

Columbia University
PSYC 4686 (4 points)
Spring 2019

BARRIERS AND LEVERS FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Time: Thursday 10:10am
Location: Schermerhorn 200C

Instructor: Claudia R. Schneider
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office hours: tbd
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Bulletin Description:

Seminar course exploring individual, social, and cultural barriers and levers for behavior change, with a focus on social issues, such as motivating pro-environmental action, encouraging positive health behavior change, and promoting charitable giving.

Course Overview:

This seminar is for those who are interested in gaining an understanding or deepening their knowledge of various factors that influence human behavior and behavior change endeavors. The seminar will focus on investigating individual, social, and cultural barriers and levers for behavior change and the interplay of these dimensions. The focus will be on real-world current topics, such as motivating pro-environmental action, encouraging positive health behavior change, and promoting charitable giving.

We will discuss selected important topics and issues pertaining to human behavior change, such as the role of social norms, emotions, and cultural factors. We will explore recent empirical findings in these topic areas, reflect upon their meaning for behavior change research, and their application in behavior change interventions. We will discuss how the various concepts and issues covered constitute barriers to behavior change but also provide levers for behavior change interventions. Towards this end we will critically analyze and assess a range of readings which are a combination of assigned readings as well as articles chosen by the students.

This seminar will allow students to acquire a solid knowledge base of the discussed topics and relevant scientific research literacy through critically analyzing readings, crafting their own research proposals and providing critical feedback to their peers' research proposals. Students will furthermore cultivate their oral and written communication skills, through leading class discussions and writing a personal research proposal.

Prerequisites:

Science of Psychology (PSYC 1001), Mind, Brain, & Behavior (PSYC 1010), or equivalent introductory psychology course, as well as a prior course in research methods/statistics. A prior course related to social, applied, and cultural psychology or decision making will be helpful. If

you do not have a psychology background and are interested in this seminar, please contact the instructor to determine fit. Instructor permission is required for all students.

Role in the Psychology Curriculum:

PSYC GU4686 is a seminar designed for advanced undergraduates, postbac students, and graduate students in the Psychology department. It fulfills the following degree requirements:

- For undergraduate psychology majors, this seminar will meet the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement and the seminar requirement.
- For students in the psychology postbac certificate program, this seminar will fulfill the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement and the advanced seminar requirement.
- Students in the Neuroscience & Behavior major must consult with their Director of Undergraduate Studies to determine whether this course might be used to fulfill the advanced seminar requirement.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Everybody is expected to complete all assigned readings and to participate actively in the class discussion. Discussion leaders are expected to guide the class discussion and sustain an insightful discourse. In addition, students will develop a personal research proposal based on the topics discussed during the seminar. The proposal will adhere to APA standards and formatting, which includes, but is not limited to, proper citation style. Detailed instructions will be given in class. In the second half of the semester students will present their research proposals to the class to receive critical and constructive feedback. In addition to the in-class presentation, students will turn in a final written research proposal.

20% -- general class participation

10% -- reading responses

20% -- leading discussion

50% -- research proposal (10% presentation, 40% final paper)

3% --- bonus for productive brainstorming during research proposal presentations in the second part of the semester

Class Participation:

You are expected to attend and actively participate in every class meeting, contributing your critical thoughts and assessments of the materials we are covering. Attendance and participation are essential not just for your own experience but also for the experience for the rest of the class, hence inadequate preparation and/or unexcused absences will affect your grade. This seminar covers a range of different topics. These topics don't stand in isolation but connect with each other and interplay. Therefore, it is important that you attend all classes.

While assigned discussion leaders are expected to lead the class, they are not the only ones responsible for a productive class session. Effective participation involves helping your peers by giving required materials a thorough and thoughtful read and preparing to engage in various points of discussion.

In general, good class participation involves (but is not limited to) pointing out sections and take-

aways that you find particularly useful in deepening your understanding of the topic and discussing why, critically assessing and commenting on methodological issues or merits, noting what is good about a paper and what is not, drawing connections between different readings and topics we have covered, as well as real-world applications that you know of, commenting on gaps and opportunities for further research, contributing ideas on how the concepts could be applied in real-world settings to facilitate behavior change, or sharing knowledge on existing campaigns that you know of that illustrate the effective or ineffective use of the insights and tools discussed in class. Keep in mind that active class participation will account for 20% of your grade, so please be engaged.

At the end of the term, following in-class presentations of the proposals, we will discuss the personal research proposals of all class members, helping them to shape them into comprehensive research projects.

Weekly reading responses:

Before each week's class, you will submit a short response to the two main assigned readings (approx. 200 words per reading). You'll post your response on our CourseWorks discussion board, which will allow you to preview what your classmates are thinking about the topic of the week. Your posts will also help the week's discussion leader get a sense for what everyone is thinking about the readings.

Response posts should demonstrate a thorough reading of the papers, and should show that you are thinking carefully about the topics at hand. Although they don't need to be perfectly crafted examples of scientific prose, they should be clearly written, with appropriate attention to grammar, spelling, etc. The content and focus of your posts can vary quite widely. You might identify a connection between a theory, method, or intervention discussed in the current paper compared to another reading or topic we discussed; you could lay out a theoretical or empirical question that the paper sparked in you; you could offer a substantive critique of a paper's methods or its interpretations of results; you could identify a real-world application for a theory or effect from the paper and discuss its possible implications.

Please note that you will not have to write a reading response for the topic you are leading the class discussion on.

Leading Discussions:

You are responsible for leading the class discussions you have chosen/been assigned to. Depending on the number of enrolled students, you may be expected to lead the class discussion 1-2 times. Your role as discussion leader is to provide a succinct overview of the assigned readings, critically reflect on them (including the authors' rationale, hypotheses, methods, results, and implications, theoretically as well as applied) and integrate them with each other and with other class materials and topics we have covered.

In addition, discussion leaders will select one additional, current (2014 or newer) empirical article on their own that complements, extends, or contradicts the assigned materials and will integrate this article into their presentation and discussion. The self-selected articles will be cross-checked with the instructor and shared with the class ahead of time. You will be required

to send 2-3 potential articles (rank ordered) to the instructor for review at least one week before your scheduled presentation day. This is to ensure that you have a back-up article already picked out in case your first picked article is not a good fit for that class. In your email to the instructor please include a short note for each article, how you see it fit to your discussion topic and the assigned readings and how you would integrate it.

In leading discussion, you should also create a connection to the real-world application potential of the concepts from the readings, e.g., how they could improve behavior change interventions. If you know of existing campaigns that use concepts discussed in class or do something different, please bring this knowledge in, to reflect on what works and what doesn't and why.

For leading discussion, you may find it helpful to use PowerPoint to aid your presentation and discussion, but note that your PowerPoint or other presentation tools will not be graded. The instructor will be grading the quality of your presentation content (how well you summarize, analyze and reflect on the materials) and the discussion your presentation generates, as well as your ability to raise interesting and thought-provoking questions to engage the class. As a discussion leader, you are in charge of initiating and sustaining a healthy class discussion, so make sure to put adequate preparation into your discussion agenda.

To assist you with this, leaders will meet with the instructor at least 2 days before the presentation day to go over your discussion agenda (questions and topics you intend to raise during your discussion in bullet point format). If you are opting to use a visualization tool such as Power Point you might find it helpful to prepare your slides ahead of the meeting to be able to go through them with the instructor. A solid discussion agenda is part of your discussion leading grade. In our first class we will go over what will be expected for leading discussions. We will also assign discussion leading spots based on topic preferences.

The Research Proposal:

The research proposal paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced, not including references or appendices) should develop an idea and design for an original research study on one of the topics covered during the semester. It will comprise the following sections: Introduction, Design/Method, Predicted Results and Discussion. Your proposal should be inspired by theoretical and empirical findings covered in the course and based on additional literature you will find on your own. Each student will determine the topic of the proposal on her/his own and will discuss it with the instructor one third through the term. Half way through the course, no later than by Spring break, you are required to submit a 2-3 page outline and description of the research proposal including at least 3 references. This summary will be part of the final paper grade.

In order to help you fully formulate your research ideas, you will present your proposal in class. At least 4 days before the in-class presentation of the research proposal, you will submit one empirical reading that is relevant to your presentation for the whole class to read. This can, for example, be a study that uses a similar method, or that addresses the same topic but in a different way, or that raised an open question which you are closing with your proposal. In addition, you will share a one-page summary of the proposal with the class (which is part of your presentation grade for the research proposal). These steps help ensure that the other students can make helpful

and informed suggestions about the research proposals. Critical and constructive feedback to your peers' research proposals is expected and will be part of your participation grade. Up to 3 bonus percentage points will be added to your final grade for particularly helpful suggestions during these brainstorming of ideas sessions.

Class Attendance, meeting deadlines, & classroom decorum:

Excused absences are granted only if proper documentation (i.e., a letter from your doctor or advising dean) is provided. Life happens. Sometimes there may be circumstances that make it difficult to obtain a written note. Therefore, you may use one unexcused absence during the semester for such emergency cases that will not affect your grade. Further unexcused absences will lead to losing 2 participation percentage points per absence. Please note that you **may not** be absent during the day you are leading discussion.

Since this is a seminar course in which everyone's diligent preparation and contribution is crucial, it is important to adhere to all structural requirements (meeting deadlines etc.) diligently and consistently, which will be part of your participation grade.

Mobile phones are not allowed during class. Laptops may strictly be used only for note-taking and other course-related activities. Please be respectful of your own and everyone's experience - and be present.

Students with Disabilities:

If you require particular classroom accommodations or support services, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS—<http://health.columbia.edu/services/ods>) to make the necessary arrangements.

Academic Integrity:

As members of this academic community, we are expected to maintain the highest level of personal and academic integrity. Consider this excerpt from the Columbia University Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity: “[E]ach one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. [...] Th[e] exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited. In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects [...] [and] you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.” More information about Columbia University Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity can be found here:

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/faculty/resourcesforinstructors/academicintegrity/statement>. Plagiarism – whether intentional or inadvertent – is a serious violation of academic integrity, and will thus not be tolerated. You are required to submit exclusively original work that you wrote, composed, or ideated on your own. If you are uncertain or have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, you are encouraged to read the information provided on Columbia's website about the various forms of plagiarism and ways to avoid it. Here is the link to a relevant webpage on plagiarism: <https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/dishonesty-plagiarism>. The instructor is obligated to report any incident of plagiarism to the appropriate channels at the

university, which may result in significant penalties that may impact your academic career at Columbia. If you feel overwhelmed, confused, or that you are likely to resort to plagiarism, please talk to the instructor. It is better to inform the instructor beforehand so we can try and remediate the issue, whatever it might be, than to deal with such a serious offense after the fact.

Weekly list of topics (subject to change):

Class	Topic
1	Introduction
2	Individual factors: Starting from the self
3	Individual factors: Emotions
4	Individual factors: Worldviews and ideology
5	Social factors: The influence of the social world on the self
6	Social factors: Social norm interventions
7	Social factors: Individual differences in the effect of norm interventions
8	Cultural factors: Universality of psychological concepts?
<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
9	Cultural factors: Norms and values across cultures
10	<i>Bonus session (if four presentation days suffice for student enrollment)</i> Context matters: Socio-politic, environmental, and situational influences
11	Presentations 1
12	Presentations 2
13	Presentations 3
14	Presentations 4
	Final research proposal submission by May 10, 2019

Tentative Reading List:

The following is the preliminary reading list, which is subject to revision. No readings are required before the first class.

** Reading responses will be on the starred articles; however, you will need to read all materials for the class discussion.*

Individual factors: Starting from the self

*Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.

Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 21, 261-302.

*Sparks, P., Jessop, D. C., Chapman, J., & Holmes, K. (2010). Pro-environmental actions, climate change, and defensiveness: Do self-affirmations make a difference to people’s motives and beliefs about making a difference? *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(3), 553–568.

Schneider, C. R., Zaval, L., Weber, E. U., & Markowitz, E. M. (2017). The influence of anticipated pride and guilt on pro-environmental decision making. *PLoS ONE*, 12(11), e0188781.

Individual factors: Emotions

- *Dunn, E. W., Aknin, L. B., & Norton, M. I. (2014). Prosocial spending and happiness: Using money to benefit others pays off. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(1), 41-47.
- *Van Der Linden, S. (2015). Intrinsic motivation and pro-environmental behaviour. *Nature Climate Change*, 5(7), 612.
- Taufik, D., Bolderdijk, J. W., & Steg, L. (2015). Acting green elicits a literal warm glow. *Nature Climate Change*, 5(1), 37.

Individual factors: Worldviews and ideology

- *Graham, J., Haidt, J., Koleva, S., Motyl, M., Iyer, R., Wojcik, S. P., & Ditto, P. H. (2013). Moral foundations theory: The pragmatic validity of moral pluralism. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 47, pp. 55-130). Academic Press. Chapter 3.2.1.
- *Winterich, K. P., Zhang, Y., & Mittal, V. (2012). How political identity and charity positioning increase donations: Insights from moral foundations theory. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 29(4), 346-354.
- van Prooijen, A. M., Sparks, P., & Jessop, D. C. (2012). Promoting or jeopardizing lighter carbon footprints? Self-affirmation can polarize environmental orientations. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4(2), 238-243.

Social factors: The influence of the social world on the self

- *Nolan, J. M., Schultz, P. W., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2008). Normative social influence is underdetected. *Personality and social psychology bulletin*, 34(7), 913-923.
- Leary, M. R., Tambor, E. S., Terdal, S. K., & Downs, D. L. (1995). Self-esteem as an interpersonal monitor: The sociometer hypothesis. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 68(3), 518.
- *Gilbert, D. T., Killingsworth, M. A., Eyre, R. N., & Wilson, T. D. (2009). The surprising power of neighborly advice. *Science*, 323(5921), 1617-1619.

Social factors: Social norm interventions

- *Cialdini, R. B., Reno, R. R., & Kallgren, C. A. (1990). A focus theory of normative conduct: recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 58(6), 1015.
- Cialdini, R. B. (2003). Crafting normative messages to protect the environment. *Current directions in psychological science*, 12(4), 105-109.
- *Goldstein, N. J., Cialdini, R. B., & Griskevicius, V. (2008). A room with a viewpoint: Using social norms to motivate environmental conservation in hotels. *Journal of consumer Research*,

35(3), 472-482.

Sparkman, G., & Walton, G. M. (2017). Dynamic norms promote sustainable behavior, even if it is counternormative. *Psychological science*, 28(11), 1663-1674.

Social factors: Individual differences in the effect of norm interventions

*Schultz, P. W., Nolan, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2007). The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms. *Psychological science*, 18(5), 429-434.

*Schultz, P. W., Nolan, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2018). The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms: Reprise. *Perspectives on psychological science*, 13(2), 249-254.

Berger, J., & Heath, C. (2008). Who drives divergence? Identity signaling, outgroup dissimilarity, and the abandonment of cultural tastes. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 95(3), 593.

Cultural factors: Universality of psychological concepts?

*Heine, S. J., Lehman, D. R., Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1999). Is there a universal need for positive self-regard?. *Psychological review*, 106(4), 766.

Uchida, Y., & Kitayama, S. (2009). Happiness and unhappiness in east and west: Themes and variations. *Emotion*, 9(4), 441.

*Uskul, A. K., Sherman, D. K., & Fitzgibbon, J. (2009). The cultural congruency effect: Culture, regulatory focus, and the effectiveness of gain-vs. loss-framed health messages. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45(3), 535-541.

Cultural factors: Norms and values across cultures

Gelfand, M. J. (2012). Culture's constraints: International differences in the strength of social norms. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21(6), 420-424.

*Harrington, J. R., & Gelfand, M. J. (2014). Tightness-looseness across the 50 united states. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 201317937.

*Ginges, J., Atran, S., Medin, D., & Shikaki, K. (2007). Sacred bounds on rational resolution of violent political conflict. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104(18), 7357-7360.

Atran, S., Axelrod, R., & Davis, R. (2007). Sacred barriers to conflict resolution. *Science*, 317, 1039-1040.

Bonus session

Context matters: Socio-politic, environmental, and situational influences

- *Tankard, M. E., & Paluck, E. L. (2017). The effect of a Supreme Court decision regarding gay marriage on social norms and personal attitudes. *Psychological science*, 28(9), 1334-1344.
- *Zaval, L., Keenan, E. A., Johnson, E. J., & Weber, E. U. (2014). How warm days increase belief in global warming. *Nature Climate Change*, 4(2), 143-147.
- Berger, J, Meredith, M., & Wheeler, S.C. (2008), Contextual Priming: Where People Vote Affects How They Vote, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105 (26), 8846 - 8849.

Student presentations

Readings will consist of student proposals and empirical papers assigned by the presenters

Course syllabus, schedule, and readings are subject to revision. The most recent version will always be posted to CourseWorks (Canvas).