

**Conservation Psychology**  
**Psyc 158/Envs 158**  
**(Spring 2007)**

**Course Room and Time: MW 2:15-4pm, Daly 202**

**Professor: Amara Brook**

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**Office Hours: MW 4:15-5:15pm (right after class), or by appointment**

**(For both email and phone, please allow at least 48 hours for a response.)**

**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, which will be due by noon the day of each class meeting. You will also complete two larger projects.

**GRADING:** The following will determine your course grade.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Discussion questions and in-class contributions | 40% |
| Self-change project                             | 20% |
| Conservation program design project             | 40% |

**READINGS:** Readings will be from several sources: Books, articles on e-res, articles handed out in class, articles available online through the library (accessible from links in the syllabus), and an email newsletter.

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

**[E]** Available on E-Res

**[H]** Handed out in class

**[O]** Online via link from syllabus (ctrl + click on author name(s); for some articles, you will have to log into the SCU library using your last name and access card number)

### Books:

Cialdini, R. (2004). *Influence: Science and practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Clayton, S. & Opatow, S. (2003). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

McKenzie-Mohr, D. & Smith, W. (2000). *Fostering sustainable behavior : An introduction to community-based social marketing*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

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

### 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>

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Two brief commentaries or questions about anything that you found especially surprising, interesting, or unclear in the reading (including *Daily Grist*), with page number(s) if possible. Include quotes from readings if appropriate. Commentaries may also include implications (in your view) of the reading for encouraging environmental conservation, including examples.

- The purpose of the discussion questions is to help you think about the readings and to focus our class discussions on topics of greatest interest to you. These must be emailed to me by 12 noon the day of class and should be about 1 double-spaced page. Please put your discussion questions in the body of the email, not as an attachment (to avoid filling up both of our mailboxes, and to avoid possible flagging as spam).
- Discussion questions and commentaries will be used to guide class discussion, so 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.

## **PROJECTS:**

- **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.
- **CONSERVATION PROGRAM DESIGN PROJECT** (in groups):
  - Imagine that you are a team of scientists employed by an environmental organization or government agency (or a group of students at SCU working to increase campus sustainability!). You will complete this project in a group of 2-3 students, with at least one ES major and one psych major, so you can benefit from each others' environmental and psychological expertise. You have been asked to design a program to address a specific environmental problem that is dependent on human behavior, such as global warming, habitat loss, etc. Your program should reduce a behavior harmful to the environment (for example, driving large vehicles), and/or increase an alternative behavior that is better for the environment (for example,

bicycling). If you can identify a specific organization that could potentially implement your program (SCU, SF Zoo, environmental group, government agency, etc, so much the better!).

- PART 1: Research the science and policy of the environmental issue, brainstorm potential psychological solutions, and propose a solution. Write a memorandum describing the problem you are addressing (ex: the impact of driving on global warming), and describing and justifying your program, in light of psychological theories and research, and the ways in which they have previously been applied. (About 5 pages, draft and short presentation in class due May 14)
- 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 1-2 pages, draft and short presentation in class due May 21)
- Powerpoint presentation (15-20 min) and final paper (8-10 pages) due last week of class.

### Discussion Topics and Reading List

#### Weeks 1 & 2 - Introduction to Conservation Psychology

##### April 4 - What's the problem?

[O] [ABC News/Time/Stanford Poll](#). (2006). Intensity spikes in concern on warming: Many see a change in weather patterns. March 14, 2006.

[O] [Oskamp, S.](#) (2000). A sustainable future for humanity? How can psychology help? *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 496-508.

Ecological Footprint (browse web pages, complete the EF questionnaire and record a) your results, and b) your reaction to them)

[O] [www.ecofoot.org](http://www.ecofoot.org)

[O] [www.rprogress.org/newprojects/ecolFoot/faq/index.html](http://www.rprogress.org/newprojects/ecolFoot/faq/index.html)

## **April 9 - What is Conservation Psychology?**

[O] [Saunders, C.](#) (2003). The emerging field of conservation psychology. *Human Ecology Review*, 10, 137-153.

[H] 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.

## **April 11 - Conservation Psychology Approaches**

[B] McKenzie-Mohr & Smith - Ch. 1

[O] [Monroe, M.C.](#) (2003). Two avenues for encouraging conservation behaviors. *Human Ecology Review*, 10, 113-125

[O] [Stern, P.C.](#) (2000). Psychology and the science of human-environment interactions. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 523-530.

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

## **Week 3 - April 16 & 18 - Cognition**

[B] Winter & Koger - Ch.3, 6 & p.149-51

[B] Cialdini - Ch. 1

## **Week 4 - April 23 & 25 - Attitudes & Values**

### **Attitudes**

[O] [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] Cialdini - Ch. 6,7, & 8

[B] McKenzie-Mohr & Smith - Ch. 4 & 6

## Values

- [O] [Dietz, T., Fitzgerald, A., & Shwom, R.](#) (2005). Environmental values. *Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour.*, 30, 335-372.
- [O] [Schultz, P.W. & Zelezny, L.](#) (2003). Reframing environmental messages to be congruent with American values. *Human Ecology Review*, 10(2), 126-136.

## Week 5 - April 30 & May 2 - External vs. Internal Motivation

### External Motivation

- [B] McKenzie-Mohr & Smith - Ch. 7-8
- [B] Winter & Koger - Ch. 4

### Internal Motivation

- [O] [DeYoung, R.](#) (2000). Expanding and evaluating motives for environmentally responsible behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 509-526.
- [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.
- [O] [Villacorta, M., Koestner, R., & Lekes, N.](#) (2003). Further validation of the Motivation Toward the Environment Scale. *Environment and Behavior*, 35, 486-505. [focus on introduction and discussion]
- [O] <http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT>

## **Week 6 - May 7 & 9 - Development of Environmental Concern and Identity**

### **Playing in Nature**

[E] Louv, R. (2005). Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder. Chapel Hill: Algonquin. (pp. 5-35).

[O] [Bixler, R. D., Floyd, M. F., & Hammitt, W. E.](#) (2002). Environmental socialization: Quantitative tests of the childhood play hypothesis. Environment and Behavior, 34, 795-818.

### **Developing Environmental Identity**

[B] Clayton & Opatow - Chapters 1 & 4-7

## **Week 7 - May 14 & 16 - Identity & Commitment**

### **Identity**

[B] Clayton & Opatow - Ch. 3, 14, & 15

[B] Winter & Koger - Ch. 7

### **Commitment**

[B] Cialdini - Ch. 3 & 5

[B] McKenzie-Mohr & Smith - Ch. 3

## **Week 8 - May 21 & 23 - Social Norms**

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

[B] Cialdini - Ch. 2 & 4

[B] McKenzie-Mohr & Smith - Ch. 5

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

[O] [www.dontmesswithtexas.org](http://www.dontmesswithtexas.org)

## **Week 9**

**May 28 - Memorial Day Holiday - no class**

**May 30 - Environmental Conflict**

[B] Clayton & Opatow - Chapters 12 & 13

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

[O] [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.

**Week 10 - June 4 & 6 - Project presentations and Wrap-up**