

## **Brief Syllabus**

### **Psychology of sustainability and behavior change**

#### **Course Goals:**

- Review the psychological bases of environmental problems.
- Investigate theories of behavior change as they relate to environmental issues.
- Introduce practical strategies that foster behavior change.

#### **Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the general conditions that encourage or constrain environmental behavior.
- Describe psychological approaches to the study of environmental problems
- Analyze a particular target behavior, develop a plan to investigate barriers to this behavior and implement a workaround to overcome these barriers.
- Integrate some of the necessary foundations of environmental behavior change into their own lives and bring them to others through their communication and teaching.

#### **Course Units**

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| Unit 1 | Overview: environmental problems and human behavior   |
| Unit 2 | Psychological approaches:<br>Prosocial behavior<br>Social factors   |
| Unit 3 | Psychological approaches:<br>Cognitive psychology <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Rational decision-making</li><li>- Attentional, perceptual and cognitive limitations</li><li>- Complexity</li></ul> |
| Unit 4 | Psychological approaches:<br>Attitude models of environmental behavior change<br>Stimulus-response/learning theory approaches   |
| Unit 5 | Psychological approaches:<br>Psychoanalytic models<br>Ecopsychology   |
| Unit 6 | Psychological approaches:<br>Health-behavior models   |
| Unit 7 | Social Dilemmas<br>Social traps   |

Spatial traps  
Temporal traps

- Unit 8 Factors that shape environmental behavior  
Demographic factors
- Unit 9 Factors that shape environmental behavior  
Internal/psychological factors
- Unit 10 Factors that shape environmental behavior  
External factors
- Unit 11 Factors that shape environmental behavior  
Situational factors
- Unit 12 One further important factor: connection with nature
- Unit 13 Influential theories
  - Theory of Planned Behavior
  - Norm Activation Model
  - Value-belief-norm model
  - Protection-motivation theory
  - Social learning theory
  - Stages of change
- Unit 14 What is a barrier? Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing
- Unit 15 Community-based social marketing, continued
- Unit 16 Other practical approaches to behavior change
  - Changing the conditions, changing the rewards
  - Modeling and social diffusion
  - Legislation, grass-roots organizing
- Unit 17 Education and environmental literacy
- Unit 18 Risk communication, persuasion and framing
- Unit 19 Observations from sociology
  - Social paradigms and world views
  - Environmental decisions and participatory processes
  - How change occurs in a society
- Unit 20 The role of companies and organizations
- Unit 21 Overview and conclusion

