



8-2024

## Syllabus: Workplace Motivation

Alice M. Brawley Newlin  
*Gettysburg College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/syllabus>



Part of the [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

**Share feedback** about the accessibility of this item.

---

### Recommended Citation

Brawley Newlin, Alice M., "Syllabus: Workplace Motivation" (2024). *Open Syllabus Collection*. 2.  
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/syllabus/2>

This open access other is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact [cupola@gettysburg.edu](mailto:cupola@gettysburg.edu).

---

## Syllabus: Workplace Motivation

### Abstract

This syllabus is for an upper-level undergraduate class in workplace motivation that utilizes a combination of open, free, and library-licensed material. The course is designed to provide students with a “toolbox” of work motivation theories to critically select from and use well. This open syllabus also includes an annotated reading list with stable links to materials and availability notes.

### Keywords

work motivation, organizational psychology, business, open syllabus

### Disciplines

Organizational Behavior and Theory | Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

### Creative Commons License



This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/).

### Class Information

- Lecture:** Wednesdays and Fridays 2:10 – 3:25 PM in Glatfelter 402
- Final exam:** Saturday May 6, 1:30 – 4:30 PM, in Glatfelter 402
- Email:** [abrawley@gettysburg.edu](mailto:abrawley@gettysburg.edu)
- Drop-in hours:** Wednesdays and Fridays 11 AM – 1 PM in my office (Glatfelter 405)

### Required Materials & Tools

#### Texts:

1. Be sure you have access to the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *APA Publication Manual*. (There are free copies available to borrow in Musselman Library at the Research Help Desk.)
2. All assigned readings will be freely accessible via Musselman Library or other sources, and posted on Moodle.

**Course communication:** Check Moodle and your College email regularly.

### Course Goals

My goal is for you to leave this class with a "toolbox" of work motivation theories that you can critically select from and use well. Therefore, this course is designed to provide you with the (1) knowledge you will need to understand work motivation and (2) practice with applying that knowledge.

First, we'll get a solid understanding of the theoretical frameworks for enhancing motivation, including their development over time. Surveying this history will help set you up with many "tools" in your motivation toolbox. Understanding the history will also capitalize on the lessons our field has learned from past approaches ("**Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.**") and sharpen your critical thinking about motivation.

But since "**there's nothing so practical as a good theory,**" as we learn about these theories, we'll apply them widely – to both fun and serious cases. This practice will further hone your critical thinking about motivation, with the goal of preparing you to readily apply your work motivation knowledge beyond class.

More specifically, after taking this course, you will:

- Understand the historical and current ways that researchers have conceptualized work motivation, its antecedents, and its consequences
- Understand how to and be experienced with critically evaluating the arguments and implications of work motivation theories
- Be well-prepared to use your work motivation knowledge to address real questions in organizations

### Course Requirements

Participating in this course is a case study of work motivation. Based on a wide variety of factors, you chose to invest resources (time, effort, etc.) into this experience rather than pursue a host of alternative experiences. Over the 15 weeks of this course, you will repeatedly evaluate how much of your limited resources you should invest into this course at the expense of other activities you also wish or need to pursue. Obviously, choices you make about your participation will influence your own outcomes (e.g., enjoyment, learning, worldview). Equally important, the "people make the place," and your choices will influence your classmates' outcomes, too. Fun, illuminating perspectives and ideas will be developed and shared, or not.

I have to choose the formal structure of our temporary organization. Do I legislate the vocalization of words by placing a reward/punishment structure in place for participation? Contingent reward theories demand that I reward desired behaviors when they occur and punish undesirable ones. Intrinsic motivation theories, on the other hand, suggest that contingent rewards may actually undermine the very behavior I hope to obtain. Or maybe we should have a "leader board" where we implement a weekly preferential voting technique to induce social motives for participation. Maybe we should set difficult, specific goals for the desired course outcomes, assess the state of each outcome every week, and provide concrete feedback on progress toward the goals. Clearly, the motivational structure for our simple, temporary organization is complex.

Our course requirements, designed with the purpose of motivating you to meet the noted course goals, are as follows.

Course Component	#	Points Each	Total Points (% of Grade)
Class participation	10 (of 12 available)	3	30 (9%)
<b>Exams</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Points Each</b>	<b>Total Points (% of Grade)</b>
Midterm exams	2	60	120 (34%)
Final exam ("lightly" cumulative)	1	60	60 (17%)
<b>Case Project</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Points Each</b>	<b>Total Points (% of Grade)</b>
Case selection	1	5	5 (1%)
Theory selection	1	15	15 (4%)
Annotated bibliography	1	20	20 (6%)
Complete paper	1	100	100 (29%)

**Total possible points:** 350

Grade	%	B	82.5 – 87.4%	D+	67.5 – 69.9%
A	92.5%+	B-	80 – 82.4%	D	62.5 – 67.4%
A-	90 – 92.4%	C+	77.5 – 79.9%	D-	60 – 62.4%
B+	87.5 – 89.9%	C	72.5 – 77.4%	F	0 – 59.9
		C-	70 – 72.4%		

Grades will be posted regularly on Moodle. Address any concerns early, and concerns about specific grades should be addressed within a week of being posted on Moodle.

**Class participation:** In 12 of our classes, participation will be graded in various formats. You must be in class to earn credit. Of these 12 grades, only your 10 highest will officially count towards your grade. (Therefore, if you need to miss regular class dates for any reason, you're covered for two possible absences.) If you earn all 12 grades, the last two grades will count as bonus.

Dates for participation grading will generally be unannounced ahead of time, and may include individual or group activities, discussions, short presentations, written work, quizzes, etc. In general:

- **full participation credit** will be earned by students who come to class prepared; contribute readily to the conversation or activity without dominating it; make thoughtful contributions; show interest in and respect for others' views; push discussions to a "deeper" level of analysis; and make comments or contributions that are "on-point" with the assigned work.
- **reduced participation credit** will be earned by students who come to class prepared and make thoughtful comments or contributions only when called upon; show interest and listen attentively, but passively.
- **further reduced – or even "0" – participation credit** will be earned by students who miss class (or the activity during class – e.g., by arriving late or leaving early); show evidence of minimal preparation; provide incorrect or irrelevant answers to questions and/or avoid participation altogether. Other examples of this level of participation include talking too much, being distracted by electronic devices, or making tangential or inappropriate contributions.

**Exams:** Exams will be based on the assigned readings, lectures, and in-class activities. Exam questions generally include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam will be "lightly" cumulative, meaning that the majority of material on the final will focus on the last topics learned in class, but a small portion of the material on the final will cover main points from earlier topics in class.

**Case project:** You will (1) locate and describe a case related to a work motivation issue from sources such as the news or popular press, (2) choose from work motivation theories relevant to the case, and (3) conduct a literature review to (4) develop a written proposal for the resolution of the motivation issue. The final deliverable on this project will be an APA style paper addressing the four listed components. Details will be provided to you in class and on Moodle.

### Other Important Policies & Information

**Attendance:** For foreseeable (or emergency) absences in which there is work to possibly be made up (e.g., an exam), email me with documentation prior to the absence (or ASAP). Note that no makeups will be permitted for class participation grades. If you miss class, please ask a classmate about notes and announcements you miss, and I'm happy to answer questions afterwards.

**Late work policy:** Late or missed submissions result in an immediate 20% deduction if the assignment is not turned in on time, plus 20% for each additional 24 hours it is late. Be sure to submit the correct, working file.

**Academic honesty:** To motivate your academic honesty in this course, please note that if you violate the Honor Code, penalties may include failure of the assignment, exam, or entire course.

**Accommodations:** For learning or testing accommodations, contact Academic Advising to develop an Individual Education Accommodation Plan (IEAP). Then we'll use your IEAP as a guide to establish how accommodations will be implemented. To ensure that we have time to make appropriate plans, provide me with your IEAP at least two weeks prior to the first event (e.g., an exam) for which you request an accommodation.

**Academic and personal support:** Because this is an upper-level elective in your area of study, you are expected to produce high-level work. If you have any trouble with the material covered in class, please talk with me. Additionally, the College has a wide range of completely free resources to assist students both academically and personally – please proactively seek out what you may need in order to be successful; and know that I'm happy to help you locate appropriate resources. A lot is expected of you, but everyone at the College wants to help you do your best work.

### Course Schedule

Any changes to this schedule will be communicated to you in class. See Moodle for access to readings.

Date	Topic	Readings & Project Due Dates
W Jan 18	1. Methods, theory, and practice	-
F Jan 20	" "	-
W Jan 25	" "	"EBM Basic Principles" from CEBMA
F Jan 27	" "	-
W Feb 1	2. Biology, behavior, and \$\$\$ (1900-1925)	-
F Feb 3	" "	Wikipedia: "therblig," "pig iron," "ingot," "Yerkes-Dodson law"
W Feb 8	3. Dust bowl empiricism (1925-1950)	<b>W Feb 8: 1. Case selection due</b>
F Feb 10	" "	-
W Feb 15	Exam review	-
<b>F Feb 17</b>	<b>Exam 1 (Topics #1-3)</b>	-
W Feb 22	4. Theory, theory, theory (1950-1975)	Ravenelle (2019)
F Feb 24	" "	Harder (1991)
W Mar 1	" "	-
F Mar 3	" "	Kerr (1975)
<b>W Mar 8</b>	<b>Spring break – no class meeting</b>	-
<b>F Mar 10</b>	<b>" "</b>	-
W Mar 15	5. Cognition (1975-2000)	-
F Mar 17	" "	<b>F Mar 17: 2. Theory selection due</b>
W Mar 22	Library day	-
F Mar 24	" "	-
W Mar 29	Exam review	-
<b>F Mar 31</b>	<b>Exam 2 (Topics #4-5)</b>	-
W Apr 5	6. 20th century controversies	<b>W Apr 5: 3. Annotated bib due</b>
F Apr 7	" "	Ludwig and Geller (1997)
W Apr 12	7. Personality	-
F Apr 14	" "	Detweiler et al. (1999)
W Apr 19	8. Context	-
F Apr 21	" "	<b>F Apr 21: 4. Complete paper due</b>
W Apr 26	" "	Longenecker et al. (1987)
F Apr 28	Course wrap-up, final exam review	-
<b>Sat May 6</b>	<b>"Lightly cumulative" final exam (mostly topics #6-8)</b>	-

### Annotated Reading List for Work Motivation

In this copy of the reading list (which duplicates all the sources listed above in the course schedule), I've included notes on each source's availability, contents (from the materials provided by the reading itself, such as an abstract), and a description of how the materials were used in the course, with the goal of helping users adapt the reading list to their own course needs.

I am grateful to Dr. Amy Hooper for her guidance in choosing two of these assigned readings (i.e., Harder, 1991; Ludwig & Geller, 1997); and Dr. Rick DeShon for letting me borrow his introductory remarks on the course requirements/grading structure as they relate to work motivation. I am also thankful to Gettysburg College's Johnson Center for Teaching and Learning, as well as Musselman Library's Mary Elmquist, for their generous support and assistance in redesigning this class to be "zero-cost" for our students.

The general course structure (e.g., the topical outline) roughly follows Dr. Gary Latham's book, *Work Motivation: History, Theory, Research, and Practice* (<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/work-motivation/book235319>), but this book is not used for assigned course reading material.

This work is licensed by Alice Brawley Newlin under a [Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). By marking the work with a CC0 public domain dedication, the creator is giving up their copyright and allowing reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, even for commercial purposes.

#### Evidence-based management: The basic principles (Barends, Rousseau, & Briner, 2014)

Stable link or DOI: <https://cebma.org/assets/Uploads/Evidence-Based-Practice-The-Basic-Principles.pdf>

**Availability or Access Notes:** Freely available from the Center for Evidence-Based Management (CEBMA) at the link above; note that CEBMA also offers a wide collection of academic articles (<https://cebma.org/resources/articles/>) and other recommended reading (<https://cebma.org/resources/recommended-reading-for-students-and-practitioners/>)

**Item Description:** "In this paper, we will explain what evidence-based practice is and how it can help you and your organization make better decisions. Whether we work in a bank, hospital, large consulting firm or small startup, we have a moral obligation to use the best available evidence when making a decision. We can do this by learning how to distinguish science from folklore, data from assertions, and evidence from beliefs, anecdotes or personal opinions." (Barends et al., 2014, p. 3)

**How It Was Used in Class:** Students read this article as their first introduction to evidence-based management (EBM) in the "1. Methods, theory, and practice" portion of the course; in the corresponding class session, we talked more about what EBM is, as well as its steps and what sources of evidence should be included in this process. We also discussed EBM within the larger context of the science-practice "dichotomy," emphasizing how these two are complementary skillsets.

#### Wikipedia entry for "therblig"

Stable link or DOI: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Therblig>

**Availability or Access Notes:** Freely available from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, at the link above

**Item Description:** Introduces "therbligs," which are "...18 kinds of elemental motions, used in the study of motion economy in the workplace. A workplace task is analyzed by recording each of the therblig units for a process, with the results used for optimization of manual labour by eliminating unneeded movements. The word *therblig* was the creation of Frank Bunker Gilbreth and Lillian Moller Gilbreth, American industrial psychologists who invented the field of time and motion study. It is a reversal of the name Gilbreth, with 'th' transposed" ("therblig," n.d., para. 1-2). Further reading of the entry introduces the 18 specific therbligs and their symbols.

**How It Was Used in Class:** When provided with this reading, students were instructed to "read enough to know what [each thing – e.g., a therblig] is." In class, therbligs were discussed in the context of time and motion studies as conducted by Frank and Lillian Gilbreth in the early 1900s, in the "2. Biology, behavior, and \$\$\$ (1900-1925)" portion of the course. During class, students also practiced creating a therblig sequence for a selected "simple" activity (such as washing the dishes), to clearly see how precise elemental motions are as a form of analysis (e.g., sometimes identifying 20+ therbligs for a "simple" task).

### Wikipedia entry for “pig iron”

Stable link or DOI: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pig\\_iron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pig_iron)

Availability or Access Notes: Freely available from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, at the link above

**Item Description:** Introduces “pig iron,” which is “...also known as crude iron, is an intermediate good used by the iron industry in the production of steel” (“pig iron,” n.d., para. 1).

**How It Was Used in Class:** When provided with this reading, students were instructed to “read enough to know what [each thing – e.g., pig iron] is.” In class, pig iron was discussed in the context of scientific management as developed by Frederick Taylor in the early 1900s, in the “2. Biology, behavior, and \$\$\$ (1900-1925)” portion of the course. Taylor studied workers who were moving tons of pig iron ingots, so understanding what pig iron (and an ingot, in the next reading) is helps students grasp the magnitude of change in productivity – namely, an increase from 12.5 tons up to 47 tons of ingots moved, *and* with fewer workers! – thanks to scientific management.

### Wikipedia entry for “ingot”

Stable link or DOI: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ingot>

Availability or Access Notes: Freely available from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, at the link above

**Item Description:** Introduces “ingots,” which are “...a piece of relatively pure material, usually metal, that is cast into a shape suitable for further processing. In steelmaking, it is the first step among semi-finished casting products” (“ingot,” n.d., para. 1).

**How It Was Used in Class:** When provided with this reading, students were instructed to “read enough to know what [each thing – e.g., an ingot] is.” In class, ingots were discussed in the context of scientific management as developed by Frederick Taylor in the early 1900s, in the “2. Biology, behavior, and \$\$\$ (1900-1925)” portion of the course. Taylor studied workers who were moving tons of pig iron ingots, so understanding what an ingot (and pig iron, from the previous reading) is helps students grasp the magnitude of change in productivity – namely, an increase from 12.5 tons up to 47 tons of ingots moved, *and* with fewer workers! – thanks to scientific management.

### Wikipedia entry for “Yerkes-Dodson law”

Stable link or DOI: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yerkes%E2%80%93Dodson\\_law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yerkes%E2%80%93Dodson_law)

Availability or Access Notes: Freely available from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, at the link above

**Item Description:** Introduces the Yerkes-Dodson law (1908) which “...is an empirical relationship between pressure and performance, originally developed by psychologists Robert M. Yerkes and John Dillingham Dodson in 1908. The law dictates that performance increases with physiological or mental arousal, but only up to a point. When levels of arousal become too high, performance decreases. The process is often illustrated graphically as a bell-shaped curve which increases and then decreases with higher levels of arousal. The original paper (a study of the Japanese house mouse) was only referenced ten times over the next half century, yet in four of the citing articles, these findings were described as a psychological ‘law’” (“Yerkes-Dodson law,” n.d., para. 1).

**How It Was Used in Class:** When provided with this reading, students were instructed to “read with a focus on the overall concept, *and* whether it has been supported in subsequent research.” In class, we discussed the intuitive appeal of this example, but how it has actually received very little empirical support, despite being labeled a “law” quickly! More broadly, we discuss this within the context of EBM and theoretical development over time – i.e., how theories are proposed and (should be) refined as more evidence is collected. This extends our discussions of EBM from the “1. Methods, theory, and practice” portion of the course” to discuss how theories included in the “2. Biology, behavior, and \$\$\$ (1900-1925)” portion of the class have been either refined or abandoned over time as newer theories were developed. This helps set the stage for seeing the continuous development of motivation theories throughout the 1900s and 2000s.

### “We’re not Uber:” Control, autonomy, and entrepreneurship in the gig economy (Ravenelle, 2019)

Stable link or DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-06-2018-0256>

**Availability or Access Notes:** This is a library-licensed article, so please work with your librarian to see if it is available; or, a copy may be freely available via ResearchGate – [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333984115\\_We're\\_not\\_uber\\_control\\_autonomy\\_and\\_entrepreneurship\\_in\\_the\\_gig\\_economy](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333984115_We're_not_uber_control_autonomy_and_entrepreneurship_in_the_gig_economy)

**Item Description:** “The purpose of this paper is to utilize McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y as a framework to discuss two gig economy platforms and how their differing management assumptions affect worker perceptions of themselves as entrepreneurs. The author utilized qualitative interviews and demographic surveys with 41 contract workers from TaskRabbit, a personal assistant platform, and Kitchensurfing, a ‘rent-a-chef’ service, to examine the impact of differing management assumptions on independent contractor perceptions of themselves as entrepreneurs. Theory X management assumptions and correlated behaviors directly contradict the entrepreneurial ethos marketed by the platforms, resulting in a psychological contract violation for workers and negative responses to the platform. In comparison, Theory Y managerial assumptions and correlated behaviors can be utilized to encourage worker innovation, creativity, and sense of self as an entrepreneur.” (Ravenelle, 2019, p. 269)

**How It Was Used in Class:** Students read this article to have a “modern” example of McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y from the 1950s, covered in the “4. Theory, theory, theory (1950-1975)” portion of the course. During class, students worked together to match a list of elements from the reading (e.g., cash bonuses, asking for worker feedback, being forced to accept gigs) to either Theory X or Theory Y.

#### **Equity theory versus expectancy theory: The case of Major League Baseball free agents (Harder, 1991)**

**Stable link or DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.76.3.458>

**Availability or Access Notes:** This is a library-licensed article, so please work with your librarian to see if it is available

**Item Description:** “Equity theory and expectancy theory make different predictions under conditions of perceived underreward coupled with strong performance-outcome expectancies. A synthesis of these theories is proposed: Equity performance effects depended on the strength of the performance-outcome expectancy. Free-agent nonpitchers in the 1977-1980 baseball seasons were compared with a random sample of nonpitchers. These free agents probably felt underrewarded before entering the free-agent market yet probably also had expectations of higher salaries after becoming free agents. These competing motivations were hypothesized to affect individual performance. Two types of performance were assessed. Batting average, which had a weaker relation to salary outcome declined in the year before free agency, whereas home run ratio, which had a stronger relation with salary outcome, did not decline. These results are consistent with the proposed synthesis.” (Harder, 1991, p. 458)

**How It Was Used in Class:** Students read this article to have another “modern” example or application of theories they learned – this time, equity theory (Adams) and expectancy theory (Vroom) from the 1960s, as covered in the “4. Theory, theory, theory (1950-1975)” portion of the course. This article also shows how more than one theory can be integrated to make a nuanced prediction of behavior – namely, that underreward will reduce motivation (per equity theory), but only to the extent that future rewards are not expected to be negatively affected (i.e., the strength of the perceived performance-outcome link, per expectancy theory).

#### **On the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B (Kerr, 1975)**

**Stable link or DOI:** <https://www.jstor.org/stable/255378>

**Availability or Access Notes:** While this article is not in JSTOR’s Open Content collection, JSTOR does allow a generous number of free article accesses to anyone who sets up a free account – see <https://support.jstor.org/hc/en-us/articles/115004760028-How-to-Register-Get-Free-Access-to-Content>

**Item Description:** “Whether dealing with monkeys, rats, or human beings, it is hardly controversial to state that most organisms seek information concerning what activities are rewarded, and then seek to do (or at least pretend to do) those things, often to the virtual exclusion of activities not rewarded. ... In an effort to understand and explain this phenomenon, this paper presents examples from society, from organizations in general, and from profit making firms in particular. Data from a manufacturing company and information from an insurance firm are examined to demonstrate the consequences of such reward systems for the organizations involved, and possible reasons why such reward systems continue to exist are considered.” (Kerr, 1975, p. 769)

**How It Was Used in Class:** After learning about Skinner and (the return of) behaviorism in the 1950s (as part of the “4. Theory, theory, theory (1950-1975)” portion of the course), this article is used to help students identify some of the pitfalls of behaviorism and rewards systems in real organizations. In class, students work together to identify what

behavior was “hoped for” in each scenario described by Kerr (1975), as well as what behavior was actually rewarded. Then, we discuss more recent but strikingly similar examples, such as the Wells Fargo scandal from the early 2000s where millions of fake customer accounts were created in order to meet intensive sales goals. Last, we discuss a few scenarios where similar “follies” of unintended behavioral consequences could be likely (e.g., rewarding shorter customer service call times), but we focus on how reward systems can be redesigned to avoid these “follies.”

**Assigned versus participative goal setting and response generalization: Managing injury control among professional pizza deliverers (Ludwig & Geller, 1997)**

Stable link or DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.2.253>

Availability or Access Notes: Freely available via NC DOCKS, the open access repository for the University of North Carolina System - <https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/listing.aspx?id=8031>

**Item Description:** “Safety belt use, turn signal use, and intersection stopping were observed at 3 pizza delivery locations per driver’s license plate numbers. After baseline observations, employees at 1 store participated in goal setting targeting complete stops. Employees at the other store were assigned a goal. Over 4 weeks, the group’s percentages of complete intersection stopping were posted. Both intervention groups significantly increased their complete intersection stops during the intervention phase. The participative goal-setting group also showed significant increases in turn signal and safety belt use (nontargeted behaviors) concurrent with their increases in intersection stopping (targeted behaviors). Drivers decreased their turn signal and safety belt use concurrent with the assigned goal condition targeting complete stops.” (Ludwig et al., 1997, p. 253)

**How It Was Used in Class:** During the “6. 20<sup>th</sup> century controversies” portion of the course, we discuss the mixed scientific evidence on whether participation in decision-making truly improves worker motivation and performance. As part of this discussion, we consider this reading where pizza delivery workers showed increases in targeted work behaviors, but also “non-targeted” work behaviors; we especially consider the implications for real work settings (e.g., the need to consider not just one outcome variable), as well as the relatively simple research design (for example, the participative goal-setting condition consisted of a discussion meeting, while the assigned goal-setting condition consisted of a lecture-based meeting). We also briefly discuss how the first paragraph of this paper does an outstanding job in briefly setting up the key contextual factors impacting worker motivation in this setting – as an exemplar for their final course papers, where students focus on a particular workplace and work motivation issue of their choosing.

**Message framing and sunscreen use: Gain-framed messages motivate beach-goers (Detweiler et al., 1999)**

Stable link or DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.18.2.189>

Availability or Access Notes: This is a library-licensed article, so please work with your librarian to see if it is available

**Item Description:** “Prospect theory suggests that people respond differentially to factually equivalent messages depending on how these messages are framed (A. Tversky & D. Kahneman, 1981). A. J. Rothman and P. Salovey (1997) relied on prospect theory to predict that messages highlighting potential ‘gains’ should promote prevention behaviors such as sunscreen use best. This experiment compared the effectiveness of 4 differently framed messages (2 highlighting gains, 2 highlighting losses) to persuade 217 beach-goers to obtain and use sunscreen. Attitudes and intentions were measured before and immediately following the delivery of the framed information, and after completing the questionnaire participants were given a coupon redeemable for a small bottle of sunscreen later that same day. People who read either of the 2 gain-framed brochures, compared with those who read either of the 2 loss-framed brochures, were significantly more likely to (a) request sunscreen, (b) intend to repeatedly apply sunscreen while at the beach, and (c) intend to use sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher.” (Detweiler et al., 1999, p. 189)

**How It Was Used in Class:** During the “7. Personality” portion of the course, students are introduced to Higgins’ (2005, 2006) regulatory focus – namely, a prevention/avoidance or promotion/approach focus – as an individual difference; and we also discuss the relative influence of personality and situational factors in predicting behavior. This reading helps see an example of regulatory focus as well as “situational” influences on behavior (i.e., the gains and losses highlighted in the experimental messages), applied to a health behavior with serious long-term implications.

**Behind the mask: The politics of employee appraisal (Longenecker et al., 1987)**

Stable link or DOI: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4164751>

**Availability or Access Notes:** While this article is not in JSTOR's Open Content collection, JSTOR does allow a generous number of free article accesses to anyone who sets up a free account – see <https://about.jstor.org/get-jstor/>; or, a copy may be freely available via ResearchGate – [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277515965\\_Behind\\_the\\_Mask\\_The\\_Politics\\_of\\_Employee\\_Appraisal](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277515965_Behind_the_Mask_The_Politics_of_Employee_Appraisal)

**Item Description:** “According to the books and manuals, employee performance appraisal is an objective, rational and, hopefully, accurate process. Despite many historical efforts to improve the accuracy of performance appraisals, they continue to resist all attempts to reflect actual performance. Why? The idea that executives might deliberately distort and manipulate performance ratings for political reasons seems unthinkable. However, in-depth, candid interviews that the authors conducted with 60 top-level executives in seven different organizations revealed extensive evidence that executives do engage in such manipulations intentionally and systematically. The primary finding of this research is that accuracy in ratings is not the primary concern of the practicing executive. The main concern is how best to use the appraisal process to motivate and retain subordinates. The astute manager recognizes that politics in employee appraisal will never be entirely squelched. The issue, then, is not one of arbitrarily and ruthlessly trying to eliminate politics in the appraisal process but, instead, one of effectively managing the role of politics in employee appraisal. The authors examine the causes of political ratings, their potential effects, and what steps individual managers and the organization as a whole can take to manage the employee appraisal process.” (Longenecker et al., 1987)

**How It Was Used in Class:** After completing all of the main topics of the course, and immediately after completing the portion on “8. Context,” this article helps students see many visceral examples of how managers are “motivated” to change performance appraisals (e.g., providing high ratings to promote a disliked worker out of one’s unit, providing high ratings to help a person who is down on their luck). Here, we focus on how what we have learned about motivation theories in the class may (or may not!) translate into work settings, given that they are complex social environments.