

Syllabus

The Psychology of Self-Control (PSYC19H3)
Dr. Michael Inzlicht
Fall 2018

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Course Description

According to prominent scholars, self-control is central to success across life domains, from school to work to relationships. Quite simply, self-control—also colloquially known as willpower—is thought to lead to the good life. In this lecture course, we will do a deep dive on self-control, examining how organisms exercise control, bringing thoughts, emotions and behaviours into line with preferred standards. This course will expose students to a number of classic and contemporary theories and empirical findings in the area of self-control. The topics covered in this course represent a broad selection of major themes in the field and each topic will provide students with the opportunity to develop their understanding of the field as well as learn how social, personality, and cognitive psychologists think about this topic. The topics covered in class include ego depletion, executive function, the neural bases of self-control, personality, motivation, goal setting, goal pursuit, and decision-making. Importantly, given recent controversies in the field of psychology, we will also spend a considerable time discussing the replication crisis, including what it means for our understanding of the psychology of self-control.

Required Text

- Baumeister, R.F., & Tierney, J. *Willpower: Rediscovering the greatest human strength*. Penguin Books
- Course Readings. The course reader will contain **required** course readings that consist of journal articles, but also magazine articles and blog posts. Available online through Quercus (under Course Documents)

<u>Evaluation:</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Midterm	TBD	35%
Term Paper	Nov 22, 11:59pm	25%
Final (non-cumulative)	TBD	40%

Quercus

I will use Quercus to communicate with you (i.e. to make announcements) and so that you can each communicate with one another. Anything I hand-out in class will also be posted on Quercus; so the syllabus, class notes, class schedule, and reading list are all there. Quercus is also the place you go to log-on to and participate in the discussion board. I recommend getting quickly acquainted with Quercus and checking it on a regular basis throughout the semester for announcements and messages. Also, please make sure to update your Quercus account so that your correct email address is noted. You do not need to apply for Quercus access. If you are registered, you will automatically see this class when you log-on to the intranet. To access Quercus, log onto <http://www.utoronto.ca/>, and on the top left of the screen, you'll see a Quercus button which you should press, and then enter your UTORid and password, and voila you have access!

Discussion Forum

To help foster communication between each of you, I've created a discussion forum on Quercus. The forum should also be the first place you go when you have questions about course material. Please feel free to use this space as our virtual classroom. So, post clarification questions! These posts are valuable because they may echo many people's concerns. Remember, however, to respond to questions as well as this will enhance the classroom experience and create a self-sustaining internet community.

Lectures

The lecture slides will be posted on Quercus along with each class. The amount of overlap between lectures and required readings will vary across topics. What this means is that sometimes the lecture will be very different from the assigned readings for that week. Because exams will cover both lecture (50%) and readings (50%), you will need to both read and attend/watch the lectures.

Weboption

The Weboption offers flexibility and control in the learning process. Lectures will be digitized and uploaded to the Web where you can access them by streaming video. PowerPoint slides shown in class are presented side-by-side with the video of the lecture.

Fall Session: Please note that because lectures were recorded in Winter 2018, **all dates mentioned in class are not valid.** These were dates for the Winter semester. If you have any questions about dates, consult this syllabus or Quercus, which will be regularly updated. Also, note that some aspects of the Winter 2018 semester are different from the current summer session, most notably I have made small changes to the op-ed project (please consult the assignment guidelines on Quercus).

Course Readings

The number of readings will vary per week and will sometimes include assigned chapters in our text plus additional articles that you can find on Quercus under "course readings". You can find the list of readings at the end of this syllabus. The textbook will be made available in the library in Course Reserves.

Exams

Both midterm and final will consist of multiple-choice questions (50% lectures, 50% readings). The mid-term is worth 35% of your grade and the final, 40%. Both midterm and final will take place on a date and location to be determined.

The midterm will cover lectures 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5. It will also cover all readings (from the Baumeister & Tierney and supplemental readings) assigned for lectures 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5

The final will be **non-cumulative** and will cover lectures 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10. It will also cover all readings (from the Baumeister & Tierney and supplemental readings) assigned for lectures 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10

Term Paper (Op-Ed project)

Each person will submit a 3-4 pages (750-1,000 words), typed, double-spaced term paper that takes the form of a newspaper Op-ed. Op-eds are not reportage or literature reviews, but are opinion articles in which the author takes a position on (makes an argument for) a social, political, educational, or cultural issue that relates to self-control. Details of the assignment will be specified later in the semester. Hard copies of papers will not be accepted—you will need to send a digital version of the paper to turnitin.com. Late papers will be docked 5% for each day that they are late.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site

Participating in EEG study

If you would like to earn 2 bonus points, you could also participate in a 2-hour electroencephalography (EEG) study in my lab. EEG studies involve wearing an EEG skull-cap (kind of like a swim cap) that is injected with electrolyte gel. Although your hair will get messy, you will be given the opportunity to wash, dry, and style your hair in the lab after the study.

If you would like to participate in an EEG study for your two bonus points, you need to email the TA (amandamichelle.ferguson@gmail.com) with your name, telephone number, email address, and general times of availability (days and times). She will then have someone contact you to schedule an appointment. Note that if you miss your appointment, you will not be able to reschedule another one.

Please note that spots for these studies are limited, so we cannot guarantee that everyone who wants to participate in an EEG study for the two bonus points will be able to. If you are interested in earning your bonus points this way, please book your appointment as soon as possible.

Email Policy

My policy is to respond to emails within 2 *working* days of receipt. I am available to all my students and encourage you all to visit me during office hours (Mondays 12:00-1:00) even if it's to have a casual chat. However, given the size of the class and my already overflowing inbox, I am less encouraging of email. If you have questions or concerns, always check the course syllabus and Quercus site first. If you don't find your answer there, consult the FAQ on Quercus. You could also try posting a question in the discussion forum. If that doesn't work, contact your TA. If issues remain, come to my office hours.

FAQ

Please note there is a lengthy FAQ document on Quercus. This contains a collection of common questions I am asked by students. **If you have a question that appears on the FAQ, I will not answer it by email.** It is your responsibility to try to get your question answered by the documents I have made available, including the lengthy FAQ.

Policy for missed Term Work due to Medical Illness or Other Emergency

All students citing a documented reason for missed term work must bring their documentation to the Psychology Course Coordinator in SW427C **within three (3) business days** of the assignment due date. You must bring the following:

- (1.) A completed Request for Missed Term Work form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-MTW>), and
- (2.) Appropriate documentation to verify your illness or emergency, as described below.

Appropriate Documentation:

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to ILLNESS:

- Submit an **original** copy of the official UTSC Verification of Illness Form (<http://uoft.me/UTSC-Verification-Of-Illness-Form>) or an **original** copy of the record of visitation to a hospital emergency room. Forms are to be completed in full, clearly indicating the start date, anticipated end date, and severity of illness. The physician's registration number and business stamp are required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to ILLNESS:

- Submit **both** (1.) a **hardcopy** of the Self-Declaration of Student Illness Form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-form>), **and** (2.) the **web-based** departmental declaration form (<http://uoft.me/PSY-self-declare-web>).

For missed term tests or assignments in OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES:

- In the case of a **death of a family member**, a copy of a death certificate should be provided.
- In the case of a **disability-related concern**, an email from your Disability Consultant at AccessAbility Services should be sent directly to both the Course Coordinator (psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca) and your instructor, detailing the accommodations required.
- For U of T Varsity **athletic commitments**, an email from your coach or varsity administrator should be sent directly to the Course Coordinator (psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca), detailing the dates and nature of the commitment. The email should be sent **well in advance** of the missed work.

Documents covering the following situations are **NOT acceptable**: medical prescriptions, personal travel, weddings, or personal/work commitments.

Procedure:

Submit your (1.) [request form](#) and (2.) [medical/self-declaration](#)/other documents in person **WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS** of the missed term test or assignment.

Submit to: Course Coordinator, Room SW427C, Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 4 PM

If you are unable to meet this deadline for some reason, you must contact the Course Coordinator via email (psychology-undergraduate@utsc.utoronto.ca) within the three business day window. Exceptions to the documentation deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.

Within approximately one week, you will receive an email response from the Course Instructor / Course Coordinator detailing the accommodations to be made (if any). You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus/Quercus course announcements daily, as accommodations may be time-critical.

Completion of this form does NOT guarantee that accommodations will be made. The course instructor reserves the right to decide what accommodations (if any) will be made. **Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may result in a denial of your request for accommodation.**

Note that this policy applies only to missed assignments and term tests. Missed final exams are handled by the Registrar's Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/registrar/missing-examination>).

Course Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Lecture 1 Sep 6	Introduction & brief history	B&T: Introduction
Lecture 2: Sep 13	Replication crisis; importance of self-control	Moffitt et al., 2011; Yong, 2015; Inzlicht, 2016
Lecture 3: Sep 20	Ego depletion	B&T: chapters 1, 2, & 4; Inzlicht & Berkman, 2015; Engber, 2016
Lecture 4: Sep 27	Cognitive and neural foundations of self-control	Hofmann et al., 2012
Lecture 5 Oct 4	Personality & Development	B&T: chapter 9; Roberts et al., 2014
Oct 11	READING WEEK	NO CLASS
Oct 18	Discussion of Term Paper; Midterm Week, Date TBD	
Lecture 6 Oct 25	Goals & Motivation	B&T: chapters 3 & 5; Deci & Ryan, 2008
Lecture 7: Nov 1	Food, God, & People	B&T: chapters 8 & 10; Fain, 2015
Nov 8	NO CLASS	
Lecture 8: Nov 15	Addiction	B&T: chapter 8; McMillen, 2013
Lecture 9: Nov 22	Rethinking self-control Op-ed paper due	B&T: chapters 7 & conclusion; Fujita, 2011
Lecture 10: Nov 29	Improving self-control	B&T: chapter 6; Inzlicht, Legault, & Teper, 2014

Note: B&T = Baumeister & Tierney book

Course Reader

All Course Readings can be found here: <https://goo.gl/jiVrh2>

Lecture 2

Inzlicht, M. (2016, March 25). *The replication crisis is my crisis*. Retrieved from <https://undark.org/article/the-replication-crisis-is-my-crisis/>

Moffitt, T. E., et al., (2011). A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108, 2693-2698.

Yong, E. (2015, August 27). *How reliable are psychology studies?* Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2015/08/psychology-studies-reliability-reproducibility-nosek/402466/>

Lecture 3

Engber, D. (2016, March 6). *Everything is crumbling*. Retrieved from http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/cover_story/2016/03/ego_depletion_an_influentia_theory_in_psychology_may_have_just_been_debunked.html

Inzlicht, M., & Berkman, E. (2015). Six questions for the resource model of control (and some answers). *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 9/10, 511-524.

Lecture 4

Hofmann, W., Schmeichel, B. J., & Baddeley, A. D. (2012). Executive functions and self-regulation. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 16, 174–80.

Lecture 5

Roberts, B.W., Lejuez, C., Krueger, R.F., Richards, J.M., & Hill, P.L. (2014). What is conscientiousness and how can it be assessed? *Developmental Psychology*, 50, 1315-1330. **[Note, although I recommend you read the entire article, you are only required to read pp. 1315-1321, stopping at the section titled “Methods of assessing Conscientiousness”]**

Lecture 6

Deci, E.L., & Ryan, R.M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 182-185.

Lecture 7

Fain, J. (2015, June 1). In *“Eating Lab,” a psychologist spills secrets on why diets fail*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/06/01/411217634/in-eating-lab-psychologist-spills-secrets-on-why-diets-fail>

Lecture 8

McMillen, S. (2013). *Rat Park*. Retrieved from <http://www.stuartmcmillen.com/comic/rat-park/#page-1>

Lecture 9

Fujita, K. (2011). On conceptualizing self-control as more than effortful inhibition of impulses. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15, 352-366.

Lecture 10

Inzlicht, M., Legault, L., & Teper, R. (2014). Exploring the mechanisms of self-control improvement. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23, 302-307.