

**Columbia University  
Graduate School of Business**

**B8564 *Motivation Science***

*Professors E. Tory Higgins*

**FOR BIDDING PURPOSES ONLY**

Prof. E. Tory Higgins  
401-C Schermerhorn Hall  
[tory@psych.columbia.edu](mailto:tory@psych.columbia.edu)  
Full Term

W 12:30-3:45

URI 333

**General Course Information**

This course has two general objectives. First, *to learn about how motivation works* from recent conceptual and empirical advances in psychological science. Second, to have students *use this knowledge to make motivation work for them*—in their own performance, but, especially, as motivators of others. Motivation science has exploded in the last 20 years. Despite this explosion, most people still believe that the best way to motivate others is by using “carrots and sticks” (incentives), which is based on the classic assumption that what motivates people is to approach pleasure and avoid pain (the hedonic principle). What we have learned is that motivation is more than “carrots and sticks”, and that, importantly, there are many different kinds of motivational mechanisms that underlie people’s choices and what influences them. The class sessions in the course will be informed by a combination of class lectures and discussions, readings, case studies, in-class exercises, and student presentations on their own group projects.

There is one thing that all Chief Executives agree on—whether their organization is business, military, sports, academia—there is nothing more important to being successful in their job than to be successful in motivating others. But how can you make motivation work? For the answer, you first need to know how motivation itself works. This course is designed for the students to learn both how motivation works and how they can use it to work for them. The motivational mechanisms and principles that will be covered in the readings and discussed in class, as well as how these mechanisms and principles can be used to be a more effective motivator in business-relevant settings, are summarized below when describing each class.

**Course Readings**

The majority of class readings are contained in:

Halvorson, H. G., & Higgins, E. T. (2013) *Focus: Use Different Ways of Seeing the World for Success and Influence*. NY: Hudson Street Press (Penguin)

Higgins, E. T. (2012) *Beyond Pleasure and Pain: How Motivation Works* NY: Oxford University Press

These books have been ordered at the CU Bookstore and are available through standard on-line sources as well. They are each available in hard cover, soft cover, and Kindle versions.

Any assigned readings not in these two books, such as those used in class exercises, will be made available by the professors.

### **Assignments and Grading**

1. Class Participation (10%)

2. Assignment 1 (25%)      A research review paper on a business-relevant motivational topic, such as: What changed in business investment decisions after 9/11 that differed from before 9/11, and what motivational principles can be used to understand these changes? [The motivational principles can include principles that have not been discussed in class, such as “terror management theory” or “self-determination theory”, to allow students to extend their motivational reach if they wish.]

3. Assignment 2 (25%)      A paper on developing a business plan that takes into account motivational principles, such as: You are the manager of a team that will develop, implement, and market a new product. How would you select the members of the team? What instructions would you give them during the processes of product development, implementation, and marketing? The paper must include not only the plan but the rationale for the plan based on motivational principles. [Once again, the motivational principles can include principles that have not been discussed in class to allow students to extend their motivational reach if they wish.]

4. Group Project (40%): Presentation and paper due in Class 12 [See Class 12 description]

## CLASSES

### **Class 1**      *What Is Motivation?*

In-class exercise: When you try to motivate someone, what are you trying to do? What do you want to happen? Given what you want to happen, how do you make it happen?

The purpose of this exercise is to have students, perhaps for the first time explicitly, think about what it means to be highly motivated and how they could get someone highly motivated.

This class will discuss what are the different perspectives in the motivational literature about what it means to be motivated, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective. A preferred perspective will be suggested and debated.

#### **Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain*    Chapters 1 & 2

### **Class 2**      *What Do People Want?*

Pre-class exercise: What 3 things do you want most from your job? [Open ended question]

Rate for the following things you might want from your job, how important each one is to you [on a scale from 0 “not at all important” to 7 “extremely important”] The job qualities will include items like “having the opportunity to increase my expertise regarding job-relevant knowledge” or “getting a chance to to improve my managing skills” and “having projects that are easy to carry out”.

The purpose of this exercise is to have students recognize that what they want from their job is not always or only “pleasure and no pain” (e.g., “having projects that are easy to carry out”). They can recognize that they also want to be effective, including not only being effective in having desired results [which itself can be more than “pleasure and no pain” but also being effective in managing what happens (*control*: “getting a chance to to improve my managing skills”) and being effective in establishing what is true, right, and real (*truth*: “having the opportunity to increase my expertise regarding job-relevant knowledge”).

In-class exercise: The Robert Nozick test of whether people want is pleasurable outcomes or control effectiveness.

This class will discuss what are the different perspectives in the motivational literature about what it is that people want, and what are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective. A preferred perspective will be suggested and debated.

#### **Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain*    Chapters 3 & 4

### **Class 3      *Promotion and Prevention***

How can the same product or action be described in terms of promotion and prevention concerns? How do promotion and prevention motivations determine strengths and weaknesses in performance and decision making?

#### *Methods & Predictions Exercises:*

**Note.** For these “Methods & Predictions” exercises (and those in subsequent classes), students will be given the Method section from a published journal study prior to class, without any information about the original authors’ predictions or actual findings. The different conditions in the study will be presented to students in a “consulting” framework. They will be told that the different conditions describe the different options that a middle level manager of an organization (e.g., a Marketing Director; a Product Team Manager; a Sports Coach) is considering. This manager has sent the options to his/her boss, asking advice about how to proceed. His/her boss is uncertain about the benefits or costs of each option and has decided to hire the student to predict—based on the student’s expertise in motivation science—what is likely to happen for each option (i.e., what should happen in each condition in the study based on a particular motivational principle).

The students will be asked to make their predictions (also prior to class) based on a particular motivational theory (e.g., incentive theory; regulatory focus theory; a classic persuasive communication theory; regulatory mode theory; dissonance theory; regulatory fit theory) for each of the experimental conditions that were described in the Method section. Of special importance, they will be asked to provide a clear, theory-based rationale for their predictions. During class, the students’ predictions will be discussed, including how well their predictions relate to the motivational theory that they used, and how well they relate to the actual results of the experiment. Then the implications for making motivation work for them in business will be discussed. Whenever possible, what students did as managers under analogous conditions, and how it worked in their experience, will also be discussed.

This form of class exercise—without being tied to a business consulting framework—has been used by Prof. Higgins in his graduate level *Theories in Social and Personality Psychology* course for decades as a way to encourage students to think about motivational theories and mechanisms more deeply, and to help them to better understand how motivational principles actually work to impact behavior.

#### *Class 3 Methods & Predictions Exercises:*

- (1) Wang & Lee (2006) The role of regulatory focus in preference construction. (toothpaste)
- (2) Cesario, Grant & Higgins (2004) Regulatory fit and persuasion. (fruits & vegetables)
- (3) Galinsky, Leonardelli, Okhuysen, & Mussweiler (2005) Regulatory focus at the bargaining table.

The class will discuss the fundamental differences between the promotion and the prevention motivational systems as two distinct **value** concerns. There will be a discussion about what this

means for how people respond to the world and deal with the world. Promotion and prevention as a personality difference **and** as a situational difference—including different organization cultures—will be emphasized. How promotion and prevention are socialized in parenting or in mentoring, and how situations also induce them, will be discussed.

### **Readings:**

*Focus* Chapters 1-6

### **Class 4      *Locomotion and Assessment***

How can the same product or action be described in terms of locomotion or assessment concerns? How do locomotion and assessment determine strengths and weaknesses in performance and decision making?

*Class 4 Methods & Predictions Exercises:*

(1) Manetti et al (2009) Regulatory mode and inter-temporal choices

(2) Pierro, Kruglanski & Higgins (2006) Regulatory mode and the joys of doing

The class will discuss the fundamental differences between locomotion **control** concerns and assessment **truth** concerns. The class will discuss what this means for how people respond to the world and deal with the world. Again, locomotion and assessment as a personality difference **and** as a situational difference will be emphasized. How locomotion and assessment might be socialized and how situations might induce them will be discussed.

### **Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain* Chapter 9

Higgins, E. T., Kruglanski, A. W., & Pierro, A. (2003). Regulatory mode: Locomotion and assessment as distinct orientations. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology, Volume 35* (pp. 293-344). New York: Academic Press.

### **Class 5      *Using Motivational Fit: Performance & Decision Making***

*Class 5 Methods & Predictions Exercises:*

(1) Plessner, Unkelback, Memmert, Baltes & Koob (2009) How to succeed in a soccer penalty-shooting. (performance)

(2) Lee, Keller & Sternthal (2010) Value from regulatory construal fit (decision-making: abstract vs. concrete construals)

This class will discuss research evidence for the effects of motivational fit on performance and decision making, including the relations among promotion/prevention goal pursuit orientations and eager/vigilant strategies of goal pursuit, locomotion/assessment goal pursuit orientations and initiation/reflection strategies of goal pursuit, and fun/importance goal pursuit orientations and enjoyable/serious strategies of goal pursuit. Issues include how to increase the value of a work activity and how to provide feedback that strengthens motivation.

**Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain* Chapter 8

*Focus* Chapter 8, 9 & 10

**Class 6** *Using Motivational Fit: Leadership & Teamwork*

*Class 6 Methods & Predictions Exercises:*

(1) Wallace, Little, Hill & Ridge (2010) CEO regulatory foci, environmental dynamism, and small firm performance

(2) Van Dijk & Kluger (2004) Feedback sign effect on motivation (analysis of work motivations and occupations)

(3) Benjamin & Flynn (2006) Regulatory mode and leadership style

(4) Pierro et al (2009) Frogs and ponds: mode complementarity in teams

This class will discuss research evidence for the effects of motivational fit on effective leadership and teamwork, including the relations among promotion/prevention goal pursuit orientations and eager/vigilant strategies of goal pursuit, and locomotion/assessment goal pursuit orientations and initiation/reflection strategies of goal pursuit. Issues include how to select team members and what leadership style to use.

**Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain* Chapter 12

*Focus* Chapter 11

**Class 7** *Using Motivational Fit: Marketing & Persuasion*

*Class 7 Methods & Predictions Exercises:*

- (1) Lee & Aaker (grape juice – promotion & prevention)
- (2) Avnet, Laufer & Higgins – two paths to persuasion
- (3) Avnet & Higgins (2003) booklight – locomotion & assessment
- (4) Zhao & Pechmann (teen anti-smoking ads)

This class will discuss research evidence for the effects of motivational fit on marketing and persuasion, including the relations among promotion/prevention goal pursuit orientations and eager/vigilant strategies of goal pursuit, locomotion/assessment goal pursuit orientations and initiation/reflection strategies of goal pursuit, and fun/importance goal pursuit orientations and enjoyable/serious strategies of goal pursuit. Issues include how to frame a persuasive message and what properties of a product to emphasize and display.

**Readings:**

*Focus* Chapters 12 & 13

**Class 8**      *Organizational Change: How to Get Others On Board*

In-class exercise:      EIS Simulation

This class will discuss how to use knowledge of what motivates people (e.g., locomotion control vs. prevention security) to persuade organizational members to support the organizational changes that top management believe are needed. Structural and social relationship variables that need to be considered will also be discussed.

**Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain*      Chapter 12

**Class 9**      *Culture & Motivation*

In-class negotiation:      Alpha-Beta

This class will discuss cross-cultural differences in which motivational orientations predominate in different cultures and the implications of this for cross-cultural differences in biases and preferences for how to work with others. Issues include how to take advantage of cultural differences to create win-win outcomes and stable partnerships.

**Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain*      Chapter 11

*Focus Chapter 7*

**Class 10**      *How to Strengthen Work Commitment & Engagement*

*Class 10 Methods & Predictions Exercises:*

- (1) Li, Evans, Christian, Gilliland, Kausel, & Stein (Fit is Fair)
- (2) Lockwood et al (Fit & Role Models)
- (3) Freitas & Higgins (Fit creates enjoyment)
- (4) Spiegel, Grant, & Higgins (Fit heightens motivation)

This class will discuss the benefits of strengthening organizational members' commitment to and engagement with their projects in particular, and with their organization in general, and how motivational mechanisms can be used to facilitate this. Issues include when engagement should actually be weakened rather than strengthened and how this can be done.

**Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain*    Chapter 7

**Class 11**      *Improving Helping and Life Quality at Work*

In-class exercise:      Measure how well students tailor their help to meet the needs of the helpee, and the impact of their personality on effective tailoring.

In-class exercise:      Measure students' effective organization of motivations (i.e., motivations working well together), and discuss its relation to well-being

This class will discuss the "Helping 3-Step Model" for helping others who currently have problems with being effective in either value, truth, or control. It will also consider how the relations among value, truth, and control effectiveness (e.g., fit or non-fit; support or constraining) impact well-being. Issues include how having motivations work together effectively relates to a person's general life values, such as benevolence and caring for others.

**Readings:**

*Beyond Pleasure and Pain*    Chapters 10 & 13

**Class 12**              *Group Project Presentations*

During this class, the student groups will present their motivational projects. The teams will consist of 4-6 students who have decided to work together on a real-world motivational problem—a problem that one member of the team is facing and needs help in solving. The problem solution (or attempted solution) has a deadline of week 10 to allow time for the team to prepare the presentation in week 12. The solution will require that the team member be effective in *influencing* one or more other persons, and it must have a significant outcome for that team member. These team projects are like the team projects that are part of many negotiation courses. Indeed, it could be a negotiation, but the emphasis must be on motivational techniques of influence rather than on negotiation techniques per se.