

Course Syllabus
Psych 220: Environmental Problems and Human Behavior
MWF 9:30-11:00

Instructor: Bob Riesenb, Ph.D., CSW

Office Hours: LDC 222; MWF 11:15 - 12:15; T-Th 12:30-1:20

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Required books:

Gardner, G. T. & Stern, P. C. (2002). *Environmental problems and human behavior*, 2nd ed. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing. 371 pp. ISBN: 0-536-68633-5

Recommended:

Allen, J. L. (most recent edition). *Annual Editions: Environment 06-07*. Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw Hill. ISBN: 0-07-283851-5.

World Watch Institute. (2006). *State of the World 2006*. New York: Norton pub. ISBN: 0-393-32386-2

Goldfarb, T. D. (most recent). *Sources: Notable selections in environmental studies* Guilford, CT: Dushkin/McGraw Hill.

A sample of web sites relevant to the course:

1. Instructor's faculty web page: <http://faculty.whatcom.etc.edu/briesenb/>
2. Dushkin Online for *Annual Editions Environment*:
<http://www.dushkin.com/online/get-isbn.mhtml?isbn=0072506822>
3. Environmental News Network: <http://www.enn.com/>
4. Environmental News Service: <http://ens.lycos.com/>
5. Yahoo! Directory for Environment and Nature:
http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Environment_and_Nature/
6. The David Suzuki Foundation, a on-profit education and scientific organization based in Canada devoted to identifying and promoting public knowledge of ecological issues and sustainable societies: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/>
7. The Earth Times Monthly: <http://www.earthtimes.org/>
8. The Earth Policy Institute: <http://www.earth-policy.org/>
9. The Electronic Green Journal, an academic publication from the University of Idaho featuring research on international environmental issues: <http://egi.lib.uidaho.edu/>
10. The League of Conservation Voters, a non-profit organization tracking the voting records and political views of elected officials on environmental issues:
<http://www.lcv.org/>
11. The Legacy of Aldo Leopold who was a major founding influence on the modern environmental movement by describing the relationship of human well-being to ecological well-being. The web site is maintained by the U.S, Forest Service where he served as one of the first rangers and later as a professor at the University of Wisconsin: <http://www.fs.fed.us/eco/eco-watch/ew950111.htm>

12. Natural Connections, educational web site of King County Dept. of Natural Resources: http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/naturalconnections/big_picture.htm
13. National Public Radio: <http://www.npr.org>
14. The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation: <http://www.cec.org/home/index.cfm?varlan=english>
15. Northwest Ecosystem Alliance: <http://www.ecosystem.org/>
16. The Sierra Club: <http://www.sierraclub.org/>
17. Report from the Heinz Center “The State of the Nation’s Ecosystems”:
<http://www.heinzctr.org/ecosystems/index.htm>
18. The United Nations Environmental Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre: <http://www.unep-wcmc.org/>
19. The World Resources Institute report on the status of the world’s ecosystems titled *World Resources 2000-01: the Fraying of the Web of Life*. The report was compiled by the United Nations Environmental Programme, United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, and the World Resources Institute. It examines the agriculture’s impact on ecosystems and the status of marine, forest, freshwater and grassland ecosystems.
20. <http://www.wri.org/wri/wr2000/index.html>
21. The Wild Washington Campaign is a political action and education organization dedicated to protecting wildlands in Washington state:
<http://www.wildwashington.org/>
22. The Wildlands Project, an organization dedicated to rebuilding of intact ecosystems throughout North America founded by Dave Foreman who also founded Earth First!:
<http://www.wild-earth.org/>
23. Earth Island Institute’s web site devoted to the work of a modern environmentalist, the late David Brower at <http://www.earthisland.org/brower/index.cfm>
24. The Worldwatch Institute is the publisher of the State of the World series and many other reports. It describes itself as a “source of information on the interactions among key environmental, social, and economic trends. Our work revolves around the transition to an environmentally sustainable and socially just society—and how to achieve it.” The web site is at: <http://www.worldwatch.org/>
25. The United States Environmental Protection Agency at <http://www.epa.gov/>
26. Until two years ago this web site was the definitive source for global warming and renewable energy information which was prominently displayed on the home page. Try to find it now (beyond a summary of the President’s Clear skies Initiative which lightens many current restrictions on air pollution and global warming gases). While this web site has accurate information, I cannot recommend it any longer as the one best source for information on environmental problems and possible solution alternatives. It is a good source for information on the current administration’s priorities on environmental issues, but not for a survey of the scientific knowledge and range of solutions.
27. The Earth Charter Initiative mission statement from the web site: “The Earth Charter is an authoritative synthesis of values, principles, and aspirations that are widely shared by growing numbers of men and women in all regions of the world. The principles of the Earth Charter reflect extensive international consultations conducted over a period of many years. These principles are also based upon contemporary

science, international law, and the insights of philosophy and religion. Successive drafts of the Earth Charter were circulated around the world for comment and debate by nongovernmental organizations, community groups, professional societies, and international experts in many fields.” <http://www.earthcharter.org/>

Course Description: This course meets the requirements for Social Science Distribution and as a Global Diversity course (g).

This course will focus on the application of environmental psychology paradigms and theories to understand the causes and potential solution strategies to present day environmental problems in Whatcom County, Washington State, the United States, and the globally. Many environmental problems have their origin in human behavior, and psychology is uniquely equipped to identify avenues for behavioral change. The cognitive-behavioral perspective will be emphasized in understanding these issues. The global perspective reflects the reality of the planet’s ecosystems which are impacted across political and cultural boundaries. Also, the global perspective enables us to understand our own behavior’s causes and effects on the planet’s ecosystem in relationship to the values, attitudes, and lifestyles in other cultures.

Environmental Psychology as a discipline studies the transaction between humans and our many environments. It’s perspective is interdisciplinary and global. It utilizes paradigms, theories, and research from a wide array of disciplines including psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, and biology to understand the myriad of influences human behavior as it relates to environmental impacts.

Whatcom Community College Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives:

1. To apply environmental psychology theories and paradigms to understand the transaction of humans and their environments (Knowing and Relating).
2. To explain the role of human cognitive processes, attitudes and behaviors in the origins of and solutions to environmental problems. (Thinking and Relating)
3. To apply psychological concepts to the design of intervention programs to alleviate environmental problems. (Relating)
4. Identify the cognitive-behavioral change strategies that will move societies and the individual student toward sustainable lifestyles for the planet’s ecosystems. (Relating and Integrating)
5. To access and critique research literature and mass media information pertaining to origins of environmental problems and strategies for alleviating those problems as they relate to human behavior. (Thinking)
6. Each student will compare and contrast his/her attitudes and behavior with those necessary for the global ecosystem’s sustainability and identify areas and strategies for changing his/her behaviors. (Integrating)

Course Requirements:

1. Read the assigned materials (knowing and thinking).
2. Attend classes. (knowing, thinking, relating, communicating)
3. Complete three exams based upon assigned readings and class discussions (knowing, thinking, relating).
4. Present three reading assignments relevant to environmental issues and environmental

psychology, and lead a discussion of the related issues. Post a summary of each article in a web site for all to read. (knowing, communicating, relating)

Presentation and discussion of readings and web sites (75 points) (Knowing, thinking, communicating, relating)

Articles will be assigned from the most recent editions of *State of the World*, and *Annual Editions Environment*, and possibly others sources as they come to the instructor's attention. These readings will describe the current environmental problems from a global perspective, and will complement the textbook (*Environmental Problems and Human Behavior*, 2nd ed.) with information about environmental issues and problems. The student will provide a thorough summary and lead discussion of three articles in class. These article summaries will serve as the basis for discussion in class and for questions on the exam. The class needs each of us to do a thorough job of summarizing the articles. More detailed instructions will be presented in-class. (3 presentations @ 25 points = 75 points)

In-class exams (300 points) (knowing, thinking, relating)

Three in-class exams will be completed during the quarter. The material to be covered in the exam will be from the assigned text readings and the readings presentations by students and the instructor. The exams will be graded for the degree of understanding of the concepts and clarity of communication represented in the completed exam. (3 @ 100 points = 300 points)

Attendance (29 classes @ 5 points = 145 points)

Attendance will be taken in each class and will contribute about 1/4 of the course grade. Much of the course content will be discussed during the classes and will provide an integrative framework from an environmental psychology perspective for the variety of readings.

Course Grades

Three article in-class presentations and online summaries @ 25 points = 75 points;

Three exams @ 100 points = 300 points.

Attendance 29 @ 5 points = 145 points.

Total = 545 points.

A = 90%; B = 80-89%; C = 70-79%; D = 60-69%.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Weeks 1 & 2

Introduction to the course, the readings, and discussion of environmental issues impacted by human behavior.

Textbook Chap. 1: The earth's environmental problems and the role of human behavior.

State of the World Chap. 1: A history of our future

Videos: KCTS Seattle "Affluenza"

PBS Bill Moyers Reports "Earth on the Edge"

Web site #20: The World Resources Institute report on the status of the world's ecosystems titled *World Resources 2000-01: the Fraying of the Web of Life*.

<http://www.wri.org/wri/wr2000/index.html>

Articles:

- "Ideas Matter: A political history of 20th century environmentalism" by J.R. McNeill, in *Current History*, November 2000.
- "Windows on the Future: Global Scenarios and Sustainability" by Gallopin, G.C. & Raskin, P. (1998, April) *Environment*, 40, (3) 6-18.
- "Crossing the threshold: early signs of an environmental awakening" by Lester R. Brown in *World Watch*, March/April 1999.
- Articles from *The Economist*, July 6, 2002 (AE-03 #1)
- "How many planets?"; "Flying blind"; "Blowing hot and cold".
- "Local difficulties"; "Working miracles"; The invisible green hand; "Insuring a brighter future".
- "Forget nature. Even Eden is Engineered" by Andrew C. Revkin, *New York Times*, August 20, 2002. (AE-03 #2)

Week 3

Textbook Chap. 2: Environmental problems as tragedies of the commons

Video: "The River"

Articles:

- "Crimes of a Global Nature" by Lisa Mastny & Hilary French in *World Watch*, Sept/Oct. 2002. (AE-03 #3)
- "The human impact on climate" by T.R. Karl and K.E. Trenberth in *Scientific American*, December 1999. (AE-02 #26).
- "Life in the greenhouse" by M.D. Lemonick in *Time*, April 9, 2001. (AE-03 #22)

Audio clips on The Kyoto Treaty: Listen to these audio clips from NPR Morning Edition and All Things Considered. Go to The National Public Radio web site at

<http://www.npr.org/>, click on Audio Archives in the center of the homepage, and then enter the keywords "Kyoto Treaty" in the search window that appears in the center of the audio archive web page. You will see about 12 links to audio clips from NPR news programs. Each clip last about 4 minutes. Listen to the clips from these dates: March 28, 2001, June 14, 2001, and July 19, 2001. Listen to more if you want.

Week 4

Textbook Chap. 3: Religious and moral approaches: changing values, beliefs, and worldviews.

State of the World Chap. 8: Engaging religion in the quest for a sustainable world.

Video: “Mindwalk”

Articles:

- Stewards of the Earth; Jim Motavalli; *E : the Environmental Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2002; Vol. 13, Iss. 6; pg. 24, 14 pgs
- Conversations: John Grim: Transforming religions; Jim Motavalli; *E : the Environmental Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2002; Vol. 13, Iss. 6; pg. 30, 2 pgs
- Conversations: Paul Gorman: Making spiritual connections; Jim Motavalli; *E : the Environmental Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2002; Vol. 13, Iss. 6; pg. 32, 2 pgs.
- Worldly wonder: Religions enter an ecological phase; Mary Evelyn Tucker; *E : the Environmental Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2002; Vol. 13, Iss. 6; pg. 36, 3 pgs

First Exam

Week 5

Textbook Chap. 4: Educational interventions: changing attitudes and providing information

State of the World Chap. 2: “Watching birds disappear”.

Video: King County Dept. of Natural Resources “Natural Connections”

Articles

- “What is nature worth?” by E.O. Wilson in *The Wilson Quarterly*, Winter 2002, p. 20-39. (AE-03 # 15)
- Excerpt from *The Diversity of Life* by E.O. Wilson, the renowned Harvard biologist, describing the impact of humans on species extinction:
<http://raysweb.net/specialplaces/pages/wilson.html>
- “A fragile cornucopia: assessing the status of U.S. biodiversity” by Bruce A. Stein, *Environment*, September 2001.

Week 6

Video: “Baraka” (on reserve in the library) and online discussion.

Week 7

Textbook Chap. 5: Changing the incentives

State of the World Chap. 5: "Charting a new energy future"

Articles:

- "An economy for the earth". by Lester R Brown; in *The Humanist*, May/June 2002; pg. 31, 4 pgs (AE-03 #6)
- "The eco-economic revolution: getting the market in sync with nature." By Lester R Brown; in *The Futurist*, Washington; Mar/Apr 2002, pg. 23, 10 pgs (AE-03 #7)
- "Energy: a brighter future?" in *The Economist*, Feb. 10, 2001. (AE-03 #10)
- "Beyond oil: the future of energy" by Fred Guerl, Adam Piore, & William Underhill, Newsweek, *April 15, 2002 (AE-03 #11)*
- "Renewable energy: a viable choice" by Antonia V. Herzog, Timothy E. Lipman, Jennifer L. Edwards, Daniel M. Kammen. *Environment*, December 2001
- "Fossil fuels and energy independence" by B. Samuel Tanenbaum. *The World & I*, May 2002
- The following three articles are in *E The Environmental Magazine*, January/February 2003.
 - "The hydrogen economy" by Jeremy Rifkin, p. 26
 - "Power plays" by Jim Motavalli, p. 32.
 - "Hijacking hydrogen" by Jim Matavalli, p. 38

Audio clips: Listen to these audio clips from NPR and review the web site for reviews of the President's energy plan. (You need Real Player for the audio clips from NPR. The NPR web site provides links to download Real Player for free. You need not pay anything for audio material for this course.)

- NPR Morning Edition "Bush's Energy Plan", 5/18/01
- http://search.npr.org/cf/cmn/segment_display.cfm?segID=123091
- NPR Morning Edition "In America, More is Better", 5/18/01.
http://search.npr.org/cf/cmn/segment_display.cfm?segID=123102
- NPR Morning Edition "Energy Bill Passes". 8/2/01
http://search.npr.org/cf/cmn/segment_display.cfm?segID=126827

For a review of the President's energy plan from the point of view of an environmental organization, peruse a couple of the links on the Sierra Club's Energy web page: <http://www.sierraclub.org/energy/>

Second Exam

Week 8

Textbook Chap. 6: Community Management of the commons

Articles:

- “All the wild rivers” by Curtus Ruyan in *World Watch*, Jan-Feb 2001. (AE-03 #19)
- “Growing more food with less water” by Sandra Postel, in *Scientific American*, Feb. 2001 (AE-03 #20)
- “Oceans are on the critical list” by Anns P. McGinn, *USA Today Magazine*, January 2000 (AE-03 #21)
- “Making every drop count” by Peter H. Gleick in *Scientific American*, Feb. 2001, pp. 40-45. (AE-02 #23)

Week 9a

Written lecture: “Is change really possible in human behavior and environmental issues?”

Textbook Chap. 7: Combining the solutions strategies

State of the World Chap. 3: Linking population, Women, and biodiversity.

Video: PBS "An Interview with David Brower"

Articles:

- Messer, K.D. (2000). Can shade-grown coffee help conserve tropical biodiversity? *Endangered Species Update*, 17, (6) 125-131

Web sites #16 through 23.

Week 9b

Textbook Chap. 8: Stone age genetic behavioral predispositions in the space age

Video: PBS Frontline: "Harvest of Fear"

Week 10

Written lecture: Cognitive schemas and maps in environmental issues

Textbook Chap. 9: Human reactions to environmental hazards: perceptual and cognitive processes

Articles:

- “Three pollutants and an emission” by Dallas Burtaw, in *Brookings Review*, Spring 2002.
- “Statehouse and Greenhouse: The states are taking the lead on climate change” by Barry G. Rabe, in *Brookings Review*, Spring 2002. (AE-03 #26).
- “Groundwater shock: the polluting of the world’s freshwater stores” by Dallas Burtaw, in *Brookings Review*, Spring 2002.
- “Water quality: the issues” by Marh H. Cooper, *CQ Researcher*, November 24, 2000.

Audio clips: Go to National Public Radio’s web site at: <http://www.npr.org/>
Select the program named below using the pull-down menu at the top of the web page titled NPR Programming. Select “Morning Edition” or “All things Considered” as directed for each audio clip.

When that programs web page appears, click on Previous Shows in the right frame. Then select the date listed below. Finally, when that dates program is visible, scroll to find the audio clip by the title listed below. Listen to the clip. You must have Real Player to listen to NPR. It is free and a link is provided on the web page if you need it.

The Audio Clips to listen to the following: (approx. length in minutes):

- NPR Morning Edition, Nov. 5, 1998. Clip: Meeting Emissions Standards (4 min)
- NPR Morning Edition, July 31, 2001. Clip: “Fuel Efficiency Study” (3 min)
- NPR Morning Edition, May 13, 2002. Clip: “Clean Cars” (4 min)
- NPR All Things Considered, July 22, 2002. Clip: “California Tail Pipe Emissions” (4 min)
- NPR All Things Considered, March 4-7, 2002: “Oil and Dependence: An NPR Special Report” Parts 3 & 4
<http://www.npr.org/news/specials/oilseries/index.html> (see right frame for these two links). “Can We Conserve?” (8 min) and “Energy in the Future”(8 min)

Week 11

Textbook Chap. 10: Choosing the behaviors to change and the points of intervention

Part of Ch. 12 Chaos, Self-organization, and the global environmental future - read the section "A broad look at the global environmental future (pp329-343) only State of the World Chap. 7: Uniting Divided Cities.

Articles:

- “Poverty and environmental degradation: challenges within the global economy” by akin L. Mabogunje, in *Environment*, Jan-Feb. 2002.
- “Where the sidewalks end” by Molly O’Meara Sheehan, in *World Watch*, Nov.-Dec. 2002.
- “The Earth Charter” on web site #26 at <http://www.earthcharter.org>

Third Exam