic Concepts: Philosophical Analysis of Play, Recreation, and Leisure

OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW

This unit covers the following objectives:

1. Define play, recreation, and leisure as three distinct terms.

   Even though play, recreation, and leisure are terms that are often used interchangeably, they are indeed distinctly different.

2. Compare and contrast play, recreation, and leisure as three distinct behaviors.

   In this week’s assignments, you are going to be asked to link these terms to your leisure artifacts. So keep them in mind as you complete the readings for this week.

3. Provide an overview of the early theories related to play.

   In the 19th and 20th centuries, a number of influential scholars developed comprehensive theories of play to help explain its development and its role in human society and personal development.

4. Discuss the role of play in childhood development.

   You are going to be asked to observe a child or baby animal. Keep this in mind as you read about early theories related to play and childhood development.

5. Discuss contemporary views of play, recreation and leisure.

6. Identify the six views of leisure as presented in the text.

   Keep in mind that leisure is individually defined. What might be considered leisure for me may or may not be considered leisure by you.

7. Discuss the importance of morally approved and socially constructive forms of leisure.

   Consider whether activities that are often widely disapproved, such as drug use, be regarded as a form of recreation.

The unit is divided into two sections (Sections 1 and 2). Each of the sections contains online lectures and assignments to go with each lecture. Section 1 should be covered during week one of the course and Section 2 the following week.

Section 2 of this unit stresses acquiring a conceptual understanding of play, recreation, and leisure. Play, recreation, and leisure represent important basic concepts that are essential aspects of the overall field of organized leisure services. These concepts have been explored by philosophers, psychologists, historians, educators, and sociologists from ancient Greek civilization to the present. Play may best be understood as a form of activity or behavior that is generally non-purposeful in terms of having serious intended outcomes, but that is an important
element in the healthy growth of children. Part 2 of this unit presents various theories of play, ranging from classical views to more contemporary concepts. Six concepts of leisure are presented that depict it as a possession of the upper classes or aristocrats throughout history, as free time or activity, as a state of being, and as a form of spiritual expression. Recreation is also explored from different perspectives, with a key issue being whether it must be morally constructive or socially approved to be considered recreation.
Part 1: Analysis of Play

**Audio:** Click here to listen to a brief audio lecture regarding the differences between play, leisure, and recreation.

The words play, leisure, and recreation are frequently used interchangeable, as if they mean the same thing. However, although related, they have distinctly different meanings, and it is important for students to understand the differences.

**What is Play?**

It is difficult to arrive at a single definition of play because it takes so many forms and appears in many contexts. Play has been defined as “doing something for its own sake, for the satisfaction of the moment.” Your textbook authors define play as “a form of human or animal activity or behavioral style that is self-motivated and carried on for intrinsic, rather than external, purposes. It is generally pleasurable and often includes elements of competition, humor, creative exploration, and problem solving, and mimicry or role playing. Consider, for example, a child playing with her dolls while pretending to be the mother. There is freedom in play as well as a lack of structure. In essence, play is defined as how we do something rather than what we do.

**Early Theories of Play**

- **Surplus-energy theory:** the view that play is primarily motivated by the need to burn up excess energy (Herbert Spencer, English philosopher). He saw play among children as an imitation of adult activities.

- **Recreation theory:** the view that the purpose of play was to conserve or restore energy rather than to burn up excess energy. When one is exhausted through toil, play recharged one’s energy for renewed work (Moritz Lazarus, German philosopher).

- **Instinct-practice theory:** the view that play enables children to practice and perfect the skills they will need in adult life (Karl Groos, philosophy professor).

- **Catharsis theory:** the view that play, particularly competitive, active play, serves as a safety valve for the expression of bottled-up emotions. A vital necessity for active play to help children and youth burn up excess energy and provide a socially acceptable channel for aggressive or hostile emotions and drives (Harvey Carr, American psychologist).

**20th Century Concepts of Play**

- **Self-expression theory:** Elmer Mitchell and Bernard Mason (leading physical educators) saw play primarily as a result of the need for self-expression. Certain universal wishes of humankind were influential in shaping play attitudes and habits, such as wishing for a new experience, wishing for participation in a group endeavor, wish for security, wish for response and recognition from others, and the wish for the aesthetic.
• **Play as a social necessity**: Joseph Lee (father of the play movement in America) believes that play contributed to the wholesome development of personal character because it involved lessons of discipline, sacrifice, and morality.

• **Typologies of play activity**: Roger Caillois, a French sociologist, examined the play experience itself by classifying the games and play activities that were characteristics of various cultures and identifying apparent functions and values. He established four major types of play and game activity: **agon, alea, mimicry, and ilinx**.

  **Agon**: Activities that are competitive and in which the equality of the participants’ changes of winning is artificially created. Winners are determined through qualities such as speed, endurance, strength, memory, skills, and ingenuity. Examples include card and table games involving skill.

  **Alea**: Includes games of chance; those games or contests over whose outcome the contestant has no control; winning is the result of fate rather than skill of the play. Examples include games of dice, roulette, lotteries.

  **Mimicry**: Based on the acceptance of illusions or imaginary universes. Children engage in mimicry through pretend play. Children play make believe, or make others believe, they are other than themselves. Examples include boys making believe they are soldiers, policemen, cowboys, etc.

  **Ilinx**: Play activities based on the pursuit of vertigo or dizziness. Examples include swings, seesaws, roller coasters, skydiving, and bungee jumping.

Over the past several decades, numerous authorities in the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis have examined play and its role in personality development, learning theory, mental health, and related areas.

For example, Frank (a child psychologist) believed play to be important in the psychological and emotional development of children.

> Play, as we are beginning to understand, is the way the child learns what no one can teach him. It is the way he explores and orients himself to the actual world of space and time, of things, animals, structures, and people. Through play he learns to live in our symbolic world of meaning and values, of progressive striving for deferred goals, at the same time exploring and experimenting and learning in his own individual way. Through play he practices and rehearses endlessly the complicated and subtle patterns of human living and communication which he must master if he is to become a participating adult in our social life.

Sigmund Freud saw play as a medium through which children gain control and competence and to resolve conflicts that occur in their lives.

> Might we not say that every child at play behaves like a creative writer, in that he creates a world of his own, or, rather, rearranges the things of his world in a new
way which pleases him? It would be wrong to think he does not take his play seriously; on the contrary he takes his play very seriously and he expends large amounts of emotion on it. The opposite of play is not what is serious but what is real.
Part 2: Analysis of Leisure

What is Leisure?

1. The word *leisure* is derived from the Latin word “licer,” which means “to be permitted” or “to be free.”

2. Difficult to define because it means something different to each person. There are multiple definitions of leisure in the literature.

Leisure is defined as “permission to do as one pleases at one’s own pace, to participate in an activity of one’s choice, and to abandon the activity at will.”

Leisure is also defined as “activity chosen in relative freedom for its qualities of satisfaction.”

Even with such a simple definition of leisure, the variety of activity that may be considered leisure is enormous. With leisure defined as a quality of experience and as the meaning of an activity, then it may be almost anything, anywhere, and anytime for someone.

Six Distinct Views of Leisure

1. Classical view of leisure. Aristotle regarded leisure as “a state of being in which activity is performed for its own sake.” What is the major flaw in this definition, according to your textbook? In modern society (unlike during Aristotle’s day), leisure cannot be a privilege reserved for a select few; it must be widely available to everyone.

2. Leisure as a symbol of social class. Veblen (American sociologist in the 19th century) saw leisure as a complete way of life for the privileged class; he attacked the idle rich and regarded them as exploiters who lived on the toil of others. Is this view of leisure still relevant? Sure it is; the wealthy or privileged class continues to engage in a variety of expensive, prestigious, and sometimes decadent leisure activities. They travel extensively, entertain, patronize the arts, and engage in exclusive and high-status pastimes.

3. Leisure as unobligated time. The view that leisure is unobligated or discretionary time that is free from work or from work-related responsibilities. Consider this though: is there ever a time when we are totally free of obligation? Is there a clear delineation between work and leisure? Can one find leisure experiences while at work (e.g., reading books related to work or inviting work colleagues to a party or dinner).

4. Leisure as activities. The view that leisure is an activity in which people engage in during their free time. This view is seen as limited because it does not accommodate individual perceptions about particular activities. You may view preparing a meal as a pleasurable activity of self-expression, whereas I think it monotonous and boring work.

5. Leisure as a state of mind marked by freedom. This view places emphasis on the perceived freedom of the activity and the role of leisure involvement in helping a person achieve personal fulfillment and self-enrichment. Neulinger writes:
To leisure means to be engaged in an activity performed for its own sake, to do something which gives one pleasure and satisfaction, which involves one to the very core of one’s being. To leisure means to be oneself, to express one’s talents, one’s capacities, one’s potentials.

6. **Leisure as spiritual expression.** The view that the leisure experience is characterized by a spiritual feel of being connected to oneself, with others, and a sense of oneness with the universe. Consider the linkages between leisure and religion.

**Leisure Seen in Relationship to Work**

By definition, leisure does not exist during work, but there is a connection. Two theories present an alternative view of this relationship.

1. **Compensatory theory of leisure.** Leisure stems from and is influenced by work in that it used to compensate for the strains or demands of work. Consider this in the sense of using leisure to contrast everyday work life.

2. **Spillover theory of leisure.** Leisure becomes an extension of work. This is the reverse of the compensatory theory. I enjoy my job based on my ability to be creative and to socialize with colleagues, so I may be more apt to repeat these actions in my leisure pursuits. I enjoy teaching, so I tutor during my leisure time.

Based on these six concepts/views of leisure, your textbook author defines leisure as the following:

. . . that portion of an individual’s time that is not directly devoted to work or work-connected responsibilities or to other obligated forms of maintenance or self-care. Leisure implies freedom and choice and is usually used in a variety of ways, but mainly to meet one’s personal need for reflection, self-enrichment, relaxation, or pleasure.
Part 3: Analysis of Recreation

What is Recreation?

Recreation stems from the Latin word *recreation*, meaning that which refreshes or restores. Historically, recreation was regarded as a period of leisure and restful activity, voluntarily chosen, that permits one to regain energy after heavy work and to return to work renewed. However, this view is not acceptable today. People are becoming more physically and mentally engaged in their recreation than in their work. What about people who do not work (e.g., people with disabilities, retirees)? In addition, both work and recreation have the potential of being pleasant, rewarding, and creative.

Contemporary Definition of Recreation

Most modern definitions of recreation fit into one of three categories:

1. Recreation as an activity carried on under certain conditions or with certain motivations.
2. Recreation as a process or state of being—something that happens within the person while engaging in certain kinds of activity, with a given set of expectations.
3. Recreation as a social institution, a body of knowledge, or a professional field.

Typically the following elements are contained in the definitions of recreation:

- Recreation is regarded as activity as opposed to sheer idleness or rest.
- Recreation may include a range of activities, such as sports, games, fine arts, music, drama, etc.
- Choice of activity is voluntary, free of obligation.
- Recreation is prompted by internal motivation rather than extrinsic rewards.
- Recreation is dependent on a state of mind or attitude.
- Recreation may be for pleasure or may meet intellectual, physical, or social needs.

Kelly (1996) defined recreation as “voluntary non-work activities that are organized for the attainment of personal and social benefits, including restoration and social cohesion.”

Recreation consists of human activities or experiences that occur in leisure time. Usually, they are voluntarily chosen for intrinsic purposes and are pleasurable. Recreation may also be regarded as the emotional state resulting from participation or as a social institution, a professional career field, or a business.

How is Recreation Different from Leisure?
1. Recreation is a leisure activity with social purposes and organization.

2. Recreation is always beneficial in intent (has restorative function).

3. Recreation generally refers to more organized activity. It is socially organized for social ends.