
Rutgers University
830:422: Advanced Topics Course
Social Psychology of Self-Regulation and Self-Control
Spring 2015

M/TH 10:20-11:40
TILLET 246

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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: Given that this is an advanced seminar class, 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 at least once throughout the course of the semester.

Quizzes: At the beginning of every Monday class there will be a short quiz. The quizzes will allow you the opportunity to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the readings and thinking critically about what you read. The quiz questions will be generated by me, but also by YOU. Each student will send me two potential quiz questions (along with answers) by no later than **5pm on Sunday evening**. I'll choose a few questions from each reading to put into a quiz to be taken at the beginning of class on Monday. After the quiz, we'll discuss the answers and use this as a jumping off point for a discussion of each reading. There will be NO make-up quizzes under any circumstances, but you will have the opportunity to drop TWO quiz grades over the course of the semester.

Mini-Presentations: On Thursdays, Discussion Leaders will start the class by giving a short 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 an in-class 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 “pitch” your idea and receive feedback. The final exam period 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%
Quiz Questions	10%
Quiz Performance	20%
Mini-Presentations	10%
Final Presentation	30%

Standards for Conduct

This class aims to foster a learning-centered environment which promotes and values:

- the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge
- critical thinking
- honesty/integrity
- professionalism
- respect for others and their viewpoints

In support of these values, the following factors may also affect your grade in the course.

- Mutual respect. Inappropriate interpersonal behavior and communication in and outside of class is not acceptable. It is expected that students will behave in a respectful way with the instructor and other students. I welcome (and encourage!) debates and disagreements about the course topics, as long as contrary viewpoints are shared in a way that is respectful and considerate. Participation grades may reflect class behavior, and those students who behave in a way deemed disruptive or offensive will see it reflected in their grades.
- Academic misconduct. Any student who cheats or plagiarizes will be referred to the Academic Judiciary Board. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: having a cell phone or other electronic device during a quiz, attempting to or leaving the classroom with a copy of the quiz, or looking at another student's quiz. Plagiarism involves any attempt to pass off work from another source as your own. This includes when the sources of ideas or direct quotes are not cited. If you are uncertain how to properly cite references, please ask me.

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 22): INTRODUCTION

WEEK 2 (JAN 26, 29): GOAL SETTING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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 2, 5): 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 9, 12): 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 16, 19): 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 23, NO CLASS FEB 26): 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 2, 5): 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 9, 12): 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 23, 26): 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 (MAR 30, APR 2): DEPLETION WARS!! (READINGS TBA)

WEEK 12 (APR 6, APR 9): 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 13,16): 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 20, 23): SELF-REGULATION IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

*Project Pitch: Schedule a time this week to meet with me to pitch your presentation 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 27, 30): 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.

WEEK 16 (MAY 4): IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

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