
Rutgers University
830:506: Self-Regulation and Self-Control
Spring 2015

Wednesdays 1:10-3:50PM
TILLET 102

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Office Hours: By appointment; schedule via email

Course Description

The successful attainment of goals is a multi-determined process. At several stages along the road to goal achievement, people face self-regulatory challenges that threaten to hinder progress. How do people overcome obstacles and difficulties in order to successfully meet the goals they set for themselves? How do they resist temptations, regulate emotions, ignore distractions, and disengage from unworthy pursuits? The course provides an overview of the major theories and findings in research on self-regulation and self-control. We will explore both the conscious and nonconscious processes by which people regulate their emotions, thoughts, behaviors, attention, and impulses in order to attain their goals. Our exploration will cut across multiple domains, delving into self-regulation strategies and processes that are implicated in consumer behavior, dieting, romantic relationships, moral judgments, and overcoming stereotypes, to name a few. Students will be introduced to these topics by reading original research articles and should expect to be active participants in class discussions.

Course Requirements

Readings. You are expected to read the assigned readings before each class. There will be a mix of original empirical research, book chapters, and review articles. Readings will be distributed electronically via Sakai.

Class Discussions: Your success in the class will be determined in large part by your active participation in class discussions. The readings are meant to encourage lively discussion, discourse, and debate. Participation in these discussions should be taken seriously and a large portion of your grade will come from your participation. As a heads up, there should be no single paper that you do not comment on during class discussion.

Discussion Leaders: Each week, two students will serve as Discussion Leaders for the week. They'll be responsible for reading one additional paper (assigned in advance), designing a mini-presentation (see below), and leading the discussion of the week's readings. Discussion leaders should consider themselves my co-professors for the week; they should strive to guide the other students in the class into a deeper understanding of the readings. Each student will serve as a Discussion Leader once during the semester.

Reaction Papers: Throughout the course of the semester, you will turn in reaction papers.

- You only need to turn in **THREE** reaction papers throughout the entirety of the semester. That is, a reaction paper is not due every week but rather you can pick and choose which weeks' readings you'd like to respond to.
- You cannot write a reaction paper for the same week that you are a Discussion Leader
- The papers should include your reactions to EACH assigned article for the week.
- They should be about 2-3 pages in length.
- Included in each paper should be your general thoughts about the papers but also a specific question that came to mind while reading each paper. These questions should be ones that will provoke discussion, rather than clarification questions. The questions can address aspects of the readings that you find interesting, irrelevant, provocative, contradictory and/or confusing. Please highlight, bold, or otherwise emphasize your question within the document.
- Email your reaction papers to me 24 hours before class, in other words **by 1pm on Tuesday.**

Mini-Presentations: Each week, Discussion Leaders will give a mini-presentation. These presentations should be related to the topic and the readings for the week but, importantly, should extend beyond the readings. Find demonstrations, videos, or real world examples that illustrate the concepts discussed that week. Design or lead a relevant class activity. Take a poll, design a game, act out a scenario. Remember, you are the co-professors for the week. How can you make sure the class understands and can relate to the phenomena discussed in the readings?

Final Presentation: The culmination of your work in this class will be a final presentation in which you design and develop an idea for your own research study. Now that you have a working knowledge of self-regulation and self-control research, what questions do you feel like have yet to be answered? What would YOU like to know about how people regulate their behaviors, emotions, or thoughts during goal pursuit? You can build off of empirical work you have read in class, or design a study in a completely new domain. It is your chance to be the experimenter. You do not actually need to carry out the study, but you should think through all of the pieces of designing it—what does the literature already say about this topic, what will your study add, how would you run the study, what would you expect the results to be? To save yourself the last minute stress of having to come up with a research idea, you should think about potential topics for this THROUGHOUT the course of the semester. Start thinking early! You will meet with me at a designated time a few weeks prior to the end of the semester to “pitch” your idea and receive feedback. The last week of class will be spent presenting your ideas in front of the class. You can work in pairs or alone on this final project—your decision.

Grading

Discussion Participation	30%
Reaction Papers	20%
Mini-Presentations	20%
Final Presentation	30%

Course Schedule and Readings

(The ordering of the topics may change. As much notice as possible will be given when scheduling changes occur.)

WEEK 1 (JAN 21): INTRODUCTION

WEEK 2 (JAN 28): GOAL SETTING AND IMPLEMENTING

Reading #1: Oettingen, G., Pak, H., & Schnetter, K. (2001). Self-regulation of goal setting: Turning free fantasies about the future into binding goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 736–753.

Reading #2: Gollwitzer, P. M. (1999). Implementation intentions: Strong effects of simple plans. *American Psychologist, 54*, 493-503.

WEEK 3 (FEB 4): GOAL SHIELDING AND SUPPRESSING

Reading #1: Shah, J. Y., Friedman, R. S., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2002). Forgetting all else: On the antecedents and consequences of goal shielding. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*, 1261–1280.

Reading #2: Bélanger, J. J., Lafrenière, M. A. K., Vallerand, R. J., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2013). When passion makes the heart grow colder: The role of passion in alternative goal suppression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*, 126–147.

WEEK 4 (FEB 11): GOAL PROGRESS AND ATTAINMENT

Reading #1: Koo, M., & Fishbach, A. (2008). Dynamics of self-regulation: How (un)accomplished goal actions affect motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 94*, 183-195.

Reading #2: Klein, N. & Fishbach, A. (2014). Feeling good at the right time: Why people value predictability in goal attainment. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 55*, 21-30.

WEEK 5 (FEB 18): GOAL DISENGAGEMENT

Reading #1: Wrosch, C., Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Schulz, R. (2003). The importance of goal disengagement in adaptive self-regulation: When giving up is beneficial. *Self and Identity, 2*, 1–20.

Reading #2: Brandstätter, V., & Schüler, J. (2013). Action crisis and cost-benefit thinking: A cognitive analysis of a goal-disengagement phase. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 49*, 43–53

WEEK 6 (FEB 25): DUAL-PROCESS MODELS

Reading #1: Metcalfe, J., & Mischel, W. (1999). A hot/cool-system analysis of delay of gratification: dynamics and willpower. *Psychological Review*, 106, 3-19

Reading #2: Sherman, J.W., Gawronski, B., Gonsalkorale, K., Hugenberg, K., Allen, T.J., & Groom, C.J. (2008). The self-regulation of automatic associations and behavioral impulses. *Psychological Review*, 115, 314-335.

WEEK 7 (MAR 4): DELAY OF GRATIFICATION

Reading #1: Mischel, W., Ebbesen, E.B., & Zeiss, A.R. (1972). Cognitive and attentional mechanisms in delay of gratification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 21, 204-218

Reading #2: Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Rodriguez, M. L. (1989). Delay of gratification in children. *Science*, 244, 933-938.

WEEK 8 (MAR 11): COUNTERACTIVE CONTROL

Reading #1: Trope, Y., & Fishbach, A. (2000). Counteractive self-control in overcoming temptation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79, 493-506

Reading #2: Smeets, P. A., Kroese, F. M., Evers, C., & de Ridder, D. T. (2013). Allured or alarmed: Counteractive control responses to food temptations in the brain. *Behavioural Brain Research*, 248, 41-45.

WEEK 9: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

WEEK 10 (MAR 25): CONSTRUAL LEVELS AND SELF-CONTROL

Reading #1: Fujita, K., Trope, Y., Liberman, N., Levin-Sagi, M. (2006). Construal levels and self-control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 351-367

Reading #2: Fujita, K., & Roberts, J. C. (2010). Promoting prospective self-control through abstraction. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46, 1049-1054.

WEEK 11 (APR 1): DEPLETION WARS!! (READINGS TBA)

WEEK 12 (APR 8): REGULATING STEREOTYPES AND OVERCOMING BIASES

Reading #1: Gordijn, E. H., Hindriks, I., Koomen, W., Dijksterhuis, A., & Van Knippenberg, A. (2004). Consequences of stereotype suppression and internal suppression motivation: A self-regulation approach. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 212-224.

Reading #2: Devine, P.G., Plant, E.A., Amodio, D.M., Harmon-Jones, E., & Vance, S.L. (2002). The regulation of explicit and implicit race bias: the role of motivations to respond without prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 835-848.

WEEK 13 (APR 15): SELF-REGULATION IN CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING

Reading #1: Keinan, A., & Kivetz, R. (2008). Remediating hyperopia: The effects of self-control regret on consumer behavior. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45, 676-689.

Reading #2: Verplanken, B., & Sato, A. (2011). The psychology of impulse buying: An integrative self-regulation approach. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 34, 197-210.

WEEK 14 (APR 22): SELF-REGULATION IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

**Project Pitch: Schedule a time this week to meet with me to pitch your research idea and get it approved*

Reading #1: Finkel, E. J., & Campbell, W. K. (2001). Self-control and accommodation in close relationships: An interdependence analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 263-277.

Reading #2: Fitzsimons, G.M., & Finkel, E.J. (2010). Interpersonal influences on self-regulation. *Current Directions in*

Psychological Science, 19, 101–105.

WEEK 15 (APR 29): SELF-REGULATION IN MORAL JUDGEMENTS

Reading #1: Sachdeva, S., Ilic, R., & Medin, D.L. (2009). Sinning saints and saintly sinners: the paradox of moral self-regulation. *Psychological Science*, 20, 523–28

Reading #2: Mead, N., Baumeister, R. F., Gino, F., Schweitzer, M., & Ariely, D. (2009). Too tired to tell the truth: Self-control resource depletion and dishonesty. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45, 594-597.

FINAL EXAM WEEK (Date TBA): IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS