

**SOP 4712 B52**

**Environmental Psychology**  
**Sorah Dubitsky, Ph.D., Instructor, Psychology Department**  
**Biscayne Bay Campus**

**Spring 2009 Syllabus**

**Class Hours:** MWF 1:00PM-1:50PM

**Room:** AC1 265

**Office Hours:** MWF 2:00-3:30pm

**Office:** AC 1 365A

**Email:** Instructor on SOP 4712 Blackboard web site

**Phone:** 305-919-5867 (Psych Dept.)

**Note: Any part of this syllabus is subject to change at any time. All changes will be announced in class and posted on the SOP 4712 Web site.**

**Required Reading:**

**Books: The following books will be read in their entirety**

Kingsolver, B. (2007). *Animal, vegetable, miracle: A year of food life*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

McKibben, B. (2007). *Deep economy*. NY: Holt Paperbacks.

Quinn, D. (1995). *Ishmael: An adventure of the mind and spirit*. NY: Bantam Books.

Winter, D. & Koger, S. (2004). *The psychology of environmental problems* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

**Book Chapters: All book chapters are on reserve in the library, under my name and/or course number.**

Bell, P.A., Greene, T.C., Fisher, J.D., Baum, A. (2001). Nature and human nature. In *Environmental Psychology* (pp 23-54). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Feygina, I., Goldsmith, R.E., & Jost, J. T. (in press). System justification and the disruption of environmental goal-setting: A self-regulatory perspective. In R.R. Hassin, K. Oschhner & Y. Trope (Eds.) *Social cognition and the social neuroscience series*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, G.T & Stern, P.C. (2002). Environmental problems as tragedies of the commons. In *Environmental problems and human behavior* (2d ed.) (pp 21-32). Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.

Gifford, R. (2002). Making a difference: Some ways environmental psychology has improved the world. In *Handbook of environmental psychology*. R. Bechtel & A. Churchman (eds.). New York: J. Wiley & Sons.

Gifford R. (2007). The nature and scope of environmental psychology. In *Environmental psychology* (pp. 1-21). Colville, WA: Optimal Books.

Nickerson, R.S. (2003). The problem. In *Psychology and environmental change* (pp 12-46) Mahwah, NJ. Lawrence Erlbaum.

**Journal articles by topic: All Journal Articles are available for download either from PSYCHINFO on the FIU library or from the SOP 4712 Blackboard web site.**

### **Conservation Psychology and Ecopsychology**

Clayton, S. & Brook, A. (2005). Can psychology help save the world? A model for conservation psychology. *Analysis of social Issues and Public Policies*, 5, 87-102

Reser, J.P. (1995). Whither environmental psychology? The transpersonal ecopsychology crossroads. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. 18, 235-257.

### **Environmental Problems**

Rotton, J. & Cohen, E. (2003). Global warming and U.S. crime rates: An application of routine activity theory. *Environment and Behavior*, 35, 802-825.

Hardin, G. (December 13, 1968). The Tragedy of the Commons, *Science*. Downloaded 8/30/08. [www.garretthardingsociety.org](http://www.garretthardingsociety.org).

### **Health**

Frumkin, H. (2001). Beyond toxicity and the natural environment. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 20, 234-239.

### **Nature and Nature as Therapy**

Berger, R. (2008). Building a home in nature: an innovative framework for practice. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. 48, 264-279

Frantz, C., Mayer, F.S. Norton, C., Rock, Mindi (2005). There is no "I" in nature: The influence of self-awareness on connectedness to nature. *Environmental Psychology*. 25, 427-436.

Mayer, F. S., McPherson Frantz, D. (2004). The connectedness to nature scale: A measure of individuals feeling in community with nature. *Environmental Psychology*. 24, 503-513.

### **Sustainability**

Gardner, G.T. & Stern, P.C. (2008). The short list: The most effective actions U.S. Households can take to curb climate change. Environment. [www.environmentmagazine.org](http://www.environmentmagazine.org)

Gifford, R. (2007). Environmental psychology and sustainable development: Expansion, maturation, and challenges. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63, 199-212.

Heath, Y. & Gifford, R., 2006. Free-market ideology and environmental degradation: The case of belief in global climate change. *Environment and Behavior*, 38, 48-71

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

**All book chapters are on reserve in the library. Journal articles can be downloaded from the designated journals or they will be available on the SOP 4712 web site.**

**I. Course Description:** This course will serve as an introduction to the study of human-environment transactions. After a brief introduction to the history and scope of Environmental Psychology research, we will examine the role that human behavior has taken in contributing to environmental problems. We will look at psychology's major theoretical perspectives and see how they apply to environmentally-linked behavior. We will focus on the field of Conservation Psychology which includes consumer and sustainable behaviors and the environment/health link. We will also look at changes we can make as individuals and as a society to help protect our environment. The course is divided into seven modules or major themes. The modules are as follows:

**Module 1:** Introduction overview and history

**Module 2:** Attitudes toward nature

**Module 3:** Environmental Problems

**Module 4:** Environmental problems as tragedy of the commons and underpinnings

**Module 5:** The Psychology of Environmental Problems

**Module 6:** Conservation and Ecopsychology

**Module 7:** Environment and Health

**Module 8:** Sustainability

## **II. Course Objectives:**

1. Develop an appreciation for the history and scope of environmental psychology
2. Become aware of how human health and well-being cannot be separated from environmental quality.
3. To be aware of the current status of the environment.
4. To understand the role that behavior as it impinges upon the environment.
5. To critically examine the assumptions on which human behavior towards the environment are based.
6. Apply major psychological theories and/or perspectives to understand why humans behave the way they do towards the environment.
7. To understand that sustainability will require behavioral change and whether those changes affect the quality of your life.
8. To commit to adapting at least one sustainability-related behavior all semester and become aware of its consequences.

### III. Course Requirements:

1. **This is a discussion based class and so you must have read and thoughtfully considered** assigned readings, before coming to class. This class will be highly interactive and will rely on student input. Students are also expected to stay current on environmental issues as they relate to global climate change, environmental destruction, and/or human health and well-being. Students will discuss these issues in relation to research or theoretical perspectives found in assigned readings.

Since this class deals with the environment, from time-to-time, whenever the weather is agreeable, and with students' consent, we will sit outside so you might want to bring a towel, chair, or blanket accessible to you!

2. **Class discussion topics:** Students must be able to discuss from the perspective of the following:
  - a. What is the main point of each reading?
  - b. Does the reading deepen your understanding of the application of psychology to every day problems, in particular to environmental problems we are facing?
  - c. How does the reading contribute to your understanding of the behavior/environment interaction?
  - d. Does the reading offer insight into the extent to which our views of self and happiness relate to our attitudes and beliefs about nature and the environment, and (4) changes we can make as individuals, and as a society, to help protect the environment.
  - e. Does the reading provide any insight or action points for behavioral change?
  - f. Is the assigned reading related to any current environmental issues?
  - g. How does adapting sustainable behaviors related to the reading?
3. **Course Project:** You will commit to adapting at least one sustainability-related behavior consistently all semester. In order to become aware of the consequences of the behavior, you are to keep a journal of it in which you record every time you performed that behavior and what happened as a result. Sustainable behaviors include: recycling, using canvas bags for shopping instead of paper or plastic, not purchasing any beverages in plastic bottles, maintaining correct tire pressure, carpool, etc. For other suggestions, read the Gardner & Stern (2008) paper.

In addition to discussing your reactions to engaging in sustainability-related behaviors, you are to write a summary of how you have or haven't changed as a result of taking this class. What did you learn about the environment? What did you learn about yourself? Are you more or less willing to adjust your behavior in reaction to changing environmental and economic conditions? What are you taking away from this class? Again, your summary paper will be 4-typed, double space pages. Use MLA format. All papers will be uploaded to Turnitin.com (link and instructions will be posted on the SOP 4712 Blackboard web site). The paper will be due on April 3. Late papers will not be accepted.

**4. Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. An attendance sheet will be passed around in each class which students will be required to initialize. Students who have perfect attendance will have 5 bonus points added to their possible point score. Students who have more than one absence will have five points deducted from their possible point scores.

**5. Participation:** Participation in class discussions, exercises, experiments, and/or thought experiments is an integral part of the college experience. Students are expected to come to class ready to be fully engaged. You are encouraged to answer and ask questions, cite relevant examples, and, in general, contribute to the quality of discourse. Your visibility in class will contribute toward a favorable assessment and will factor into your final grade (see Section 9 for of this syllabus: Criteria for Grading).

**6. Exams:** There will be three exams, including a non-cumulative final exam given during finals week. Each exam is worth 100 points. Make-up exams will not be given. Missed exams will receive a grade of zero. The exams are based on all text readings, additional readings, and material covered in class. An exam review will be posted on the Blackboard SOP 4712 web site before each exam.

#### **IV. Additional information**

**1. Extra Credit:** Extra credit will not be offered.

**2. Web page:** Course syllabus, relevant web links, additional reading assignments, notes, announcements, etc. will be found on the SOP 4712 BLACKBOARD web site. For information about how to log on to the web site, go to <http://online.fiu.edu/>.

Students should make it a habit of logging onto the web site. All announcements, assignments, changes in schedule, exam reviews, etc. etc. are posted on the web site. You will also find additional readings and/or links that will be required for class discussion and exams.

**3. Scholarly Conduct:** In-class behavior must contribute to a positive learning environment. Participation is highly encouraged; however disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Side conversations are distracting. If you must talk to the person sitting next to you, please step outside. Any student who exhibits unscholarly behavior after being given a warning will be assigned a failing grade in the course.

**4. Cell Phones and Laptops:** Cell Phones and beepers are to be turned off before entering class.

Students with laptops will be required to sit in the first row. Laptops can only be used for taking notes or for accessing the SOP 4712 Blackboard web site. If laptops are being used for any other purposes, students will be required to turn them off and put them away.

**5. Students with Disabilities** – Disability services are available for those who need them. Please notify me, via email, if this is a concern of your.

**6. Grading Procedure:**

1. Exam I	100 points
2. Exam II	100 points
3. Exam III	100 points
4. Participation	40 points
5. Course Project	100 points
Total Possible Points	440 points

**7. Final Grade Assignment:**

Your numeric performance final grade will be calculated by dividing the total number of points you've earned by the total number of possible points. However your numeric performance grade can be augmented by the Grading Criteria outlined in Section V of this syllabus.

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

**8. Assigned Reading and Exam Schedule (NOTE: This schedule is subject to change. Any and all changes will be announced in class and posted on the DEP 3305 BLACKBOARD web site. It is your responsibility to stay aware of any changes in the reading and/or exam schedule):**

January 5	Module introduction overview and history History Using BLACKBOARD CE6 Gifford chapter: The nature and scope of environmental psychology
January 7	Introduction cont'd Gifford chapter
January 9	Gifford Chapter; Making a difference: Some ways environmental psychology has improved the world. History and Background How it has improved the world
January 12	<b>Module two attitudes toward nature</b> Bell chapter: Nature and human nature
January 12	<b>Last day to complete late registration. Drop/Add Period ends; last day to drop courses or withdraw from the University without incurring a financial liability. Last day to change grading option.</b>

January 14	Frantz, Mayer et al.: There is no I in nature
January 16	Mayer & MacPherson: The connectedness to nature scale
January 19	<b>Martin Luther King Holiday University Closed</b>
January 21	<b>Module three Environmental Problems</b> Nickerson: the problem
January 23	<b>Environmental problems</b> Rotton & Cohen: Global warming and U.S. crime rates
January 26	<b>Module 4: Environmental problems as tragedy of the commons and underpinnings</b> Hardin, G.: The tragedy of the commons
January 28	Gardner & Stern Environmental problems as tragedy of the commons
January 30	Freygina, et al.: Justification theory
<b>January 30</b>	<b>Last day to withdraw from the University with a 25% refund of tuition.</b>
<b>February 2</b>	<b>Exam I</b>
February 4	<b>Module 5 The Psychology of Environmental Problems</b> Quinn: Ishmael
February 6	Quinn
February 9	Quinn
February 11	Winter & Koger: The Psychology of Environmental Problems Preface and Chapter 1
February 11	Winter & Koger: Preface and Chapter 1
February 13	Winter & Koger: Chapter 2
February 16	Winter & Koger: Chapter 2
February 18	Winter & Koger: Chapter 3
February 20	Winter & Koger: Chapter 3
February 23	Winter & Koger: Chapter 4

February 25	Winter & Koger: Chapter 4
<b>February 27</b>	<b>Last day to drop a course with a DR grade. Last day to withdraw from the university with a WI grade</b>
<b>February 27</b>	Winter & Koger: Chapter 6
March 2	Winter & Koger: Chapter 6
<b>March 4</b>	<b>Exam II</b>
March 6	<b>Module 6 Ecopsychology and Conservation Psychology</b> Clayton & Brook journal, Can psychology help save the world? A model for conservation psychology Winter & Koger Chapter 7
March 9	Winter & Koger Chapter 7
<b>March 11</b>	<b>Last day to drop a course with a DR grade. Last day to withdraw from the University with a WI grade.</b>
<b>March 11</b>	Reser: Whither Environmental Psychology?
<b>March 16-21</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
March 23	<b>Module 7</b> Winter & Koger Chapter 5 Health
<b>March 25</b>	<b>Exam II in class objective test</b>
March 27	Winter & Koger Chapter 5
March 30	Kingsolver: Animal, vegetable miracle
April 1	Kingsolver
April 3	Kingsolver <b>Projects due. Late projects will not be accepted</b>
<b>April 6</b>	<b>Module 8 – Environmental Sustainability and changing behavior</b> Winter & Koger Chapter 7: Holistic Approaches Roszak's principles (from Reser, 1995)
April 8	Winter & Koger Chapter 7: Holistic Approaches Vess & Arndt: The nature of death and the death of nature:

April 10	Winter & Koger Chapter 8: Putting it all together
April 13	Berger: Building a home in nature: an innovative framework for Practice – we will meet outdoors Heath & Gifford: Free market ideology and degradation
April 15	Reser: Whither Environmental Psychology?
April 17	Schultz & Zeleny: Reframing environmental messages to be congruent with American values Elgin: The garden of simplicity (revisited)
<b>April 20</b>	<b>Monday 4/20/2009 12:00-2:00pm A I 265</b>

### **V. Dr. Dubitsky's Criteria for Grading Students.**

**A numeric percentage is only one component of your final grade assessment. Listed below is a description of the composite criteria I will be using.** Not all students excel in all areas of academia. For that reason I use a variety of criteria to assess student performance. The assignment of final grades takes all of the following into account.

#### **A Students:**

1. Consistently excels in all aspects of academics
2. Receives 90 or better on all exams
3. Submits written work that demonstrates a depth of understanding and interest in exploring the material deeply; critical thinking and analysis: ability to synthesize various perspectives to generate new avenues of inquiry
4. Attends every class prepared to be fully engaged in the material.
5. Participates in discussion
6. Asks questions
7. Arrives on time
8. Makes an attempt to communicate with an instructor about the material presented by showing interest.
9. Retains enthusiasm for the course and coursework throughout the semester.
10. Loves to learn
11. Hands in all assignments on time.

**The key to the above is consistency**

#### **B students:**

1. Shares many attributes of an A student, however his or her performance isn't consistent.
2. Test grades would be more variable or consistently be in the 80+ range.
3. His or her written work would be shallower. There would also be errors in formatting or grammar. The writing would not flow as smoothly as that of an A student
4. Some assignments are handed in late

5. Misses classes for reasons other than illness.

**C students:**

1. Demonstrates average performance.
2. Test grades would be in the 70s range.
3. The student is absent more frequently than either A or B students
4. The student's written work is more superficial. The writing doesn't generate excitement. There would be formatting errors and errors in grammar and citations. Written work has a minimal amount of effort and thought. The written work displays a lack of appreciation of course content.
5. Assignments are handed in late.
6. A C student is more likely to wait until later in the semester to find ways of boosting his or her grades

**D students:**

1. Performance is **below average**.
2. Test grades would be in the 60s range
3. The student would have more absences than A, B, or C students.
4. The student is barely engaged.
5. The student comes late to class
6. Assignments are late; some assignments may be missing
7. Written work is filled with errors and shows little appreciation for the content. Material is inappropriately cited or not cited at all. The paper does not meet the minimum requirements that had been set.
8. A D student either waits until the end of the semester to find out how he or she can boost a grade, or never bothers to discuss her class performance with the instructor

**F students:**

1. Fails to demonstrate any proficiency with course material.
2. Test grades are below 59
3. The student is completely unengaged in course work
4. The student is frequently absent
5. He or she is frequently late
6. Assignments are either late or not handed in at all
7. Written work that is turned in fails to meet the assignments minimum requirements. The work is filled with errors, inappropriate citations, and/or plagiarized. Inappropriate source material is used.

**FIU CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

<http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm>

This Code of Academic Integrity was adopted by the Student Government Association on November 28, 2001 and reflects the values articulated in the Student Code of Standards. Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of Florida International University.

**Pledge**

**As a student of this university:**

- § I will be honest in my academic endeavors.**
- § I will not represent someone else's work as my own.**
- § I will not cheat, nor will I aid in another's cheating.**

All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Note: In accordance with University policy and procedures, any student caught cheating or helping another student to cheat will automatically fail this course. Further disciplinary action may also be taken.**

**Disciplinary action and procedures found on <http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html>**