The Motivation/Cognition Lab at SBU

The psychology of motivation is the psychology of wanting. Motivation research seeks to explain how people become attracted to or repelled by that which they encounter, including activities and potential courses of action, political candidates, and fresh, hot pizza.

Along with closely related work on attitudes and affect, motivation research has benefited recently from a strong integration with basic research on cognition. Research in our lab builds on that work by examining how mental representations of potential choices, options, and alternatives impact a broad range of self-regulatory processes, such as action initiation, affective evaluation, and the construal of others’ intentions. Whereas much social-cognitive research has used cognitive principles to help explain motivational processes, moreover, one line of our current work examines how motivational principles might help explain basic cognitive processes of selective attention and memory.