

SYLLABUS

PSYC 570 Self-Regulation

Overview

Self-regulation refers to the process of directing one's thoughts, feelings, and actions in order to achieve one's goals, or how the self controls the self. This course aims to provide a comprehensive overview of social psychological research on self-regulation. We will examine theories and experiments to try to find answers to questions such as:

- Why do we want what we want?
- How often do 'good' intentions get translated into action?
- What can we do to make it more likely that we will achieve our goals?
- How important are unconscious processes in determining what we do?
- Is willpower a limited resource?
- What behavior change techniques can psychologists offer to policy makers and practitioners concerned with societal problems such as obesity, teen pregnancy, or energy conservation?

Following this course, you will understand key concepts in self-regulation and appreciate the complexity of the processes involved. You will also have honed skills that should be valuable to you in work or educational contexts (designed a questionnaire, formulated and presented a study) and applied what you have learned to your own life (undertaken self-change and context-change experiments to achieve your goals).

Pre-requisites: PSYC 101 or equivalent (e.g., AP PSYC)

Class meetings: Classes will comprise lectures, demonstrations, class discussions, and student presentations.

Readings

The readings are journal articles and book chapters located on the course website: <https://sakai.unc.edu/>

Classes 1-4:

- Webb, T. L., Sniehotta, F. F., & Michie, S. (2010). Using theories of behaviour change to inform interventions for addictive behaviours. *Addiction, 105*, 1979-1892.
- Sheeran, P., Harris, P., & Epton, T. (2014). Does heightening risk appraisals change people's intentions and behavior? A meta-analytic review of the experimental evidence. *Psychological Bulletin, 140*(2), 511-543.
- Conner, M., & Sparks, P. (2015). The theory of planned behavior and the reasoned action approach. In M. Conner & P. Norman (Eds.), *Predicting health behavior* (3rd ed.) (pp. 142-188). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Class 5:

- Grant, H., & Gelety, L. (2009). Goal content theories: Why differences in *what* we are striving for matters. In G. B. Moskowitz & H. Grant (Eds.), *The psychology of goals*. New York: Guilford Press

Class 6:

- Sheeran, P., & Webb, T. L. (2016, in press). The intention-behavior gap. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*.

Class 7:

- Oettingen, G., & Stephens, E. J. (2009). Fantasies and motivationally intelligent goal setting. In G. B. Moskowitz & H. Grant (Eds.), *The psychology of goals* (pp. 153-178). New York: Guilford.

Classes 8, 10, and 11:

- Gollwitzer, P. M., & Sheeran, P. (2006). Implementation intentions and goal achievement: A meta-analysis of effects and processes. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 69-119.
- Webb, T. L., & Sheeran, P. (2010). Mechanisms of implementation intention effects: The role of goal intentions, self-efficacy, and accessibility of plan components. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 47*(3), 373-395.

Class 9:

- No readings: Examination I

Class 12:

- Harkin, B., Webb, T. L., Chang, B. P. I., Prestwich, A., Conner, M. T., Kellar, I., Benn, Y., & Sheeran, P. (2016). Does monitoring goal progress promote goal attainment? A meta-analysis of the experimental evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 142(2), 198-229.

Classes 13-14:

- Abraham, C., & Michie, S. (2008). A taxonomy of behavior change techniques used in interventions. *Health Psychology*, 27(3), 379–387. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.27.3.379>

Class 15:

- Custers, R., Eitam, B., & Bargh, J. A. (2012). Conscious and unconscious processes in goal pursuit. In H. Aarts & A. J. Elliot (Eds.), *Goal-directed behavior* (pp. 231-264). New York: Psychology Press.

Class 16:

- Wansink, B. (2010). From mindless eating to mindlessly eating better. *Physiology & Behavior*, 100(5), 454–463.

Class 17:

- Wood, W., & Rünger, D. (2015). Psychology of habit. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 67, 11.1-11.26.

Class 18:

- No readings: Examination II

Classes 19-20:

- Hagger, M. S., Wood, C., Stiff, C., & Chatzisarantis, N. L. D. (2010). Ego depletion and the strength model of self-control: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(4), 495–525.
*** You will also be assigned one of the following five articles ****
- Muraven, M. (2010). Building self-control strength: Practicing self-control leads to improved self-control performance. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46(2), 465–468.
- Gailliot, M. T., Baumeister, R. F., DeWall, C. N., Maner, J. K., Plant, E. A., Tice, D. M., et al. (2007). Self-control relies on glucose as a limited energy source: Willpower is more than a metaphor. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(2), 325–336.
- Hagger, M. S., & Chatzisarantis, N. L. D. (2013). The sweet taste of success: the presence of glucose in the oral cavity moderates the depletion of self-control resources. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(1), 28–42.
- Job, V., Dweck, C. S., & Walton, G. M. (2010). Ego depletion--is it all in your head? Implicit theories about willpower affect self-regulation. *Psychological Science*, 21(11), 1686–1693.
- Vohs, K. D., Baumeister, R. F., & Schmeichel, B. J. (2013) Erratum to “Motivation, personal beliefs, and limited resources all contribute to self-control,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49(1), 184–188.

Classes 21-23:

- Wagner, D. D., & Heatherington, T. F. (2014). Emotion and self-regulation failure. In J. J. Gross (Ed.), *Handbook of emotion regulation* (2nd ed., pp. 613-628). New York: Guilford Press.
- Webb, T. L., Schweiger Gallo, I., Miles, E., Gollwitzer, P. M., & Sheeran, P. (2012). Effective regulation of affect: An action control perspective on emotion regulation. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 23(1), 143–186.

Classes: 24-28

- No readings [student presentations, revision session]

Requirements and Grading

Participation includes regular class attendance, contribution to classroom discussions, as well as taking part in activities and exercises. Grading is based on the following criteria:

- 10% Goal Setting Report
- 5% Self-change project
- 5% Context change project
- 30% Paper
- 10% Paper presentation
- 40% Exams (performance on best 2 out of 3 exams)

Goal-setting project: You will choose a behavior that interests you and develop a questionnaire based on the theory of planned behavior designed to test predictors of intentions to perform that behavior.

Self-change project: You will complete a 1-2 page report on the use of mental contrasting with implementation intentions (MCII) to tackle a personal project. The report will include both the MCII exercise and your perceptions of progress with the project.

Context-change project: You will complete a 1-2 page report on changes you should make to your environment to achieve personal goals. You will describe 2-3 changes and your perceptions of their impact.

Paper: The paper will be a 6-10 page research proposal where you will design and propose your own original empirical study. You should include a discussion of the empirical literature motivating your study in an Introduction section. This section should also include your hypotheses about the outcomes of the study. A Methods section and Predicted Results section will outline the research methods you are proposing to use and the anticipated outcome of your study. You should summarize your anticipated findings and their impact on the literature in a Discussion section. ** Please note that this is an exercise and you are *not* expected to actually conduct this study **

Presentation: Students will present their studies in a 5-minute Powerpoint presentation (3-5 slides) at the end of the semester.

Exams: There will be three exams. Performance on your best two exams will contribute to your final grade.

Planned absences from exams must be approved during the first week of the course. In the event of an emergency absence please contact Professor Sheeran within twenty-four hours or as soon as circumstances allow. You will be asked to provide documentation to allow a make-up exam. Late assignments that have not been previously excused by Professor Sheeran will be penalized by a full letter grade (for example, from A to a B) for each partial or whole day late.

Grades: Grades are assigned per UNC's grading system (<http://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system>). Letter grades correspond to the following values:

A= >94	A- =90-93	B+=87-89	B=84-86	B-=80-83	C+=77-79
C=74-76	C-=70-73	D+=67-69	D=64-66	F= <63	

Academic integrity: As a member of this course, you are expected to follow the UNC Honor Code (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All exams and assignments must represent your own independent work. Any violation of academic integrity (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, non-independent work etc.) will be reported to the Honor System following a discussion with the student (http://honor.unc.edu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62&Itemid=67)

Please note that I reserve the right to alter the schedule depending on your feedback about what you find interesting and worthwhile and my perceptions of your progress with particular topics. I want you to feel challenged (not overwhelmed) and enjoy learning about self-regulation. Any changes will be notified as soon as possible both during class time and on the class website.

Class Schedule and Assignments

Class 1 – August 23: Introduction to Self-Regulation

Class 2 – August 25: Goal-Setting I – Why Do We Want What We Want?

Class 3 – August 30: Goal-Setting II – Why Do We Want What We Want?

Class 4 – September 1: Goal Setting Study Design

Class 5 – September 6: Goal Content – Does What We Want Matter?

Class 6 – September 8: Goal Striving: The Intention-Behavior ‘Gap’

- *Assignment: Goal Setting Study - Due 5pm on Friday, September 9*

Class 7 – September 13: Improving Goal Striving I: Mental Contrasting

Class 8 – September 15: Improving Goal Striving II: Self-Regulatory Problems

Class 9 – September 20: *Examination I*

Class 10 – September 22: Improving Goal Striving III: Nature and Impact of Implementation Intentions

Class 11 – September 27: Improving Goal Striving IV: Mechanisms of Implementation Intention Effects

Class 12 – September 29: Monitoring Goal Progress: Control Theory

Class 13 – October 4: Behavior Change Techniques

Class 14 – October 6: Behavior Change Techniques II: Class Presentations

- *Assignment: Self-Change Project - Due 5pm on Friday, October 7*

Class 15 – October 11: Automatic Self-Regulation I: Behavior Priming

No Class – October 13: *Conference Keynote Address*

Class 16 – October 18: Automatic Self-Regulation II: Nudges

FALL BREAK: October 19-23

Class 17 – October 25: Automatic Self-Regulation III: Habits

- *Assignment: Context Change Project - Due 5pm on Friday, October 28*

Class 18 – October 27: *Examination II*

Class 19 – November 1: Ego-Depletion: The Strength Model of Self-Control

Class 20 – November 3: Alternative Explanations of Ego-Depletion: Class Presentations Affect and Self-Regulation I

Class 21 – November 8: Affect and Self-Regulation I

Class 22 – November 10: Affect and Self-Regulation II

No Class – November 15: NCI CASPHR Meeting

Class 23 – November 17: Affect and Self-Regulation III

Class 24 – November 22: Presentations and Q&A Session I

THANKSGIVING – November 24

Class 25 – November 29: Presentations and Q&A Session II

Class 27 – December 1: Presentations and Q&A Session III

Class 28 – December 6: Revision Session

- *Assignment: Paper - Due 5pm on Monday, December 5*

Final Exam – Thursday, December 15 at 4pm