

**Columbia University  
Graduate School of Business**

**B8564 *Motivation Science***

***Professor E. Tory Higgins***

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**General Course Information**

This course has two general objectives. First, *to learn how motivation works* from recent conceptual and empirical advances in psychological science. Second, to be able *to use this knowledge to make motivation work for you*—both in your own performance and as a motivator of others.

Motivation science has exploded in the last 20 years. Despite this explosion, many people still believe that the best way to motivate others is by using “carrots and sticks” (incentives), which is based on the classic assumption (the hedonic principle) that what motivates people is to approach pleasure (carrots) and avoid pain (sticks). What we have learned is that motivation is more than “carrots and sticks,” and that, importantly, there are other kinds of motivational factors that determine how people make decisions, what they want to do, and how well they perform.

There is one thing that all Chief Executives agree on, whether their organization is business, military, sports, or academia: there is nothing more important to be 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.

The class sessions in the course will be informed by a combination of class lectures, chat discussions, breakout exercises, readings, and out-of-class assignments. The goal is to build a bridge between the science of motivation and its application to solving everyday problems of management.

## Course Readings

Several of the 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)

This book is available through standard on-line sources, such as Amazon. It is available in hard cover, soft cover, and Kindle versions.

The other *Required Readings* are journal articles and book chapters that will be posted and available on the course site.

*An additional, non-required reading* for those students who want to explore motivation science more deeply and broadly, is the following:

Higgins, E. T. (2012) *Beyond Pleasure and Pain: How Motivation Works*. NY: Oxford University Press. This book is available in hard cover, soft cover, and Kindle versions.

## Assignments and Grading

1. **Class Participation (20%)**. This includes participation in chat rooms and breakout exercises.
2. **After-class reflections (40%)**. After each of the first four weeks, you will submit *a maximum 1 page* [double-spaced, 12 font, word document] paper for a total of 4 papers that describe how you could approach a business problem familiar to you in a new and effective manner by using what you learned in class that week. From the readings and what was discussed in class that week, you will select one takeaway message about motivation and then apply that idea to a business issue with which you are familiar. The purpose of these papers is for you to *create a bridge* between *motivational concepts* that you have *learned in this course* and *practical solutions to business issues* that you are dealing with now or have dealt with in the past. How can you use what you have learned in the course that week? Be specific about how you would use the motivational principles in the course to approach a real-world business problem differently than you would have before. Bottom line: Show that what you have learned can be applied to business in a useful way to make a difference.

The length is *a maximum* of only *1* page, word document format [double-spaced, 12 font] because what matters is your spending time reflecting and thinking about practical applications of what was learned that day in class rather than spending time writing per se.

3. **Group Paper (25 %)**. A group assignment to be done in groups of 4-5 people. Each team will write a *maximum 5 page* [double-spaced, 12 font] paper describing how they would use motivational principles from the course to deal effectively with a real-world motivational challenge that is relevant to your business life. The challenge will be related to management or marketing issues. The paper will describe the challenge and how the team would meet it using motivational principles from the course, providing arguments and research evidence for why you believe applying those principles would be effective. \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Group Presentation (15%)**. A group presentation based on the assigned motivational challenge. The presentation will be approximately 10 minutes. Leveraging what was learned during the course, the group will provide an analysis of the challenge and recommend implementable solutions.

## **CLASSES**

### **Before The Course Begins**

You will complete a set of surveys that will be posted on the course site.

## **WEEK 1 What Is Motivation?**

### **CLASS 1 -What Does It Mean to Be Motivated?**

Beginning at the beginning: This class will introduce the course and begin to discuss different ideas in the motivational literature about how motivation works. The first question is, “What does it mean to be motivated?” What are you trying to do when you attempt to motivate someone (yourself or another person)? To be successful in strengthening others’ motivation, you need to know what it means for people to be motivated.

**Class Discussion: What is the best way to increase someone’s motivation to do something?**

**Class Exercise: *Boeing***

### **CLASS 2 -What Do People Want?**

This class will discuss different ideas in the motivational literature about what people want in life and at work. What is it that people want that motivates them? Where do the preferences that direct their choices come from? What needs, concerns are being served by making a particular choice over alternative options?

**Class Discussion: Are there good versus bad ways to be motivated?**

**Class Exercise: *Seeing the world***

### **Readings:**

## *Beyond Pleasure and Pain, Chapter 2*

### **WEEK 2 Promotion and Prevention Focus as Distinct Pleasures & Pains**

**CLASS 3 -Promotion & Prevention Ways of Seeing & Feeling About the World** There is a critical difference between the promotion and prevention motivational systems. They are two distinct kinds of *value*, two distinct ways of approaching pleasure and avoiding pain. Promotion is concerned with attaining gains. Prevention is concerned with maintaining non-losses. This class will discuss how this difference impacts how we *see the world* and how we *feel* about the world.

**Class Exercise: *Feedback***

#### **Readings:**

***Focus Chapters 1-2***

#### **CLASS 4 -Guest Lecture On Gender Bias In Funding Entrepreneurs**

This class will have a guest speaker discussing the gender bias that exists in funding female entrepreneurs who lead their own start-up business, and will describe what can be done to reduce this bias.

#### **Readings:**

***Focus Chapters 3-4***

### **WEEK 3 Focus and Mode**

#### **CLASS 5 -Promotion & Prevention Ways of Dealing With the World**

This class will discuss what the difference between having a promotion focus versus a prevention focus means for how we *deal with the world*—how we make decisions and solve problems. The importance of knowing *both* others' focus and your own focus will be discussed

**Class Exercise: *Job Recruitment***

#### **Readings:**

***Focus Chapters 5-8***

**Halvorson & Higgins, “Do you play to win—or to not lose?” (*HBR, 2013*)**

#### **CLASS 6 -Locomotion and Assessment Modes As Distinct Goal Processes**

There is a fundamental difference between the locomotion mode and the assessment mode as distinct kinds of motivation that are concerned with the *process* of goal pursuit rather than the outcome (value) of goal pursuit. Locomotion is concerned with effecting change, with making things happen—effective *control* motivation. Assessment is concerned with making the right choices, with establishing what's real—effective *truth* motivation. This class will discuss how this difference impacts how we make decisions and pursue goals.

**Class Exercise: *Retirement Savings and Gamification***

**Readings:**

**Kruglanski et al., “The distinct psychologies of “looking” and “leaping”:** Assessment and locomotion as the springs of action.”

*(Personality and Social Psychology Compass, 2013)*

**WEEK 4 Mode & Fit**

**CLASS 7 -How Locomotion and Assessment Impact Judgments & Decisions** Locomotion and assessment motivations are an essential part of who we are as humans. This class will discuss both the upside benefits and the downside costs of these motivations. As is the case for focus, the importance of knowing *both* others’ mode and your own mode will be discussed.

**Class Exercise:** *Communication Exercise and Company Mission Statements*

**Readings:**

**Higgins Chapter, “Going in the right direction: Locomotion control and assessment truth, working together.”** *(In C. Kopetz & A. Fishbach (Eds.), The motivation-cognition interface: From the lab to the real world)*

**CLASS 8 -How to Help an Organization that Needs to Change**

Managing change has become a common occurrence in organizations, and managers must convince other members of the organization to get on board with the changes that are needed. But openness to change is not the same for all members of the organization, and what will persuade them to support a change is different depending on their motivational orientation. This class will discuss strategies for convincing members of your organization to get on board with changes that are needed.

**Class Exercise:** *Organizational Change*

**Readings:**

**Kruglanski et al., “Locomotion, Closure, & Organizational Change”**

*(Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 2007)*

**Focus Chapters 9-13**

**WEEK 5 Fit and How to Make Change Happen**

**CLASS 9 -It’s The Fit That Counts: Strengthening individuals and Teamwork** This class will discuss research evidence for the effects of motivational fit on individuals’ performance and persuasion. It will also emphasize the importance of considering how promotion and prevention, and how locomotion and assessment, can work together to enhance effective teamwork. Issues include how to use fit to increase the value of a work activity or a product, and to make your leadership style, your task instructions, and your team selection more effective.

**Class Exercise:** *Sentinel Computer Exercise and Internal Communication*

**Readings:**

**Higgins, “Value from regulatory fit”**

*(Current Directions in Psychological Science, 2005)*

**Brockner et al., “Regulatory Focus & the Entrepreneurial Process”**

*(Journal of Business Venturing, 2003)*

**CLASS 10 -How to Help Individuals with Problems**

A major responsibility of managers is to provide support to employees when they are in need of help. Providing useful and appreciated help is difficult...more difficult than many people realize. This class will discuss the pitfalls in helping others and what can be done to be more effective.

**Class Exercise: *Social Support***

**Readings:**

**Fridman et al., “Using A Non-Fit Message”**

*(Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 2016)*

**WEEK 6 Dealing With Motivational Challenges**

**CLASS 11 -The Challenge of Intergroup (e.g., sex, race, culture) Differences**

This class will discuss the challenge of dealing with intergroup differences. How can we identify the potential downsides of intergroup differences and find solutions, and how can we recognize intergroup differences and make choices based upon them that support our goals?

**Class Exercise: *Cultural differences***

**CLASS 12 -Group Presentation For Motivational Challenges**

This class will have all groups give approx. 10 minutes presentations on their motivational challenge and its solution as described in their paper.