

Conservation Psychology

PSYCHOLOGY 338

CSU San Marcos
Summer 2005

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Course meets: MTWR 9-10:50

Classroom: UH 101

Dates: May 23 – July 2

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Overview: The field of psychology is the scientific study of behavior. Much of the discipline focuses on internal processes (like thoughts, motives, or feelings). However, in recent years psychologists have become increasingly sensitized to the many environmental conditions that affect people's behavior or are caused by people's behavior.

Conservation Psychology is the scientific study of the reciprocal relationship between human behavior and the natural environment. Conservation Psychology is an applied field, meaning that it involves the use of psychological principles, theories, or methods, to understand and solve a social issue.

The course will be divided into three sections, with each section followed by an exam. The first section of the course will examine the scientific evidence regarding a number of environmental issues, including global warming, ozone depletion, acid rain, destruction of rainforests, and depletion of natural resources like fresh water, oil, and metal deposits. For each of these issues, we will examine the specific behaviors that lead to these problems. The second section of the course will examine psychological factors associated with conservation behavior. We will examine such topics as the commons dilemma, rational choice, values, and incentives. The final section of the course will examine interventions designed to change human behavior. Topics covered in this module will include public transportation, recycling, and environmental education.

Objectives. This course will provide an overview of the basic knowledge, theories, and research methods that characterize the field of Conservation Psychology. After completing this course, you should:

- Understand the causes and consequences of environmental problems
- Understand the psychological factors that lead people to engage in conservation behavior
- Have a clear understanding of the approaches being used to promote conservation behavior.

Required Texts:

Gardner, G., & Stern, P. (2002). *Environmental problems and human behavior* (2nd). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Hertsgaard, M (1999). *Earth odyssey: Around the world in search of our environmental future*. New York: Broadway.

Recommended Texts:

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the APA*. Washington, DC: APA.

Brown, L. (2005). *State of the world: 2004*. New York: Worldwatch Institute.

Service Learning. This is a Service Learning course, meaning that part of the requirements for this course involves work on a community conservation project. The projects will be conducted at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. In addition to the in-class material presented through lecture, students will be required to spend a minimum of 10 hours per week working on service learning activities at the Wild Animal Park. I will allot 4 hours of class time per week for your work at the Park, but I expect that you will schedule an additional 6 hours per week to work on the Service Learning activities.

At the end of the semester, each group will present the findings from their observations in an oral report, and in a final paper. More information about these group projects is available on the attached handout.

Grades. Grades for the course will be based on two exams, a final research paper summarizing the methods and findings from your course project, and a final oral presentation summarizing your course project.

Exams	100 x 2 =	200
Service Learning Reflections (5 x 10) =		50
Oral reports	(2 x 25)	50
<u>Final paper</u>		<u>100</u>
Total		400

Course grades will be determined by the percentage of the total points possible.

A = 93-100%	B ⁻ = 80-82%	D ⁺ = 67-69%
A ⁻ = 90-92%	C ⁺ = 77-79%	D = 63-66%
B ⁺ = 87-89%	C = 73-76%	D ⁻ = 60-62%
B = 83-86%	C ⁻ = 70-72%	F = Below 60%

Exams. There will be two in-class midterm exams. Exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short-answer questions.

Course projects. During the semester, you will spend a minimum of 10 hours per week engaged in service learning activities. Projects will be conducted in groups, with each group supervised by the staff at their organization.

The activities for each week must be summarized in a weekly Reflection Essay. The reflection essay is simply a narrative summary of your service learning activities, and the ways in which the course materials relate to your service work. Reflection essays should be ~3 pages, double-spaced. There will be total of 5 Reflective Essays, each worth 10 points.

Oral report. As part of the requirements for this course, your research team will make two brief (15 minute) oral presentations to the staff at the Wild Animal Park. Although the presentations will be organized by group, grades will be determined separately for each student.

Final paper. At the end of the semester, each student will write a final paper summarizing the findings from their service learning activities. The paper should summarize the relevant background research and literature on environmental problems and on environmental education (drawing from course readings). The paper should then summarize their project, the findings from the observations (include the data from the entire group), and your conclusions and recommendations.

Attendance and Participation. Attending this class is mandatory. I do not have a set criterion for *good* attendance. This means you don't get any excused absences. At this education level, you should be able to attend every class session.

An important part of this course is your participation. This means that I expect you not only to be physically in the classroom, but to actively take part in class activities. I do **not** expect to lecture for the entire class period. Instead, I expect you to ask questions and actively engage in discussion. Throughout the course I will be asking students to participate in class demonstrations. These are intended to be fun and help make the abstract theories discussed in class more relevant to your lives. Again, I don't have any established criteria for *good* participation.

Drop Policy

You are responsible for attending class. Any student who does not attend the first day of class will be dropped, unless that student contacts me beforehand. If you wish to drop the course, **you must do so yourself** up until the drop deadline. If you do not drop before the deadline, you will receive a grade for the course.

Daily topics and readings are presented below on an approximate weekly schedule. Be aware that the dates are meant only as a guide. This is an ambitious outline of topics, and we will speed up or slow down in accordance with the level of understanding of the class.

Course Syllabus

Date	Topic	Service Activities	Readings from	
			Gardner	Hertsgaard
Week 1 (5/23)	Welcome, introductions, definitions, Service Learning		1	1, 2
5/24	The Wild Animal Park (presentation by Wild Animal Park Staff) and service learning projects	Orientation to Service Learning. Forms and Procedures.		
5/25	All about data: Evaluation, questionnaires, surveys, and observations.		3	
5/26	Meet with your research group at the Wild Animal Park	Contact staff and arrange initial meeting for Service Learning Projects		
Week 2 (5/30)	MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY			
(5/31)	Service learning projects (WAP)	Research Proposals to Staff at the WAP	8	5,6
(6/1)	Population and Pollution	Reflective Essay #1	9	3, 4
(6/2)	Service learning proposals, projects, and data collection (WAP)	Group training and codesheet/questionnaire development		
Week 3 (6/6)	Exam 1	Reflective Essay #2	2	7, 8
(6/7)	Continue data collection (WAP)			
(6/8)	Tragedy of the Commons		4	
(6/9)	Continue data collection (WAP)			
Week 4 (6/13)	Behavioral genetics-- Biophobia and biophilia—CORAL BRUNI	Reflection essay #3	5	
(6/14)	Continue data collection (WAP)			
(6/15)	Social Psychology and the attitudes approach – VBN Theory		6	
(6/16)	Continue data collection (WAP)			
Week 5 (6/20)	Rational choice and the motives for conservation behavior	Reflection essay #4	7	
(6/21)	Data collation and analysis (meet on campus)			
(6/22)	Environmental education and applications to specific behaviors		10	
(6/23)	Data collation and analysis (meet on campus)			
Week 6 (6/27)	Exam #2	Reflection essay #5	11	
(6/28)	Oral Presentations (WAP)			
(6/29)	Conclusions		12	
(6/30)	Oral presentations (WAP)			

Final Papers are due by 3 PM on Thursday, June 30.