

## Syllabus

The Psychology of Self-Control (PSYC19H3 LEC01)

Dr. Michael Inzlicht

Mondays 11-1, MW170

Fall 2022

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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. (2012). *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	Oct 24	35%
Term Paper	Nov 28, 11:59pm	25%
Final (non-cumulative)	TBD	40%

**Note for possible class interruptions due to COVID-19:** This is an in-person class, and the class will not be recorded or posted online. This means attending class is critical for course success. In the event of class interruption, however, for example if I am sick or we experience a temporary lockdown, we will move (temporarily) to an online, asynchronous course format. This means that I will teach “live” during normal class hours, and you can attend by clicking on the class Zoom link that I will provide. Hopefully this will not happen, but I am planning just in case it is necessary.

### **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 for 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.

### **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%. If you score higher on the midterm than the final, however, I will re-weight your midterm to 40% and the final, 35%.

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 *Ouriginal* via Quercus. Late papers will be docked 5% for each day that they are late.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to *Ouriginal* via Quercus 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 *Ouriginal* 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 *Ouriginal* service are described on the *Ouriginal* web site

### **Office Hours**

Office hours will be held in my office in SY168 every Monday 2-3pm. If you cannot make this time, please email me and we will find a time that is mutually convenient.

### **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 virtually during office hours even if it's to have a casual chat. 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. Your TA is also happy to help, please reach out!

### **FAQ**

Please note there is a lengthy FAQ document on Quercus. This contains a collection of common questions I am asked by students. It is your responsibility to try to get your question answered by the documents I have made available, including the lengthy FAQ.

### **Disability-Related Accommodations**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Services Office (<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability/>) as soon as possible. AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm AA142, Arts and Administration Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please contact 416-287-7560 (tel/TTY) or email [ability.utsc@utoronto.ca](mailto:ability.utsc@utoronto.ca) for more information. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

### **Kindness During COVID-19**

No one asked to be stuck in a global pandemic. It sucks to have to so much of our learning online for the past 2+ years with very little human interaction. This is hard for all of us. I am sensitive to how difficult this is and will do my best to extend kindness during this time. We're all in this together so let's try to be extra patient and kind with one another.

## Psychology Department Missed Term Work Policy

For missed term work (assignments and term tests) due to illness, emergency, or other mitigating circumstances, please follow the procedures outlined below.

Note:

- The following reasons are not considered sufficient for missed term work: travel for leisure, weddings, personal commitments, work commitments, human error.
- [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService.
- Instructors cannot accept term work any later than five business days after the last day of class. Beyond this date, accommodations are only possible via the Registrar's Office [petition process](#).

The email address to submit missed term work accommodation requests is to our course TA, Aidan Cambell: [aidanv.campbell@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:aidanv.campbell@mail.utoronto.ca)

### ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY accommodations:

For missed work due to ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY, complete the following process:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Declare your absence on [ACORN](#) (Profile & Settings > Absence Declaration)
3. Email **both** of the following items to the course email **WITHIN 2 BUSINESS DAYS** of the missed work:

- the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#)

**\*AND\***

- a screenshot of your Self-Declared Absence on ACORN

Note:

- If you are unable to submit your request within 2 business days, you must still email your instructor within the 2 business day window to explain the nature of the delay. Exceptions to the 2 business day deadline will only be made under exceptional circumstances.
- If your absence is declared on ACORN, we do not require any additional supporting documentation (e.g. medical notes) to support your missed term work accommodation request.

### ACADEMIC CONFLICT accommodations:

For missed term work due to an ACADEMIC CONFLICT (e.g. two midterms at the same time):

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Take screenshots of your course Quercus pages that demonstrate the conflict.
3. Email the form and screenshots to the course email **at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier. Requests sent after the activity deadline may not be accommodated.

Note:

- Multiple assignments due on the same day are not considered conflicts. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines.
- Back-to-back tests/quizzes are not considered conflicts. Only overlapping activities are conflicts.

- Students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

### **RELIGIOUS CONFLICT accommodations:**

For missed term work due to a RELIGIOUS CONFLICT:

1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
2. Email the form to the course **email at least two weeks (10 business days) before the date of the activity**, or as soon as possible if it was not possible to identify the conflict earlier. Requests sent after the activity deadline may not be accommodated.

### **ACCESSABILITY SERVICES accommodations:**

For missed **TERM TESTS** due to ACCESSABILITY REASONS:

- **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email the course email detailing accommodations required.

For missed **ASSIGNMENTS** due to ACCESSABILITY REASONS:

- If your desired accommodation is **within the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” and you need 3 days):
  1. Complete the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#).
  2. Email the form **\*AND\*** your **Accommodation Letter** to the course email specifying how many days extension you are requesting.
- If your desired accommodation is **outside the scope** of your Accommodation Letter (e.g. your letter includes “extensions of up to 7 days” but you need more time than that):
  1. **Contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email the course email detailing the accommodations required.

### **Accommodation Procedure:**

After submitting your documentation, you will receive a response from your TA. This form does not guarantee that you will be accommodated. 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. **You are responsible for checking your official U of T email and Quercus course announcements daily**, as accommodations may be time-critical.

For missed assignments, **do not wait for the instructor’s response to resume work on your assignment**. Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you’re able and email it to your instructor.

For an **anticipated absence** (e.g. a scheduled surgery or an illness with a prolonged recovery period), if you would like to request accommodations in advance, submit a [Verification of Illness Form](#) completed by your doctor AND the [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) to the course email. Absences can be declared up to 14 days into the future on ACORN.

### **Missed Accommodations**

If an accommodation is granted but a continued illness/emergency prevents you from meeting its requirements, you must repeat the missed term work procedure to request additional accommodations. Please make it clear in your subject line that you are requesting a second accommodation. E.g. If you are given an extension but are still sick and need more time, or if you miss a make-up term test, you must submit another [Request for Missed Term Work Accommodations Form](#) and declare your extended absence on ACORN. \*Note: In the case of a missed make-up test, an opportunity to write a second make-up test may not necessarily be provided.

## Course Schedule

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READINGS</b>
Lecture 1 Sep 12	Introduction & brief history	B&T: Introduction
Lecture 2: Sep 19	Replication crisis; importance of self-control	Moffitt et al., 2011; Yong, 2015; Inzlicht, 2016
Lecture 3: Sep 26	Ego depletion	B&T: chapters 1, 2, & 4; Inzlicht & Berkman, 2015; Engber, 2016
Lecture 4: Oct 3	Cognitive and neural foundations of self-control	Hofmann et al., 2012
Lecture 5 Oct 10	<b>READING WEEK</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
Oct 17	Personality & Development	B&T: chapter 9; Roberts et al., 2014
Oct 24	<b>MIDTERM</b>	
Oct 31	<b>Term paper Q&amp;A</b>	
Lecture 6: Nov 7	Goals & Motivation	B&T: chapters 3 & 5; Deci & Ryan, 2008
Lecture 7 Nov 14	Food, God, & People	B&T: chapters 8 & 10; Fain, 2015
Lecture 8: Nov 21	Addiction	B&T: chapter 8; McMillen, 2013
Lecture 9: Nov 28	Rethinking self-control <b>Op-Ed Paper Due</b>	B&T: chapters 7 & conclusion; Fujita, 2011
Lecture 10: Dec 5	Improving self-control	B&T: chapter 6; Milkman et al., 2021

Note: B&T = Baumeister & Tierney book

## Course Reader

All Course Readings can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3T2kpUY>

### 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\\_influent\\_theory\\_in\\_psychology\\_may\\_have\\_just\\_been\\_debunked.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/cover_story/2016/03/ego_depletion_an_influent_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**

Milkman, K.L. et al. (2021). Megastudies improve the impact of applied behavioural science. *Nature*, 600, 478-483.