

ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
PSYCH 472 / NRES 472

FALL 2005 COURSE DESCRIPTION

Tues/Thur 10:00 to 11:15
Plant Sciences Lab, rm. 1103
Office Hours: Tues, Thur 11:15 to 12:30 or by appointment

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- Purpose:** The purpose of the course is to provide an overview of theory, research, and methods in environmental psychology. The course is structured to place an emphasis on learning to synthesize diverse information, to critically evaluate conceptual material and empirical studies, and to employ life experiences as well as substantive information in developing questions for theory and research in environmental psychology.
- Approach:** Class time will be divided among lectures, discussions, and student presentations. Assignments will include group and individual exercises. I will emphasize practicing oral presentation skills and developing a unique personal understanding of what environmental psychology means to the individual. A set of readings accompanies many of the topics. In lectures, I will supplement and clarify these readings, not reiterate them. Students are responsible for reading the assigned material and being prepared to discuss it. Students are also strongly encouraged to bring up relevant materials such as experiences or news reports for discussion.
- Organization:** The organization of this course is based on the definition of Environmental Psychology as the application of psychological principles, theories, and methods to the solution of environmental problems. We begin with basic topics such as science, theory, and history and then move to examine environmental issues from the psychological frameworks of cognitive psychology, behaviorism, social psychology, and intrapersonal psychology.
- Objectives:**
1. Students will master content and sharpen their critical thinking skills.
For a given topic or concept, students should learn to:
Give a succinct description (oral and written),
Identify and discuss empirical evidence testing, supporting, or applying the concepts,
Critically evaluate conceptual foundations and empirical studies.
Integrate the material with other course materials across the semester.
 2. Students will gain a grasp of the psychological underpinnings of the conserving individual and/or society.
 3. Students should develop a personal understanding of how the environment has affected and continues to affect them as individuals.
 4. Students will learn to use and recognize experience and curiosity as bases for scientific inquiry.
 5. Students will attempt to become more open-minded and tolerant of others' points of view, and also become a good collaborator.
- Exams:** Two midterm exams will be given. The exams will consist of essay questions. A set of questions will be given to you in advance and I will choose a subset for you to answer. The final exam will be a take-home essay test due before or during the final exam period.

Individual**Assignments:** In addition to class reading and participation, individual assignments to be completed will include:

1. Review and oral presentation of an article (of the student's choice) in one of several journals related to environmental psychology,
2. Preparation of a research proposal (group format).
3. Preparation of an environmental autobiography.
4. Development of discussion comments for selected readings and topics.
5. Several short assignments.

Discussion**comments:** As noted in the schedule below, written discussion comments are required for some topics. You are required to write discussion comments for the readings for eight of the ten designated topics. Please refer to the discussion comments handout for details on this assignment.**Group Project:** For the semester presentation you will work in small groups to develop a research proposal. The topic for your proposal is up to you, but must be given to me in writing. If you have firm ideas about topics on which you would like to work you should let me know as soon as possible. Each presentation will be allowed approximately 20 to 25 minutes during the last several class periods. Your presentation should be accompanied by a detailed written summary to be distributed to class members. Details for this assignment will be distributed and discussed in class.**Participation:** The ability to present and defend your ideas in group discussions is one of the most important skills you can develop in college. I expect students to be prepared to raise questions and make constructive comments regarding readings and lectures. Respect for others' ideas and comments is required.

Basis for Grade: <u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Points</u>
Midterm I	October 4	100
Midterm II	November 8	100
Final exam	December 14	50
Proposal presentation	Nov 29 – Dec 7	100
Environmental Autobiography	TBA	100
Journal assignment	as assigned	50
Discussion comments	as noted	80
Miscellaneous assignments various		50
Attendance	daily	25

Total points available		655

Grades will be assigned as follows: A = 90% or better, B = 80% to 89%, C = 70% to 79%, D = 60% to 69%, F = below 60%

Extra credit: Extra credit will be available for participation/attendance and for improvement. Please refer to the extra credit handout for additional information.

1. Extra credit for participation: Five points for enthusiastic and regular participation in class discussions. Evaluation of participation is necessarily subjective. I watch for hands in the air, of course, and also eye contact and responses when I ask questions of the class.
2. Extra credit for improvement: Five points. In order to earn these points I ask that you resubmit all of your discussion comment assignments and your two midterm exams. In

assigning these points I will look for clear evidence of improvement over time as well as for your responsiveness to my feedback on early assignments.

Texts: Winter, D. D., & Koger, S. (2004). *The Psychology of Environmental Problems (Second Edition)*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Collection of course readings available at Up Close Copies, 714 S. Sixth, Champaign, 384-7474.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- August 25** **Introductions**
Course Prospectus
What is Environmental Psychology?
- August 30** **People and Nature**

Syllabus/Handout quiz
- September 1** **The Psychology of Solving Environmental Problems**

** *Discussion comments are required for this topic* **

Text, Chapter 1
Text, Chapter 8, 211-216
- September 6** **Scientific Method, Theory, and Practice**

** *Journal assignment groups will be announced* **

** *Discussion comments are required for this topic* **

Gallagher, W. (1993). Chapter 1, The science of place, in *The Power of Place*. New York: Poseidon Press, 11-24.

Bell, P.A., Greene, T. C., Fisher, J.D. & Baum, A. (2001). Excerpt from Chapter 1: How is research in Environmental Psychology done?. *Environmental Psychology*, New York: Harcourt, 10-19.

Optional but strongly recommended: Becker, H. S. (1986). Freshman English for graduate students. In H. Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- September 8** **Environmental History**

** *Discussion comments are required for this topic* **

Winter, D. (2003). *Ecological Psychology (First Edition)*, Chapter 2.
- September 13** **Cognition: Environment Perception**

** *A copy of your journal article title and abstract is due*
- September 15** **Cognition: Environment Experience**

*** Discussion comments are required for the Walter reading only ***

Walter, E. V. (1988). Road to topistics. Chapter One of *Placeways*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 6-22.

Reread Gallagher, W. (1993). Chapter 1, The science of place, in *The Power of Place*. New York: Poseidon Press, 11-24.

September 20 Cognition: Information Processing and Environmental Values

*** Discussion comments are required for this topic ***

Text, Chapter 6, 154-175

Quammen, D. (1991). Dirty word, clean place. *Outside*.

Passell, P. (1993). Polls may help government decide the worth of nature. *New York Times*, 142.

Anonymous. (1990) A price on the priceless. *The Economist*, 61.

September 22 Cognition: Solving Environmental Problems

September 27 Cognition: Perceived Environmental Quality

September 29 Cognition: Risk Perception

Text, Chapter 2, 27-40

Text, Chapter 6, 175-184

October 4 Midterm I

**October 6 Behaviorism and Social: Conservation Behavior
Guest Lecturer Mindy Merrick**

Text, Chapter 3, 55-74, 78-86

Text, Chapter 4, 87-106, 108-120

Proposal ideas due in writing

October 11 Social: Commons Theory

*** Discussion comments are required for this topic ***

Text, Chapter 4, 106-108

Text, chapter 7, 188-190

October 13 TBA

October 18 Social: Cross-cultural Environmental Psychology

Altman, I. & Chemers, M.M. (1980). Excerpt from Chapter 1: Introduction. *Culture and Environment*, Monterey, CA: Wadsworth, 3-11.

Cristancho, S. (2001). Excerpt from *Letuama psychological representations of nature and human-nature interactions*. Unpublished M.S. thesis. Urbana: University of Illinois, 28-38.

October 20 Intrapersonal: Overview

*** Discussion comments are required for this topic ***

Text, Chapter 2, 40-54

*** Preliminary literature lists for proposal due ***

October 25 Intrapersonal: Affect and Emotion

October 27 Intrapersonal: Psychological Impact Assessment

*** Discussion comments are required for this topic ***

Text, Chapter 5.

November 1 Intrapersonal: Wilderness Psychology

Cronon, W. (1995). The trouble with wilderness. *The New York Times Magazine*, 42-43

November 3 Intrapersonal: Humans and Other Animals

Vining, J. (2003). Connection to other animals and caring for nature. *Human Ecology Review*, 10, 87-99.

November 8 Midterm II

November 10 Intrapersonal and Social: Ecofeminism

*** Discussion comments are required for this topic ***

Text, Chapter 3, 75-78

King, Y. (1989). The ecology of feminism and the feminism of ecology. In J. Plant (Ed.), *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 18-28.

Russell, J. S. (1990). The evolution of an ecofeminist. In I. Diamond and G. F. Orenstein (Eds.), *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 223-230.

Eichler, M. (1999). Sustainability from a feminist sociological perspective. In E. Becker & T. Jahn (Eds). *Sustainability and the Social Sciences*. Paris: UNESCO, 192-197.

November 15 Intrapersonal: Green Spirituality

*** Discussion comments are required for this topic ***

Text, Chapter 7, 193-210

Leopold, A. (1949). Thinking like a mountain. In *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford University Press.

Berry, T. (1988). Returning to Our Native Place. In *The Dream of the Earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 255-259.

Optional: Text, Chapter 7, 185-192

**November 17 Green Behavior
 Guest Lecturer Carol Morgan**

Text, 218-234

Text, Appendix, 256-267

November 29 Proposal Presentations

December 1 Proposal Presentations

December 5 Proposal Presentations

December 7 Proposal Presentations

December 14 Final Exam, 8:00 to 11:00 a.m.