About the impact of the why on the what and the how:
The impact of motivation on information processing

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Course for doctoral students: Friday, Dec. 14, 2012: 10 am – 1:15 pm, B 602
and Friday, Feb. 8, 2013: 10 am – 5:45 pm, H 303.

While for a long time research in psychology considered motivational and cognitive factors as
alternative or additive explanation of a phenomenon, more recent research clearly indicates that
motivation influences cognition. In other words, the motivation force driving our behaviour (i.e., why
we do something) has a strong influence on what kind of information is processed and how we
process it. This in turn has a heavy implication on the resulting perception of our environment and
behaviour. Research has, for example, shown that an otherwise highly attractive chocolate cake is
not only automatically perceived as negative among those with a strong dieting goal, but they focus
even more strongly on their dieting goal.

This course will start with a brief summary of more traditional motivation research and a more
extensive summary of initial research on the impact of motivation on information processing. This
part will be delivered during the first day as a lecture with interactive elements. The second day will
be fully interactive and focus on discussing and comparing the diverse approaches that have been
developed during the last one or two decades, including, but not limited to, goal systems theory, the
motivational inferences model, approach and avoidance motivation, regulatory focus theory, and the
biophysical model of threat and challenge.