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Rutgers University  
830:422: Advanced Topics in Social Psychology  
Self-Regulation and Self-Control  
Fall 2016

M/W 3:20 – 4:40pm  
TILLET 252

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Professor: Dr. Shana Cole  
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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 their goals? 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, health and fitness, interpersonal relationships, and overcoming stereotypes, to name a few.

### Course Requirements

Readings: We will read a mix of original empirical research articles, chapters, and review articles. Readings will be distributed electronically via Sakai. You are expected to read the assigned readings *before* each class so that you'll be prepared to discuss what you read. I encourage you to read the articles in the chronological order that they were written since later papers may build off earlier ones.

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 at least once 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 helping to lead 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 to a deeper understanding of the readings. Each student will serve as a Discussion Leader once throughout the semester.

Quizzes: At the beginning of every Monday class (starting in Week 2) 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. 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 Wednesdays, Discussion Leaders will give 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?

Research Presentation: During the last week of class, you will do 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 the 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. You can work in pairs or alone on this final project—your decision.

Goal Journal: Finally, as an ongoing, semester-long project in this class, you will keep a “Goal Journal.” The purpose of the project is to try to put to use in your everyday life the strategies and tools you have learned about in the psychological research. Specifically, in the beginning of the semester, you will identify a goal you would like to work toward for the semester. Throughout the semester, you will log entries in your goal journal that describe how you have used and implemented the research we’ve learned about in class in your efforts to meet your own goal. You should make **at least three** entries in your journal. In each entry, you should discuss what the psychological research says is an effective route to goal pursuit using a specific article we have read in class, how you specifically implemented that idea in your everyday life, and what the outcomes of that were. Did it seem to help or harm your progress toward meeting your goal? **An additional final entry** should detail your overall progress toward meeting your goal and your future plans for continuing efforts toward your goal. The journal will be due on Sakai by the date of our scheduled final exam period (December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 12:00pm). No late journals will be accepted for **any reason whatsoever**.

## Grading

Discussion Participation	30%
Quiz Performance	20%
Mini-Presentations	10%
Research Presentation	20%
Goal Journal	20%

## 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 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 if scheduling changes occur.)

### **WEEK 1 (SEPT 7): INTRODUCTION**

### **WEEK 2 (SEPT 12, 14): 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., & Brandstatter, V. (1997). Implementation intentions and effective goal pursuit. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1*, 186-199.

### **WEEK 3 (SEPT 19, 21): GOAL PLANNING, INITIATION, AND FOLLOW-THROUGH**

**Reading #1:** Dai, H., Milkman, K. L., & Riis, J. (2015). Put your imperfections behind you: Why and how meaningful temporal landmarks motivate aspirational behavior. *Psychological Science, 26*, 1927-1936.

**Reading #2:** Rogers, T., & Milkman, K. L. (2016). Reminders through association. *Psychological Science, 27*, 973-986.

### **WEEK 4 (SEPT 26, 29): NO CLASS!**

### **WEEK 5 (OCT 3, 5): GRIT AND PERSEVERANCE**

**Reading #1:** Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*, 1087-1101.

**Reading #1:** Duckworth, A., & Gross, J. J. (2014). Self-control and grit: Related but separable determinants of success. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 23*, 319-325.

### **WEEK 6 (OCT 10, 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:** Koo, M., & Fishbach, A. (2012). The small-area hypothesis: Effects of progress monitoring on goal adherence. *Journal of Consumer Research, 39*, 1-17.

### **WEEK 7 (OCT 17, 19): GOAL DISENGAGEMENT**

**Reading #1:** Wrosch, C., Scheier, M. F., Miller, G. E., Schulz, R., & Carver, C. S. (2003). Adaptive self-regulation of unattainable goals: Goal disengagement, goal reengagement, and subjective well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*, 1494-1508.

**Reading #2:** Vohs, K. D., Park, J. K., & Schmeichel, B. J. (2013). Self-affirmation can enable goal disengagement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*, 14.

### **WEEK 8 (OCT 24, 26): 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 9 (OCT 31, NOV 2): 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:** Myrseth, K. O. R., Fishbach, A., & Trope, Y. (2009). Counteractive self-control: When making temptation available makes temptation less tempting. *Psychological Science, 20*, 159-163.

## WEEK 10 (NOV 7, 9): TAMING TEMPTATION

**Reading #1:** Mead, N.L., & Patrick, V.M. (2016). The taming of desire: Unspecific postponement reduces desire for and consumption of postponed temptations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 110, 20-35.

**Reading #2:** Milyavskaya, M., Inzlicht, M., Hope, N., & Koestner, R. (2015). Saying “no” to temptation: Want-to motivation improves self-regulation by reducing temptation rather than by increasing self-control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 109, 677-693.

## WEEK 11 (NOV 14, 16): DEPLETION WARS!! (READINGS TBA)

## WEEK 12 (NOV 21, **NO CLASS NOV 23**): CONSTRUALS OF SELF-CONTROL CONFLICTS

**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 13 (NOV 28, NOV 30): REGULATING STEREOTYPES AND OVERCOMING BIASES

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

**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 14 (DEC 5, 7): SELF-REGULATION AND INTERPERSONAL PROCESSES

**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. (2011). Outsourcing self-regulation. *Psychological Science*, 22, 369-375.

## WEEK 15 (DEC 12, 14): IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS