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Rutgers University  
830:421: Advanced Topics in Social Psychology  
Self-Regulation and Self-Control  
Fall 2022

Monday/Thursday 10:20-11:40am  
Beck Hall 111

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Professor: Dr. Shana Cole (she/her)  
Email: shana.cole@rutgers.edu (Please allow 24-48 hours for an email response)  
Office Hours: By appointment; schedule via email

### Course Description

Nearly 80% of individuals who set New Year's resolutions break them by Valentine's Day. Likewise, within a year of quitting, 75% of smokers start up again. And five years after losing the initial weight, two-thirds of dieters gain back even more than they had originally lost. People often struggle to meet and manage goals, even ones they value a great deal. 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? This 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 health and fitness, interpersonal relationships, consumer behavior, moral decision-making, and overcoming stereotypes, to name a few.

### Course Format and Requirements

Course Site: If you are registered for this course, you will have access to our course site on Canvas. There you will find the syllabus, grade book, and announcements related to the course. You will also see Modules for each week of the class. For each module, I will post the readings and the weekly quiz. You can also utilize the Chat feature to ask questions of your classmates and communicate broadly with the class. If you have any trouble accessing our course material on Canvas, please let me know as soon as possible.

Readings: There is no textbook for this course. Instead we will read a mix of empirical research articles, chapters, and review articles. Readings will be distributed electronically via Canvas. You are expected to read the assigned readings *before* Monday's class so that you'll be prepared to discuss what you read in class. Class participation is a big part of your grade, and you will not be able to effectively contribute to the class discussion without doing the readings ahead of time. I encourage you to read the articles in the chronological order that they were written since later papers may contain responses to earlier ones.

Class Participation: Your success in the class will be determined in large part by your active participation in class discussions. The readings are meant to encourage discussion, discourse, and debate. As a general rule, for maximum participation points, you should try to contribute during every class session. I'll do my part to keep the class interesting and engaging, and I ask that you do your part to actively listen, offer your thoughts, and ask/answer questions.

Online Mini-Quizzes: Each week there will be a short "mini-quiz" posted on Canvas where you answer questions about the upcoming week's readings. The quiz will be posted on Thursday afternoons and you can complete it anytime before class on Monday (the quiz will close at 10:15am on Monday so you need to submit your answers by then to receive credit). The quizzes will allow you the opportunity to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the readings and thinking critically about what you read. You can feel free to refer to the readings during the quiz, but you may **not** share answers with your classmates. Any evidence of students sharing or comparing answers will be grounds for reporting to the Office of Student Conduct (see below). There will be no make-up quizzes given, but I know that various issues might prevent you from completing a quiz. Because of that, you will have the opportunity to miss **TWO** quizzes over the course of the semester without penalty (no need to email me that you are missing a quiz, they will just be dropped automatically out of your grade). Each quiz will be worth a maximum of 5 points for a total of 50 points.

Paper Presentations: Each week, several students will serve as my “co-professors” for the week. These students will read one additional paper and give a short presentation about it. Since you’ll be teaching the class about a paper they have never read before, you should think about how you can make sure the class understands and can relate to the reading. You should strive to make your presentation interactive by asking questions to your audience. Find demonstrations, videos, or real world examples that illustrate the concepts. Design or lead a class activity. Conduct a poll, design a game, act out a scenario, give a demonstration of the papers’ methods, etc. You will have about 20-30 minutes at the end of class on Thursday to present.

Goal Journal: As an ongoing, semester-long project in this class, you will log entries into a “Goal Journal.” In the beginning of the semester, you will identify a goal you would like to work toward for the semester. Throughout the semester, I will post several prompts as assignments on Canvas. The prompts will encourage you to use and implement the research we’ve learned in class in your efforts to meet your own goal. After the prompt is posted, you will have **one week** to submit a 1-2 page journal entry responding to the prompt. There will be a total of FOUR journal entries throughout the course of the semester. Each entry will be worth 10 points.

Final Presentation: Instead of a final exam, during exam week, you will do an in-class presentation in which you present an idea for your own research study. You can work in pairs or alone on this final project—your decision. Now that you have a working knowledge of self-regulation and self-control research, what questions do you feel have yet to be answered? What would YOU like to know about how people regulate their behaviors, emotions, or thoughts during goal pursuit? It is your chance to be the experimenter. You do not actually need to carry out the experiment, of course, 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!

## Grading

Class Participation	40 points
Online Mini-Quizzes	50 points
Paper Presentation	20 points
Goal Journal	40 points
Final Presentation	30 points
Total = 180 points	

## Standards for Conduct

- This class aims to foster a learning-centered environment that promotes and values the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, critical thinking, honesty/integrity, professionalism, and respect for others and their viewpoints. In support of these values, the following factors may also affect your grade in the course:
  - Mutual respect. The topics we learn about in this class are easily relatable to everyday life, making students inclined to share their own anecdotes and experiences. I welcome and encourage that—indeed, that’s one of the most exciting and unique aspects of this class. But it is imperative that students behave in a respectful and considerate way to their fellow classmates during class discussions. Inappropriate, disruptive, or offensive interpersonal behavior is not acceptable. 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. Rutgers University takes academic dishonesty very seriously. By enrolling in this course, you assume responsibility for familiarizing yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy and the possible penalties (including suspension and expulsion) for violating the policy. You can find more information about the University’s policy on academic integrity here: <http://nbademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/home-2/academic-integrity-policy>. As per the policy, all suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to):
    - Cheating (During the online mini-quizzes you MAY refer to your readings when responding but you MAT NOT share or exchange answers with other classmates)
    - Plagiarism (Plagiarism involves any attempt to pass off work from another source as your own. This includes when the sources of ideas are not cited).
    - Aiding others in committing a violation or allowing others to use your work
    - Failure to cite sources correctly (If you are uncertain how to properly cite references, please ask me).
    - Fabrication

- Using another person’s ideas or words without attribution—re-using a previous assignment
- Unauthorized collaboration
- Sabotaging another student’s work

**Student Wellness Resources:**

**Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)**

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ [www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/)

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals within Rutgers Health services to support students’ efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

**Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)**

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / [www.vpva.rutgers.edu/](http://www.vpva.rutgers.edu/)

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff, and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

**Course Schedule and Topics**

(As much notice as possible will be given if scheduling changes occur.)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Weekly Due Dates</b>
Week 1: Sept 8	Introduction to the course and syllabus review	
Week 2: Sept 12 & 15	Semester organization and How to Read a Journal Article	<i>Syllabus quiz due Sept 12<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 3: Sept 19 & 22	Boosting Motivation & Increasing Commitment	<i>Weekly quiz due Sept 19<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 4: Sept 26 & 29	Goal Planning and Implementation	<i>Weekly quiz due Sept 26<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Friday, Sept 30 <sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm	Goal Journal #1 due	
Week 5: Oct 3 & 6	Goal Progress and Monitoring	<i>Weekly quiz due Oct 3<sup>d</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 6: Oct 10 & 13	Grit & Perseverance	<i>Weekly quiz due Oct 10<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 7: Oct 17 & 20	Goal Disengagement	<i>Weekly quiz due Oct 17<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Friday, Oct 21 <sup>st</sup> by 11:59pm	Goal Journal #2 due	
Week 8: Oct 24 & 27	Delaying Gratification	<i>Weekly quiz due Oct 24<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 9: Oct 31 & Nov 3	Taming Temptation: Part 1	<i>Weekly quiz due Oct 31<sup>st</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 10: Nov 7 & 10	Taming Temptation: Part 2	<i>Weekly quiz due Nov 7<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 11: Nov 14 & 17	Construal Levels & Self-Control	<i>Weekly quiz due Nov 14<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Friday, Nov 18 <sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm	Goal Journal #3 due	
Week 12: Nov 21 & 22	Depletion Wars!!	
Week 13: Nov 24	NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 14: Nov 28 & Dec 1	Regulating Stereotypes & Overcoming Bias	<i>Weekly quiz due Nov 28<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Week 15: Dec 5 & 8	Interpersonal Processes & Self-Regulation	<i>Weekly quiz due Dec 5<sup>th</sup> by 10:15am</i>
Friday, Dec 9 <sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm	Goal Journal #4 due	
Week 16: Dec 12	Final Presentation Project Pitch	
Final Exam Week (TBD)	Final Presentations	