Jindal School of Psychology & Counselling
India's First Transdisciplinary Psychology School

O.P. Jindal Global University
A Private University Promoting Public Service

Why We Delay: Science of Procrastination & Productivity

(School-Specific Elective)

PCCU-04-BAP-SOPP4052

JSPC B.A./ B.SC (Hons.)

Fall Semester 2026

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 weeks

Credit, Hours: 4 credit points, 60 hrs.

Meetings: (by appointment only)

Location: Classroom (location yet to be decided)

Prerequisites: Foundational Knowledge in Psychology- Prior coursework in Cognitive Psychology or Introduction to Neuroscience.

Basic Understanding of Research Methods- Familiarity with experimental design, hypothesis testing, and interpretation of empirical research (e.g., introductory statistics or research methodology).

Introductory Statistics- Basic concepts such as mean, standard deviation, correlation, and hypothesis testing.

Academic Reading Skills- Ability to read and critically evaluate scientific journal articles.

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Ankita Verma

Biography: Dr. Ankita Verma is an Assistant Professor at Jindal School of Psychology and Counseling, with a Ph.D. from IIT Roorkee. Her research focuses on fear, memory reconsolidation, and how music can enhance fear extinction. She uses psychophysiological methods and computational tools to study the interaction between cognition, emotion, and behavior.

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1. Course Description

Procrastination represents a pervasive self-regulatory difficulty that significantly influences academic performance, psychological well-being, and goal-directed behavior among students and professionals. This elective course examines procrastination as a multidimensional behavioral phenomenon through cognitive, affective, and neuroscientific perspectives. The course explores the neural and psychological mechanisms underlying delay behavior, with particular emphasis on executive functioning, prefrontal control processes, reward circuitry, emotion regulation, temporal decision-making, and habit formation. Students will engage with contemporary empirical research to understand how interactions between cognitive control systems and motivational–affective neural networks influence self-regulation and goal-directed behavior. The course further emphasizes the application of neuroscience-informed psychological principles to facilitate adaptive behavioral change and improved self-regulatory functioning.

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives (Aim)

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments and Activities
Analyze procrastination as a multidimensional construct integrating cognitive, affective, and neuroscientific perspectives.	- Interactive lectures, - Concept mapping, - Guided discussions on theoretical models	- Short analytical essays, - Concept map submissions, - Class participation
Explain the neural mechanisms underlying procrastination, including executive control, reward processing, and emotion regulation systems.	- Lecture-based teaching with brain diagrams, - Research paper discussions, - Video-based learning	- Quizzes, - Diagram-based Assessments, - Research article critique

Evaluate the role of executive functions and temporal decision-making in delay behavior.	- Case-based learning, - problem-solving exercises, - classroom demonstrations	- Case analysis assignments, in-class problem-solving tests
Critically review empirical research on procrastination and self-regulation.	- Discussions, lectures, and class presentations	- Research review paper, - Group presentation, -Annotated bibliography
Design and apply neuroscience-informed interventions to reduce procrastination and improve self-regulation.	-Reflective exercises, -Applied behavioral tasks	-Intervention project, reflective journal, -practical application report

3. Scheme of Evaluation and Grading

Evaluation Breakdown

Internal breakup

10% Class Participation-

10 marks will be awarded for class participation.

20% Summary and Reflection paper -this is an individual assignment. For the assigned topic(s), each student will be required to prepare a document summarizing the key concepts and research findings about the topic, discuss its relevance and application in real-life scenarios, reflect on the strengths and limitations of the existing approaches, and share personal reactions to the topic, and suggest how these concepts can be better covered in the classroom, including ideas for integration of technology. Students can draw on pointers from their readings, classroom discussions, and interactions with

peers to develop this reflection paper. The paper template and submission instructions will be provided to students in the classroom.

20% Application based Examination – The exam will include both short-answer and long-answer questions. The syllabus will be communicated at least 2 weeks in advance.

20% Group Presentation- This is a group assignment. Students will form groups of 3 or 4 and will present on a topic relevant to the course. The topic will be decided in consultation with the instructor. Groups will be given a time slot of approximately 30 mins to have the presentation

External breakup

30% End-term Examination -There will be a final exam at the end of the semester, and It will be a closed-book exam. The exam will consist of short-answer and long-answer questions.

Grade Definition

Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Value	Grade Description
O	80% and above	8	**Outstanding:** Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 - 79.75%	7.5	**Excellent:** Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; and critical and analytical ability.
A	70 - 74.75%	7	**Very Good:** Sound knowledge of the subject matter, organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles, critically analyze existing material, and originality in thinking.
A-	65 - 69.75%	6	**Good:** Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems; good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64.75%	5	**Fair:** Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems; reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59.75%	4	**Acceptable:** Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study; passable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54.75%	3	**Marginal:** Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials; poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49.75%	2	**Pass 1:** Pass with a passable understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
P2	40 - 44.75%	1	**Pass 2:** Pass with a rudimentary understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
F	Below 40%	0	**Fail:** Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills; and marginal use of the relevant materials. Requires the student to repeat the course.

4. Academic Integrity

Plagiarism.

Plagiarism is not acceptable! Please refrain from copying and pasting paragraphs and sentences from your reading materials. This includes copying someone's words, structure, grammar, ideas, thoughts, and phrases and passing them as your own. Too many quotes from reading material and other published texts are not acceptable. What is acceptable? Using one direct quote, which is not more than 40 words, with the proper citation. Use in-text citation. It is a must! Present the content you read from your reading materials in your own words. Think and critically analyze the content. The source should always be acknowledged in your written material and presentation. All papers in this class will be checked electronically for plagiarism. You must use APA style throughout the entire course. If in doubt, please do ask for assistance.

Participation/Attendance Policy

This course covers a lot of detailed information. There is no way to get a good grade without attending and participating in the class discussion regularly. 10 marks are awarded for class participation, so it is important to attend classes.

Use of phone/ texting/ laptop

Students are encouraged to use their computers or phones only for class activities during lectures. If a student is found using the phone/computer for any other activity, they may be asked to leave the classroom and be marked absent from the lecture. In addition, repeated violations may result in academic discipline.

5. Keywords – Procrastination, Self-Regulation, Executive Function, Decision-Making,

Delay Behavior

Course Material

Textbooks: Procrastination by Jane B. Burka

Web Sources:

Chen, C., Chen, D., Zhu, Y., Xiao, F., Li, Y., & Lin, X. (2026). The relationship between self-esteem and procrastination among university students: The chain mediating effect of perfectionism and academic motivation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *17*, 1775527.

Chen, Z., Ren, Z., Li, W., Huo, Z., Wang, Z., Liu, Y., ... & Feng, T. (2025). Modulating task outcome value to mitigate real-world procrastination via noninvasive brain stimulation. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2506.21000*.

Sæle, R. G., Aslaksen, P. M., Svartdal, F., & Ørbo, M. C. (2026). Lower metacognitive abilities predict procrastination: a cross-sectional study of a healthy adult sample. *BMC Psychology*.

Wiwatowska, E., Prost, M., Coll-Martin, T., & Lupiáñez, J. (2025). Is poor control over thoughts and emotions related to a higher tendency to delay tasks? The link between procrastination, emotional dysregulation, and attentional control. *British Journal of Psychology*, *116*(4), 807-830.

Grabo, L. M., & Bellingrath, S. (2026). Bedtime procrastination as a typical problem of self-regulation? Insights from the examination of heart rate variability, behavioral regulation, and emotion regulation. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 13591053261425412.

Cheng, D., Heath, O., Farooqi, D., Chou, E., Gao, A., & Calver, J. (2026). Systematic Review of Academic Procrastination Interventions in Computing Higher Education. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2604.03248*.

Denaro, C. M., Hartley, A. A., Couperus, J. W., Bukach, C. M., & Reed, C. L. (2025). Procrastination and anxiety aspects of self-control predict individual differences in the mismatch

negativity (MMN). *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, *214*, 113202.

6. Session Plan

The classroom lectures span over 15 weeks. Each week may comprise two 120-minute lectures. The following topics will be covered during the 15-week duration:

Session	General Topic	Objectives	Main Readings
Week 1	Introduction to Procrastination	Understand definitions, types, and significance	- Steel (2007); Chen et al. (2026, Frontiers in Psychology)
Week 2	Theoretical Foundations	Explore psychological and decision-making models	- Steel & König (2006); Chen et al. (2025, motivation imbalance model)
Week 3	Cognitive Mechanisms	Examine executive functions and control processes	Miyake et al. (2000); Recent metacognition–procrastination (2024–25)

Week 4	Affective Processes	Understand emotion regulation and stress	Sirois & Pychyl (2013); Wiwatowska et al. (2025 – emotion regulation & attentional control
Week 5	Neuroscience of Self-Control	Study the prefrontal cortex and top-down control	Miller & Cohen (2001); Chen et al. (2025 – DLPFC neuromodulation study)
Week 6	Reward and Motivation Systems	Explore dopamine, reward sensitivity, and avoidance	Schultz (2015); Amemori et al. (2026 – ventral striatum & aversive motivation circuit)
Week 7	Temporal Decision-Making	Understand delay discounting and valuation MID SEMESTER- APPLIED QUIZ	Ainslie (1975); Recent valuation-based procrastination model (2025)
Week 8	Habit Formation	Examine automaticity and behavioral loops	Wood & Neal (2007); Recent behavioral regulation & habit research (2023–25)

Week 9	Physiological Markers of Self-Regulation	Link HRV and biological regulation to procrastination	Grabo & Bellingrath (2026 – HRV and procrastination)
Week 10	Academic & Real-World Procrastination	- Analyze applied contexts	- Steel (2007); Cheng et al. (2026 systematic review of interventions
Week 11	Clinical & Mental Health Links	Connect procrastination with anxiety and stress REFLECTION PAPER ASSIGNMENT	- Sirois (2014); Denaro et al. (2025 – EEG/MMN and self-control)
Week 12	Intervention Strategies I	Cognitive-behavioral and emotion regulation approaches	- Rozental & Carlbring (2014); Recent intervention frameworks (2025–26 review)

Week 13	Intervention Strategies II	Neuroscience-based interventions	- Gollwitzer (1999); Chen et al. (2025 – brain stimulation reducing procrastination)
Week 14	Integration & GROUP Presentations		
Week 15	REVISION		

This schedule is preliminary and subject to change based on changing conditions