



# Course program and reading list

**School:** Baruch Ivcher School of Psychology

## Terror Management Theory

**Lecturer:**

Dr. Uri Lifshin lifshin.uri@post.idc.ac.il

**Teaching Assistant:**

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<b>Course No.:</b>	<b>Course Type :</b>	<b>Weekly Hours :</b>	<b>Credit:</b>
8174	Seminar	4	4

<b>Course Requirements :</b>	<b>Group Code :</b>	<b>Language:</b>
Final Paper	210817401	English

**Prerequisites**

**Prerequisite:**

- 8000 - Introduction To Psychology
- 8014 - Research and Measurement Methods
- 8910 - Introduction To Statistics A
- 8911 - Introduction To Statistics B
- 8924 - Multivariate Statistics A
- 8925 - Multivariate Statistics B

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## Course Description

In this guided research seminar students will conduct an empirical study and will write a full APA style research paper. We will focus on the broad and extended framework of terror management theory (TMT; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon 1986; Solomon Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2015). TMT is a motivational theory that attempt to answer basic questions on human nature. According to TMT much of human behavior is aimed at reducing the potentially anxiety provoking awareness of our mortality. TMT has been applied to illuminate a very broad spectrum of human social behavior including: the psychological function of self-esteem, cultural worldviews, religion, intergroup conflicts, prejudice, close relationships, sexuality, attitudes towards nature, political psychology, and health related decisions. The theory may also be used to further understand how people manage various existential threats more broadly and shed new light on various psychological disorders. Together we will develop and test new and diverse lines of research in this extended framework. We will also specifically address the COVID-19 pandemic on human psychology from an existential perspective.

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## Course Goals

The goals of this course are to teach students how to develop and test new theoretically driven hypotheses related to Terror Management Theory (TMT). In the first semester students will learn about the basics of TMT, develop a novel hypothesis and propose a study that will test this hypothesis (this will include a written introduction and method section APA style). In the second semester students will carry on the study that they have proposed and write up the results and discussion in a full APA style manuscript. Students will also present their final projects in class.

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## Grading

The final grade will be based on the proposal and final submission as well as on attendance, class participation and

general effort. The proposal will constitute 30% of the final grade. The final submission will be 50% of the grade. The final presentation of the project will be worth 10% of the final grade. Class attendance and participation is 10% (students who miss classes without providing a reasonable explanation may have their grade reduced in accordance to IDC policy).

## Lecturer Office Hours

By appointment

## Teaching Assistant

## Additional Notes

### Class schedule Fall

Date	Topic	Reminder	Readings
October 25	Lecture 1: Intro class TMT basics		Syllabus, Schedule
November 2	Lecture 2: TMT basics; The function of self-esteem cultural worldviews and close relationships		*Pyszczynski et al (2006). Terrorism, violence, and hope for peace *Mikulincer et al (2003). The existential function of close relationships.
November 8	Lecture 3: TMT and the human-animal relationship		*Goldenberg et al (2001). I am not an animal: Mortality salience, disgust, and the denial of human creatureliness.
November 15	Lecture 4: Anxiety buffer disruption theory	<b>Start thinking about possible ideas</b>	*Yetzer & Pyszczynski (2018). Terror management theory and psychological disorder
November 22	Lecture 5: TMT & COVID-19; The research proposal	<b>Initial selection of idea</b>	Pyszczynski et al (2020). Terror Management Theory and the COVID-19 Pandemic.
December 29	Individual meetings		
December 6	Workshop on writing the intro; Individual meeting		
December 13	<b>Hanukah – no class</b>		
December 20	<b>Hanukah – no class</b>		
December 27	Workshop on writing the method; Individual meetings	<b>Initial submission of intro (for feedback)</b>	Workshop on writing the method/
January 3	Individual meetings		
January 10	Pretests	<b>Initial submission of method (for feedback)</b>	
January 17	Pretests		
January 21	Individual meetings	<b>Submission of Proposal Jan 31</b>	

All information contained in this course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by me.

### Class schedule Spring

Date	Topic	Reminder	Readings
March 7	Individual meetings	Conduct the study	
March 14	Individual meetings	Conduct the study	
March 21	Individual meetings	Conduct the study Submit the data	
March 28	Workshop on analyzing and reporting results		
April 4	Passover Holiday NO CLASS		
April 11	Passover Holiday NO CLASS		
April 18	Passover Holiday NO CLASS		
April 25	Individual meetings	Submit the write-up of results	
	Workshop on writing the discussion and paper submission		
May 9	Individual meetings		
May 16	Individual meetings		
May 23	Individual meetings		
June 30	Symposium		
June 6	Symposium		
June 13	Symposium		
June 18		Final paper submission TBD	

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## Reading List

### *General overview*

Greenberg, J., Vail, K., & Pyszczynski, T. (2014). Chapter three- Terror management theory and research: How the desire for death transcendence drives our strivings for meaning and significance. In A. J. Elliot (Ed.) *Advances in motivation science* (Vol. 1, pp. 85-134). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

### *Lectures 1-2*

Pyszczynski, T., Rothschild, Z., & Abdollahi, A. (2008). Terrorism, violence, and hope for peace: A terror management perspective. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(5), 318-322.

Mikulincer, M., Florian, V., & Hirschberger, G. (2003). The existential function of close relationships: Introducing death into the science of love. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 7, 20-40. doi:10.1207/S15327957PSPR0701\_2

### *Lecture 3*

Goldenberg, J. L., Pyszczynski, T., Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Kluck, B., & Cornwell, R. (2001). I am not an animal: Mortality salience, disgust, and the denial of human creatureliness. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 130, 427-

#### **Lecture 4**

Yetter, A. M., & Pyszczynski, T. (2018). Terror management theory and psychological disorder: Ineffective anxiety-buffer functioning as a transdiagnostic vulnerability factor for psychopathology. In C. Routledge, & M. Vess, (Eds.) *Handbook of terror management theory* (pp. 417-440). London, UK: Academic Press.

#### **Lecture 5**

Pyszczynski, T., Lockett, M., Greenberg, J., & Solomon, S. (2020). Terror Management Theory and the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 0022167820959488.

#### **Additional research discussed**

Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., & Solomon, S. (1986). The causes and consequences of a need for self-esteem: A terror management theory. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *Public self and private self* (pp. 189-212). New York: Springer-Verlag. doi:10.1007/978-1-4613-9564-5\_10

Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., Solomon, S., Rosenblatt, A., Veeder, M., Kirkland, S., & Lyon, D. (1990). Evidence for terror management theory II: The effects of mortality salience on reactions to those who threaten or bolster the cultural worldview. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 308-318. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.58.2.308

Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., Rosenblatt, A., Burling, J., Lyon, D., Simon, D. & Pines, E. (1992). Why do people need self-esteem? Converging evidence that self-esteem serves an anxiety-buffering function. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 913-922. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.63.6.913

Lifshin, U., Greenberg, J., Zestcott, C. A., & Sullivan, D. (2017). The evil animal: A terror management theory perspective on the human tendency to kill animals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43, 743-757. doi:10.1177/0146167217697092

Mikulincer, M., Lifshin, U., & Shaver, P.R. (2020). Towards an anxiety-buffer disruption approach to depression: Attachment anxiety and worldview threat heighten death-thought accessibility and depression-related feelings. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 39, 229-237.

#### **Additional integrative reviews**

Routledge, & M. Vess, (Eds.) (2018). *Handbook of terror management theory*. London, UK: Academic Press. [FULL TEXT AVAILABLE ONLINE AT MY IDC]

#### **Additional recommended readings**

Becker, E. (1973). *The denial of death*. New York: Free Press.