

ENVR 212: Social Dynamics and the Environment
Spring 2006 * 9:55-11:35 TR * LL21 JRC

Instructor: Dr. Britain Scott, Department of Psychology
Office, Phone & E-Mail: LL52 JRC, 962-5039; bascott@stthomas.edu
Office Hours: M 10:00-11:00, T 3:30-4:30, or by appointment

Course Overview

In this course, we draw primarily on the fields of psychology and sociology to explore the role of human behavior in creating and attempting to solve environmental problems. We examine general social dynamics in the history of the U.S. environmental movement. We consider individual-level cognitions and behaviors related to environmental degradation, the social construction of environmental problems, and the development of interventions to solve those problems. Class sessions will consist of a combination of group discussion and lecture. As we work cooperatively to create a positive and productive learning environment, I would like you to keep the following thoughts in mind:

We are all potential teachers. The diversity of perspectives and experiences we bring to the class is an invaluable resource. Each of us has a voice that is valid and important. Different voices can lead to disagreement but disagreement does not preclude respect and consideration of other points of view.

Each individual is ultimately responsible for his or her own learning and growth. In addition, we all will benefit if we are supportive of each others' learning. This means that we should all come to class ready to participate, having read and considered the assigned material.

Required Books:

Gottlieb, R. (2005). *Forcing the Spring, Revised and Updated Edition: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Losure, M. (2002). *Our way or the highway: Inside the Minnehaha Free State*. Univ. of MN Press.

Gardner, G. T. & Stern, P. C. (2002). *Environmental Problems and Human Behavior (2nd ed.)*. Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.

Additional Readings:

Breton, M. J. (1998). Those Know-Nothing Housewives. In *Women Pioneers for the Environment*, (pp. 116-132). Boston: Northeastern University Press.

LaDuke, W. (1999). White Earth: A Lifeway in the Forest (pp. 1-6, 115-134, 197-200). In *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*.

McKenzie-Mohr, D. (2000). Fostering sustainable behavior through community-based social marketing. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 531-537.

Merchant, Carolyn (1995). Preserving the earth: Women and the progressive conservation crusade. In *Earthcare: Women and the Environment*, (pp. 109-136). New York: Routledge.

Assignments & Exams

Attendance & Participation (10% of final grade)

Web-Based Biographical Sketch of an Early American Environmentalist (Due February 14, 20% of final grade)

Traditional histories of the American Environmental Movement include a “who’s who” of early conservationists and preservationists, but often neglect to discuss how these individuals’ gender, race, class, religion, political affiliations, etc. may have shaped their experiences and contributions. For this assignment, you are to select one of the noteworthy individuals listed below and do a Web search to find answers to the following questions:

- (1) When and what were this individual’s primary contributions to American environmentalism?
- (2) Can you identify influences in the individual’s childhood/family life that foreshadowed these contributions?
- (3) Where did this individual’s philosophy fall with regard to debates on wildlife protection, land conservation, urban/industrial issues, etc.? In other words, where does this individual fit into the big picture of early American environmentalism?
- (4) **How might this individual’s gender, race, social class, religion, political affiliation, or other demographic characteristics have shaped, and possibly limited, his/her environmental concerns?**
- (5) What evidence do you find in your web-search that this individual has had a lasting impact on our culture?

Be sure to attach to your 4-5 page paper a complete list of addresses/references for all web sources consulted. Select from the following individuals: Ansel Adams, Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, Bob Marshall, John Muir, Gifford Pinchot, Teddy Roosevelt, Ellen Swallow

Mid-term Exam Thursday, March 16, (25% of final grade)

Behavioral Intervention Assignment (Due May 9, 20% of final grade)

The root cause of environmental problems is human behavior. A primary goal, therefore, of environmental protection is to influence humans to modify their behaviors so as to be less environmentally damaging. For this assignment you are to select an environmental problem and design an intervention to address it. Your 5-6 page paper should include the following components:

- (1) A description of the environmental problem
- (2) A description of the specific human behaviors you think contribute to this problem and require modification
- (3) An intervention plan inspired by assigned readings on approaches to intervention. It is very important to address how the details of your plan are consistent with what you have learned about human cognitive and behavioral tendencies. For example, if you plan to offer incentives for behavioral change, you must discuss when and why incentives can be effective.
- (4) How will you assess your intervention’s effectiveness?

Final Exam Thursday May 18, 10:30-12:30 (25% of final grade)

Class will vote on whether to have in-class or out-of-class essays

Grades

Assignments and exams will be evaluated according to the following standards:

A = Outstanding work. Student demonstrates depth of thinking that goes beyond mastery of the material; writing is excellent, with no spelling errors or grammatical mistakes.

B = Very Good work. Student has fulfilled the requirements of the assignment and demonstrates above average mastery of the material; writing quality is above average.

C = Satisfactory. Student has fulfilled the requirements of the assignment; writing quality is average.

D = Less than Satisfactory. Work falls short of requirements for the assignment and/or writing quality is poor.

F = Unacceptable.

Scores will be assigned according to the scale below:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	59 and below
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

Course Schedule

Tue 1-31 Introduction to the Course

Part I: Social Dynamics in Twentieth Century American Environmentalism

Conservation, Preservation, and Privilege in the Progressive Era

Thu 2-2 The Early Conservation Movement: Muir, Pinchot, Roosevelt, et al. (Gottlieb, 47-63)
Women and the Progressive Conservation Campaign (Merchant, 109-136)

Tue 2-7 Wilderness Preservation and Anti-Urbanism (Gottlieb, 63-82)
The Roots of Urban/Industrial Environmentalism (Gottlieb, 83-120)

Environmental Protection in the Green Decade

Thu 2-9 Silent Spring and Sixties Rebellion (Gottlieb 121-148)
Earth Day 1970 (Gottlieb 148-158)

Tue 2-14 Environmental Policy in the Green Decade & The Emergence of Professional Environmentalism
(Gottlieb, 167-217) [Web-Based Biographical Sketch DUE]

Thu 2-16 Grassroots Activism in the Green Decade (Gottlieb, 218-251; Breton 116-132)

No Compromise in the Wake of the 1980s Anti-Environmental Backlash

Tue 2-21 Film: *PickAxe* (Losure, Chaps. 1-3, 5, 6)

Thu 2-23 Greenpeace, Earth First!, and Direct Action (Gottlieb, 251-259; Losure, Chaps. 7-10)
Minnesota Direct Action: CAFA & NSP; The Minnehaha Free State

Tue 2-28 The "Wise Use" Movement & Anti-Environmentalism

Environmental Justice in the 1990s to the present

Thu 3-2 Gender Inequality and Environmental Issues (Gottlieb, 269-275)

Tue 3-7 Environmental Racism (Gottlieb, 307-346; LaDuke, 1-6, 115-134, 197-200)

Thu 3-9 Economic Inequality and Environmental Problems (Gottlieb, 347-388)

Tue 3-14 A New Environmentalism? (Gottlieb, 1-30, 389-409)

Thu 3-16 **MIDTERM EXAM**

*****Spring Break*****

Part II: Individual Cognitions/Behaviors and Environmental Problems/Solutions

The Problem of Self-Interest

- Tue 3-28 Behaving Egoistically: Environmental Problems as Social Dilemmas (Gardner & Stern, 21-32)
- Thu 3-30 Evolutionary Predisposition to be Egoistic? (Gardner & Stern, 175-204)
- Tue 4-4 Film: *Subdivide and Conquer: A Modern Western*

Biases in Cognition, Perception, and Judgment

- Thu 4-6 Self-Serving Biases and Self-Esteem
- Tue 4-11 Assessing Risk (Gardner & Stern, 205-252)
- Thu 4-13 Comprehending Complex Systems (Gardner & Stern, 277-316)
- Tue 4-18 Film: *Living Under the Cloud: Chernobyl Today*

Interventions to Affect Individual Attitudes and Behaviors

- Thu 4-20 Informational Campaigns
(Gardner & Stern, 71- 94)
Film: Good Nukes—Almost Good Enough
- Tue 4-25 Incentive-Based Interventions (Gardner & Stern, 95-124)
- Thu 4-27 Community Management & Community-Based Social Marketing
(Gardner & Stern, 125-152; McKenzie-Mohr)
- Tues 5-2 Multiple Interventions (Gardner & Stern, 153-174)
- Thurs 5-4 NO CLASS
- Tues 5-9 *Intervention Assignment DUE*
- Thurs 5-11 Interventions (cont.) & Wrap-Up

THURS 5-18 FINAL EXAM, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.