

## Self-Regulation: The Science of Becoming your Better Self.

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Columbia University

Summer 2017 (3 pts.)  
Course Code: S3682Q

### What is this course about?

How do we regulate our thoughts, emotions and behavior? Can we influence our impulses? How do we set and pursue our goals? Does regulation require conscious thought? What makes something tempting? If you find these questions intriguing, join the Self-Regulation Seminar! (for a full course description go to section 4 - next page)

#### 1. When & Where?

Summer Session Q (July 3rd - August 11th)  
Psychology Department  
Schermerhorn, Room 405  
TT 9:00am - 12:10pm

#### 2. Instructor:



Dr. Elina Kanellopoulou  
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Office Hours: by appointment

#### 3. Prerequisites:

*Science of Psychology* (1001) or *Mind, Brain, & Behavior* (1010), or the equivalent introductory psychology course. Students with little or no psychology coursework but with a background in philosophy, health sciences, or other related field are also welcome, as long as they contact me as early as possible to request permission and discuss preparatory reading. Since this is a seminar, the vast majority of our readings will be from primary sources (i.e. research articles) so students need to be familiar with the basics of a research design - See also section 9: Readings for more details.

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#### 4. Course Description:

Self-Regulation is the process by which we regulate our thoughts, emotions and behavior in the service of our goals. In this seminar we will engage with insights on self-regulation that have emerged from research in the field of psychology, but also from related disciplines such as philosophy, economics, and health sciences. The application of theory to daily life through experiential activities will also be a major focus of this seminar.

We will begin by examining the philosophical origins of the concept of self-regulation and then move on to exploring the research literature that addresses how we set our goals, and how we set out to pursue them. In particular, we will focus on the ways in which we can regulate our thoughts, emotions and behavior in order to serve those goals. The aim of this part of the course is to familiarize you with the main concepts involved in the current discourse on self-regulation and goal-pursuit and to enhance your understanding of the psychological and physiological factors involved in these processes.

A major aim of this course is to review the main self-regulatory *strategies* that have been tested through research and to discuss their merits and appropriateness for different types of goals. In the experiential part of the course (see section 6: Self-Regulation Challenge!) we will apply these strategies directly to our own goals in order to experience first-hand the challenges of self-regulation and goal pursuit, and the psychological process involved in putting these strategies into practice.

## 5. Calendar of Topics:

(please see section 9 for relevant readings)

Class	Date	Topics
1	07/04	Welcome Session: Introduction & Seminar Overview
2	07/06	Philosophical Origins of Self-Regulation: Plato & Aristotle
3	07/11	Delay of Gratification
4	07/13	Emotion Regulation
5	07/18	Setting Goals & Planning for the Future
6	07/20	Motivational Science: Guest Lecture by Dr. Juliana Smith
7	07/25	The Strength Model of Self-control
8	07/27	The Function of Behavior: Why do we stick to “bad habits”?
9	08/01	Strategies for Self-Regulation (Part 1): Conscious vs. non-conscious
10	08/03	Strategies for Self-Regulation (Part 2): Self-regulation vs. self-control
11	08/08	Final Exam
12	08/10	Project Presentations

## 6. Course Requirements:

### Class Participation:

We will meet twice a week, for three hours (TT 9:00am - 12:10pm, Schermerhorn 405) with a 10-minute break half way through. In class we will be discussing that session's topics based on the required and supplemental readings, and engage in activities with the aim of enhancing our understanding of the material and challenging our conceptions. For participating meaningfully in the discussion and making the most out of this course in general, it is vital to have completed the required readings prior to coming to class. On the first day of class we will discuss in detail what constitutes **adequate and meaningful participation in group discussion**, since this **constitutes the most crucial activity aiming at clarifying, processing, and critically examining the material**.

### Leading Discussion:

Starting on the second class session, two of you will be responsible for giving a 15 minute presentation each, introducing one of the required readings and leading part of the discussion. In this process you are encouraged to include in-class activities. We will discuss this process in detail in our first session. The student(s) leading discussion on a particular week will meet with me during the days before the session in order to discuss content and structure; for that reason when you sign up for a particular date please make sure you are available to meet sometime during the 3 work days prior to class. Each of you will have the chance to lead discussion twice during our seminar - it is recommended that you do it once towards the beginning and one towards the end of the summer session. **Giving you a chance to enhance your presentation and discussion-leading skills through peer and instructor-feedback is also an important goal of this seminar.**

### Posts:

By 8pm on the day prior to each class, you will each post a response to specific questions on the week's readings, on the discussion board located in the class website. Your posts should not exceed 600 words and can be addressing the question at hand by focusing on one or more of the upcoming session's readings. The questions will encourage you to discuss application of the readings in everyday life, as well as, links to other literatures/disciplines such as Philosophy, Economics, Health Sciences, or any other, as long as you provide a clear justification for the relevance of your choice. Questions and materials for each week will become available by the evening of the last class of the prior week. Your responsibility is to **post on time** and to **read other members' posts prior to class**.

### Final Exam:

The final exam will take place during the second half of the penultimate class session and will offer you a choice of two out of five open ended questions. The aim of this activity is to challenge you to tackle an issue *ad hoc*, from the enriched perspective on self-regulation that you will have acquired throughout this course.

### Final Project Presentation & Paper:

A substantial part of this seminar is the preparation of your final paper, which will be accompanied by a 15 minute presentation on the last day of class. In the third week of class (5th session) you will give a 5-minute seed-presentation with your idea for your paper in order to get feedback from the class. Following this, you will

produce a one page outline of your proposed paper - including indicative references, on which I will give you individual feedback. Your paper can be: 1) an literature review on one of the topics related to self-regulation, or 2) a proposal for an intervention study on self-regulation. You may propose a novel application for an existing self-regulation strategy or come up with an original strategy. In both cases you need to explain in detail how you propose testing its effectiveness experimentally. You will meet with me once in week 5 or 6 to discuss your progress and address any questions/issues. The final paper is due on the last day of the course and should not exceed 12 double-spaced pages, with a 12pt Times New Roman font, and 1 inch margins, excluding cover page and references that should also be included in the paper. We will discuss the final project in detail during class.

### **The Self-Regulation Challenge!**

Apply the strategies of self-regulation to your life! In the 2nd week, you will each pick a goal, in the service of which you would like to better regulate your thoughts, emotions, and/or behavior. Over the following 5 weeks, you will use this challenge in order apply some of the self-regulation strategies that we will cover in this seminar. Periodically during class, we will check-in on our progress, discussing the challenges and experience of implementing each strategy, as well as, that strategy's effectiveness. Your contribution in the discussion of this activity will be part of the participation portion of your grade, however your grade will in no way be affected by your success in achieving the goal that you set for this challenge. The purpose of this experiential exercise is to give you a feel for the practical application of these theories in your daily life.

It will be important for each member of the seminar group to carefully consider the aspect of your lives you want to focus on in the context of this experiential exercise. There might be issues that are too complex or sensitive to be used for the purposes of this exercise; if you are unsure about your choice, we you can discuss it with me during an individual appointment. It is best to pick an issue that you are comfortable sharing with the class; you will by no means be asked to share anything that you do not feel comfortable sharing during this process. Please note that, although the insights you will get from this class might very well aid you in working on these issues, this experiential component of the course *does not constitute a therapeutic intervention*. If there are issues that arise from this exercise that you feel you need to work on, I would suggest exploring them in a more focused supportive setting, and I will be happy to offer suggestions on available resources. For more information also see the Support section under Class Policy below.

## **7. Grading:**

20% - In Class Participation  
15% - Web posts  
15% - Leading Discussion  
15% - Final Presentation  
20% - Final Paper  
15% - Final Exam

## **8. Class Policy:**

### **Class Conduct:**

The utmost respect for your fellow seminar members is a fundamental prerequisite for being a member of this seminar. This includes refraining from any activity that might insult another seminar member, or distract them from the learning process.

### **Use of Technology:**

Any devices that can make noise should be fully silenced during each class period. In general, you are fully responsible for making wise (if any) use of electronic devices for the benefit of your learning, bearing in mind that it is not only your multitasking ability that should factor into how you choose to use them, but also a concern about whether your activity might distract those around you. During your presentation you are welcome to use Power Point, video, or any other software/equipment that is available and will aid your presentation.

### **Attendance:**

Being present in class is crucial since missing even one class can have an impact in your understanding and ability to contribute (especially due to the 3-hour class length during the summer sessions). Excused absence and opportunities for make-up in class assignments (e.g. leading discussion/presenting) will be granted only with appropriate justification and documentation from your doctor or advising dean. For the benefit of everyone in the seminar, promptness in arriving for class will factor into the participation portion of your grade.

### **Late or Undelivered Assignments:**

In order to ensure appropriate processing of the material and to provide you with timely feedback, assignments must be completed and turned in on time. Late response posts will be marked down 20%, while late paper grades will be reduced by 10% per day of delay - unless of course documentation by your doctor or advising dean is provided. In the case of a medical emergency or other kind of extraordinary circumstance, you must contact me as soon as possible in order to request an extension.

### **Academic Integrity:**

The content of your assignments is expected to be fully your own and any use of external resources should be appropriately acknowledged. Plagiarism or any other kind of academic dishonesty is absolutely unacceptable. Should you have any doubt of the nature of academic dishonesty, detailed definitions and examples of academic dishonesty, as well as, the consequences according to Columbia University policy, please read the Columbia Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity: <http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity>

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students with special needs who may require classroom and/or test accommodations please contact me via email as soon as possible in order to make sure we have everything in place for enabling your unobstructed participation. If you have not already done so, visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) (<http://health.columbia.edu/services/ods>) on the 7th floor of Lerner Hall to register for support services. Students who are eligible for extra exam time will need to fill out paperwork with ODS - please also let me know so that I can make sure we will be sufficiently prepared to accommodate you.

**Support:**

You are always welcome to contact me for any issue that pertains to the class, or anything else that might concern you, especially if you feel it interferes with your wellbeing while you are taking this seminar. If you have an issue about which you would rather not talk with me, consider speaking with your academic advisor or dean; with Prof. Patricia Lindemann, the Summer Session Departmental Representative for Psychology ([pgl2@columbia.edu](mailto:pgl2@columbia.edu), 358C Schermerhorn Engineering Terrace, T: 212-854-8285); or with the counselors at Columbia's Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://health.columbia.edu/services/cps>).

## 9. Readings: (Please note: bold type and number of pages both pertain to the required readings)

### Session 2: Philosophical Origins of Self-Regulation

(32 pages)

- **Plato, Lombardo, S., & Bell, K. (1992).** In *Protagoras*, (351b – 358d). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.
- **Aristotle, & Irwin, T. (2006).** Book VII. In Terence Irwin (Ed.), *Nicomachean Ethics*, (pp. 99-113). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.
- **Dennet, D.C. (1984).** Chapter 3, Control and Self-Control. In *Elbow Room* (pp. 50-70). Cambridge: The MIT Press
- **Bobonich, C., & Destrée, P. (Eds.). (2007).** *Akrasia in Greek philosophy: from Socrates to Plotinus*. Leiden: Brill.

### Session 3: Delay of Gratification

(25 pages)

- **Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Rodriguez, M. L. (1989).** Delay of gratification in children. *Science*, **244**, 933-938.
- **Duckworth, A. L., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2005).** Self-discipline outdoes IQ in predicting academic performance of adolescents. *Psychological Science*, **16**, 939-944.
- **Metcalfe, J., Mischel, W. (1999).** A hot/cool-system analysis of delay of gratification: Dynamics of willpower. *Psychological Review*, **1**, 3-19.
- **Kross, Mischel, & Shoda (in press).** Enabling Self-Control: A Cognitive Affective Processing Systems (CAPS) Approach to Problematic Behavior.

### Session 4: Emotion Regulation

(31 pages)

- **Gross, J. J. (2013).** Emotion Regulation: Taking Stock and Moving Forward. *Emotion*, **13(3)**, 359-365.
- **Gross, J.J., John, O. P. (2003).** Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **85(2)**, 348-362.
- **Samson A.C. & Gross J.J. (2012):** Humour as emotion regulation: The differential consequences of negative versus positive humour. *Cognition & Emotion*, **26:2**, 375-384
- **Livingstone, K.M. & Srivastava, S. (2012).** Up-regulating positive emotions in everyday life: Strategies, individual differences, and associations with positive emotion and well-being. *Journal of Research in Personality*. **46 (5)**, 504-516.

### Session 5: Setting Goals & Planning for the Future

(71 pages)

- **Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2005).** Affective forecasting: Knowing what to want. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, **14**, 131-134.
- **Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2003).** Temporal construal. *Psychological Review*, **110**, 403-421.
- **Frederick, S., Loewenstein, G., and O'Donoghue, T. (2002).** Time Discounting and Time Preference: A Critical Review. *Journal of Economic Literature*, **40**, 351-401.
- **Wakslak, C. J., Nussbaum, S., & Liberman, N., Trope, Y. (2008).** Representations of the self in the near and distant future. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **95(4)**, 757-773.



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Session 7: The Strength Model of Self-control

(26 pages)

- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., & Tice, D. M. (2007). The strength model of self-control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16, 351-355.
- Baumeister, R. F., & Heatherton, T. F. (1996). Self-Regulation Failure: An Overview. *Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, 7(1), 1-15.
- Job, V., Dweck, C., & Walton, G. M. (2010). Ego depletion – Is it all in your head?: Implicit theories about willpower affect self-regulation. *Psychological Science*, 21, 1686-1693.

Session 8: The Function of Behavior: Why do we stick to “bad habits”?

(36 pages)

- Heatherton, T. F., & Baumeister, R. F. (1991). Binge Eating as Escape From Self-Awareness. *Psychological Bulletin*, 110(1), 86-108.
- Tice, D. M. et al. (2001). Emotional Distress Regulation Takes Precedence Over Impulse Control: If You Feel Bad, Do It!. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80 (1), 53-67.

Session 9: Strategies for Self-Regulation (Part 1): Conscious & non-conscious

(54 pages)

- Wansink, B. (2010). From mindless eating to mindlessly eating better. *Physiology and Behavior*, 100, 454-463.
- Aarts, H. (2007). Health and goal-directed behavior: The nonconscious regulation and motivation of goals and their pursuit. *Health Psychology Review*, 1(1), 53-82.
- Adriaanse, M. A., Oettingen, G., Gollwitzer, P. M., Hennes, E. P., de Ridder, D. T. D. & de Wit, J. B. F. (2010). When planning is not enough: Fighting unhealthy snacking habits by mental contrasting with implementation intentions (MCII). *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.*, 40, 1277–1293
- Duckworth, A. L., Grant, H., Loew, B., Oettingen, G., & Gollwitzer, P. M. (2011). Self-regulation strategies improve self-discipline in adolescents: Benefits of mental contrasting and implementation intentions. *Educational Psychology*, 31, 17-26.

Session 10: Strategies for Self-Regulation (Part 2): Self-regulation vs. self-control

(32 pages)

- Giuliani, N. R., Calcott, R. D., & Berkman, E. T. (2013). Piece of cake. Cognitive reappraisal of food craving. *Appetite*, 64, 56–61.
- Gross, J.J., & Magen, E. (2007). Harnessing the need for immediate gratification: cognitive reconstrual modulates the reward value of temptations. *Emotion*, 7(2), 415-428.
- Fujita K. (2011). On Conceptualizing Self-Control as More Than the Effortful Inhibition of Impulses. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15(4), 352-366.

Session 11: Final Exam

Session 12: Project Presentations!

## **Welcome to the Self-Regulation Seminar!**

**Summer 2017**

(The syllabus could be revised by instructor in order to best address the needs and interests of each seminar group)

