Motivation: Theories

*painterly picture of some motivated behaviour: probably eating related, but maybe social motivation or sexual*
• Define the term ‘motivation’ from a psychological perspective.
• Describe and distinguish between different theories of motivation.
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There are a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of motivation. Most of them distinguish between biological motives and social motives.
Some examples of biological motives: hunger, thirst, sex, sleep and rest.
What is Motivation?

Some examples of biological motives: hunger, thirst, sex, sleep and rest.

Some examples of social motives: play, achievement and autonomy.
There are many theories of motivation:

- Instinct theories
- Drive reduction theories
- Incentive theories
- Optimal arousal theory
- Psychodynamic theories
- Humanistic theories
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Instinct Theories

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Today, evolutionary psychologists suggest that the adaptive significance of a behaviour is the key to understanding particular motivations.
Theories of Motivation

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Drive Reduction Theories
Theories of Motivation

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Drive theory (Hull, 1943): Physiological disruptions to homeostasis produce drives: states of internal tension that motivate an organism to behave in ways that reduce tension.

Drives provide the energy to push an organism into action.
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Incentive theories say that the source of motivation lies outside the organism; whereas drive theories argue that the source of motivation lies within.
Optimal Arousal Theory

Optimal arousal theory points out that some motivated behaviours actually increase arousal (which is a move away from homeostasis). Curiosity is one such example--which might be the reason for your taking this course.
Psychodynamic theories assume that much of our behaviour results from a persistent battle between unconscious impulses (that are struggling for release) and psychological defense mechanisms that are used to keep them under control.
Humanistic theories, such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, emphasize that some needs take priority over other needs.

- **Physiological**: breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion
- **Safety**: security of: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property
- **Love/belonging**: friendship, family, sexual intimacy
- **Esteem**: self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others
- **Self-actualization**: morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts
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1. Competence: The need to master new challenges and skills.

2. Autonomy: The freedom to choose and act without outside interference.

3. Relatedness: The desire to form meaningful relationships with others.