



Conservation Psychology
Psyc 158/Envs 158
(Spring 2009)

Course Room and Time: Tues/Thurs 1:45-3:30pm, O'Connor 215

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COURSE GOALS: This course will introduce you to Conservation Psychology, that is, how psychological processes influence behaviors that help or hurt the environment, and how psychology can help encourage environmental conservation. Readings will be drawn from many areas of psychology. However, in a quarter, it is impossible to thoroughly learn about all aspects of conservation psychology. Therefore, this course will especially focus on two topics that, in my view, are especially interesting and promising for promoting sustainability: environmental identity, and the social marketing approach to promoting sustainable behavior. At the end of this course, you should know several psychological theories that are relevant to environmental conservation, be able to design interventions based on them to promote conservation, and be able to design studies to evaluate whether those interventions are effective in achieving conservation goals. Class discussions and projects will give you the opportunity to practice applying psychology to promote environmental conservation. This class is designed to be both enjoyable and useful for you; please let me know if at any time you are not enjoying or learning from it and we will work together to improve the situation!

COURSE FORMAT: This class is a seminar, and will be discussion-based, though sometimes I will briefly lecture on topics not covered in the readings.

ASSIGNMENTS: Readings will be assigned for each class. In addition, you will contribute discussion questions, complete brief home work assignments, and complete two larger projects.

GRADING: The following will determine your course grade.

Contributions in class, including discussion questions and group work	30%
Homework - brief writing assignments, running experiment, etc.	10%
Self-change project	20%
Conservation program design project	40%

READINGS: Readings will be from several sources: Books, articles on e-res, articles available online through links in the syllabus, and an email newsletter.

[B] Paper Books (available for purchase in bookstore)

[E] Available on E-Res (password: GOGREEN)

[O] Online via link from syllabus (ctrl + click on author name(s))

Paper Books:

Cialdini, R. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Clayton, S. & Myers, G. (2009). *Conservation Psychology: Understanding and promoting human care for nature*. Wiley. (Electronic copies of readings will be available on ERes until book is available mid-April).

Winter, D.D. & Koger, S. (2004). *Psychology of environmental problems*, 2nd ed. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

E-Book:

McKenzie-Mohr, D. (2009). *Fostering sustainable behavior: Community-based social marketing*.

[E] or <http://cbsm.com/public/images/FosteringSustainableBehavior.pdf>

Daily Grist:

This daily environmental newsletter is the best way I know of to quickly keep up with environmental news. Not only does it provide brief summaries of environmental news on a daily basis, it's also very funny (really!), which makes the often depressing environmental news easier to take. Please read this on a daily basis (or at least catch up before each class) and follow the links to any articles that interest you. The purpose of this assignment is so we have a current and common set of everyday environmental examples to discuss. To subscribe, go to:

<http://www.grist.org/cgi-bin/signmeup.pl?source=daily>

GROUP WORK:

Recent college graduates report that learning to work in groups and to solve complex problems were among the most useful things they learned in college. Furthermore, research on learning is also revealing that working in groups on collaborative projects is one of the most effective ways to learn. To help you learn how to solve problems in groups, you will work in small groups both in class and outside of class. We will discuss and you will apply strategies to maximize the effectiveness of group work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: To help you think about the readings and to focus our class discussions on topics of greatest interest to you, please bring to each class one brief commentary or question about anything that you found especially surprising, interesting, or unclear in the reading (including *Daily Grist*). I will not collect them, but we will discuss them in class. Please pose questions that you'd really like to hear others' thoughts about. Feel free to ask questions about things you do not understand - these are often the most important.

SELF-CHANGE PROJECT: Changing from environmentally damaging behaviors to environmentally beneficial ones can be very challenging, and it is easy to underestimate these challenges when focusing on others' behavior. To help you understand some of the challenges that can arise and thought processes that accompany these challenges, you will choose an important conservation behavior change and attempt to carry it out during the quarter. As part of this project, you will keep a journal of your efforts, participate in ongoing class discussions about challenges you are facing in your attempt to change your behavior, and summarize your project in a project portfolio (including journal entries + summary of your experience) at the end of the quarter. As a rough guideline, you should aim to write at least one typed page (or equivalent) of reflections per week (though turning in a handwritten journal is fine as long as your writing is legible).

RESEARCH EXPERIMENT: To provide you with experience doing conservation psychology research, you will help run a conservation psychology experiment. I will explain the study, then you will collect data outside of class for about 2 hours between April 13-24. We will discuss the results of the experiment later in the quarter. This experience should help you design your study as part of your Conservation Program Design Project.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM DESIGN PROJECT (in groups):

One of the top environmental challenges society faces is dwindling fresh water supplies. This is currently a huge problem here in Silicon Valley - we need to reduce water use, and quickly. This quarter, we will work with the SCU sustainability office to develop psychologically based strategies for reducing water use on campus. You will work in a group of 2-3 students, with at least one ENVS major and one PSYC major, so you can benefit from each others' environmental and psychological expertise. Your program should be designed to reduce a specific behavior that wastes water, and/or increase a specific behavior that saves water.

PART 1: Research current water use behaviors on campus, brainstorm psychological solutions to reduce water use, and propose a specific psychological strategy. Write a memorandum describing the behavior you are trying to change, and describing and justifying your program with psychological theories and research. (About 7-10 pages, short presentation outlining your program due in class due May 12)

PART 2: Design a study (ideally, an experiment) to evaluate the effectiveness of your proposed program. Include proposed method, expected results, and implications of the expected results (how would you need to revise your planned program, depending on what you find in your study?). (about 3-5 pages, short presentation outlining your study due in class due May 21)

Powerpoint presentation (15-20 min) and final paper (10-15 pages) due last day of class.

Discussion Topics and Reading List

***Note:** In addition to the readings below, I may also hand out or email you brief additional readings and multimedia resources during the quarter. I also encourage you to contribute relevant resources that you may discover during the quarter.*

Week 1 - March 31 & April 2 - Introduction to Conservation Psychology

What's the problem?

[B/E] Clayton & Myers - Ch. 1

[O] Ecological Footprint (browse web pages, complete the EF questionnaire and record a) your results, and b) your reaction to them) - www.ecofoot.org

[O] [Barringer, F.](#) (2007, February 7). In Many Communities, It's Not Easy Going Green. *New York Times*

[O] [Fish, Stanley.](#) (2008, August 3). I am, therefore I pollute. *New York Times*.

What Behavior Changes are Needed?

For April 2, read one of the following articles:

[E] Brower, M. & Leon, W. (1999). The consumer's guide to effective environmental choices. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press. Ch. 1, 3, & 4.

[E] Gardner, G.T. & Stern, P.C. (2008). The short list: The most effective actions U.S. households can take to curb climate change. *Environment*, 50, 12-24.

Additional Resources:

[O] www.climatecrisis.net

[O] www.stopglobalwarming.org

[O] www.thegreenguide.com

[O] www.turnthetide.org

Week 2

April 7 - Conservation Psychology Approaches

[E] Clayton, S. & Brook, A. (2005). Can psychology help save the world? A model for conservation psychology. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 5(1), 1-15.

[E] Winter, D.D.N. (2000). Some big ideas for some big problems. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 516-522.

[O/E] McKenzie-Mohr - p.1-7

[O] www.cbsm.com (browse)

[B/E] Clayton & Myers - Ch. 9 (skim)

April 9 - Research Methods in Psychology: How Do we Know What Works?

Introduce Conservation Psychology experiment

[E] Stangor, C. (2007). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences* (3rd ed.). Chapter 1. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

[E] Robson, C. (1993). *Real world research*. p.66-104. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. (Skim and use as a reference for Part 2 of your program design project)

Week 3

April 14 - Cognition

[B] Cialdini - Ch. 1

[B] Winter & Koger - Ch. 6

[O/E] McKenzie-Mohr - p.26-30

Read ONE of the following (or more if you want):

[E] Gilbert, D. (2006, July 2). If only gay sex caused global warming. *Los Angeles Times*.

[O] [Walsh, B.](#) (2009). 10 ideas changing the world right now: 10. Ecological intelligence. *Time Magazine*.

[O] [Jha, Alok.](#) (2009, February 10). Plug in. Turn on. Tune up. Google helps consumers check their energy use. *The Guardian*.

[O] [Saad, L.](#) (2009, March 11). Increased number think global warming is "exaggerated." *Gallup.com*

[O] [Williams, A.](#) (2008). That buzz in your ear may be green noise. *New York Times*.

April 16 - External vs Internal Motivation

[B] Clayton & Myers - p.321-326.

[O/E] McKenzie-Mohr - p.50-61

[O] www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT (browse)

Read ONE of the following:

[O] [Ryan R.M. & Deci, E.L.](#) (2000) Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 68-78.

[B] Winter & Koger - Ch. 4

Week 4

April 21 - Attitudes & Values

[B] Clayton & Myers - Ch. 2

[O] [Schultz, P.W. & Zelezny, L.](#) (2003). Reframing environmental messages to be congruent with American values. *Human Ecology Review*, 10(2), 126-136.

[O] [Horwich, J.](#) (2007, February 16). Does being green conflict with American culture? *Minnesota Public Radio*. Retrieved March 30, 2009 from <http://minnesota.publicradio.org>

April 23 - Persuasion

By noon the day of class, email me links to 2 of your favorite environmental ads.

[O/E] McKenzie-Mohr - p.38-48

[E] Aronson, E., Wilson, T.D., & Akert, R. (2007). *Social Psychology* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. - p.203-205

[E] Bator, R. & Cialdini, R. (2000). The application of persuasion theory to the development of effective proenvironmental public service announcements. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 527-541.

[B] Read one of the following chapters in Cialdini: 5, 6, or 7

Week 5 - April 28 & 30 - Social Norms

[B] Clayton & Myers - p.318-321 (top)

[B] Cialdini - Ch. 2 & 4

[O/E] McKenzie-Mohr - p.32-37

[O] [Roberts, J.O.](#) (2008, Dec 8). Luxury shame. *Newsweek*.

[O] www.dontmesswithtexas.org (browse)

[E] Cialdini, R. (2003) Crafting normative messages to protect the environment. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12, 105-109.

[E] Schultz, P.W., Nolan, J.M, Cialdini, R.B., Goldstein, N.J., & Griskevicius, V. (2007). The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms. *Psychological Science*, 18, 429-434.

[O] [Kaufman, L.](#) (2009, Jan 31). Utilities turn their customers green, with envy. *New York Times*. Retrieved January 31, 2009 from www.nytimes.com

Week 6

May 5 - Identity

[B] Clayton & Myers - Ch. 4

[B] Winter & Koger - p.193-202 (top)

May 7 - Commitment

[B] Cialdini - Ch. 3

[O/E] McKenzie-Mohr - p.18-25

[E] Dickerson, C. A., Thibodeau, R., Aronson, E., & Miller, D. (1992). Using cognitive dissonance to encourage water conservation. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 22, 841-854.

Note: The 3 short articles below should be read in order.

[O] [Tidwell, M.](#) (2007). Consider Using the N-Word Less: Voluntary actions didn't get us civil rights, and they won't fix the climate. *Grist.org*

[O] [Brook, A., Clayton, S., Myers, G. et al.](#) (2007). The power of voluntary actions: Social scientists respond to Mike Tidwell. *Grist.org*

[O] [Tidwell, M.](#) (2007). Forget the light bulbs: Part II: Tidwell responds to scientists responding to Tidwell. *Grist.org*

Week 7

May 12 - Project Part 1 Draft Presentations, Discussion, & Feedback

May 14 - Religious Identity and Conservation

Guest: Keith Warner (Religious Studies)

[O] Watch "Is God Green?": <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/moyersonamerica/green/watch.html>

[O] [Banerjee, N.](#) (2008, March 10). Southern Baptists Back a Shift on Climate Change. *The New York Times*.

[O] [Tucker, M.E. & Grim, J.](#) (2007). The greening of the world's religions. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(23), B9.

[O] [McKenna, B.](#) (2008, June 9). Survey: Support declines among some churchgoers on environmental rules. *Dallas Morning News*.

[O] [Vu, M.A.](#) (2008, May 16). Christians launch campaign against global warming hype. *Christian Post*.

[O] www.creationcare.org (browse)

Week 8

May 19 - Clashing Identities: Environmental Conflict

[B] Clayton & Myers - p.91-95(top)

[E] Bean, M. J., and D. S. Wilcove. 1997. The private-land problem. *Conservation Biology*, 11, 1-2.

[E] Brook, A.T., Zint, M. & DeYoung, R. (2003). Landowners' responses to an Endangered Species Act listing and implications for encouraging conservation. *Conservation Biology*, 17(6), 1638-1649.

[E] Opatow, S., & Brook, A. (2003). Identity and exclusion in rangeland conflict. In S. Clayton & S. Opatow (Eds.), *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature* (pp. 249-272). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[O] [Dunlap, R.E.](#) (2008, May 29). Climate-change views: Republican-democratic gaps expand. Retrieved March 13, 2009 from www.gallup.com

May 21 - Project Part 2 Draft Presentations, Discussion, & Feedback

Week 9

May 26 - Psychology of Environmental Justice and Fairness

Guest: Courtney Bonham (Stanford University)

[E] Krysan, M., Reynolds, F., Couper, M.P. (2008). In the Eye of the Beholder. *Du Bois Review*, 5(1): 5-26.

May 28 - Interactions with Nature

[B] Clayton & Myers - Ch. 6, 7, & 8

[B] Winter & Koger - p.149-151

[O] www.naturalearning.org (browse)

Week 10

June 2 - Field Trip to Ulistac!

June 4 - Project presentations and papers due