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## Psychology 750.88 Human Dimensions of Conservation

### Tentative Course Schedule and Assignments

There are two textbooks and a number of journal articles required for this class. The journal articles and the prepublication draft of the Clayton & Meyers text are available on Blackboard.

#### Core Textbooks:

Clayton, S., & Opatow, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). **Working title:** *Conservation psychology: The how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc. **NOTE, this book forms the core reading for the class and is currently in production. The book will not be printed prior to the beginning of class and cannot be purchased. The authors are providing the text for free to students in this course in draft PDF form prior to publication. Only students enrolled in this class will only be permitted access to the text. Students are encouraged to read the book on their computer. However, they may print a copy, in whole or in part, for their personal use. They may not distribute the content, in whole or in part, to any other person without prior approval from the instructor and the authors.**

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#### Week 1: August 27<sup>th</sup>, Introduction to Conservation Psychology:

##### Overview:

What is conservation psychology? Students will become familiar with the history of the subject area, the contribution this subject area makes to conservation objectives and types of questions that conservation psychologists seek to answer.

##### Pre-class Readings:

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.  
Chapter 1: Why and How People Care for Nature
- b) Saunders, C. D. (2003). The emerging field of conservation psychology. *Human Ecology Review*, 10(2), 137-149. Available online at: <http://www.humanecologyreview.org/102.htm>
- c) One commentary response to Saunders (2003) from *Human Ecology Review*, 10(2) available online at: <http://www.humanecologyreview.org/102.htm>

##### Pre-class Assignment

In addition to readings a) and b) you are to read one of the following comments on the Saunders' article (item c) and be prepared to discuss it during the first class session. You will be informed by email and/or on Blackboard which article you will be responsible for. The list of articles appears below.

Beringer, A. *A Conservation Psychology with Heart*

Bixler, R. *Segmenting Audiences and Positioning Conservation Interventions*

Borden, R. J. *Conservation Psychology: The Practice of Compassion*

Chawla, L. *People to People: A Vital Component of People-Nature Relationships*

Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Creative Disciplinary Transformation and Forging a Planetary Psychology*

DeYoung, R. *If We Build It, People Will Want to Help: The Management of Citizen Participation in Conservation Psychology*

Mascia, M. B. *Conservation Psychology: Challenges and Opportunities*

Meine, C. *Conservation Psychology as Self-Liberation*  
Opatow, S. *What Makes People Care? Moral Inclusion and Conservation Psychology*  
Reser, J. P. *Thinking Through "Conservation Psychology": Prospects and Challenges*  
Salafsky, N. *Making Conservation Psychology Relevant to Practitioners*  
Sommer, R. *Action Research and Big Fuzzy Concepts*  
Stern, P. C. *How Can Conservation Psychology Become Influential?*  
Tanner, C. *Steps to Transdisciplinary Sustainable Research*  
Tyson, C. B. *Applying Psychology to Conservation*  
Winter, D. D. *Intellectual Growth Management*  
Zavestoski, S. *Why Conservation Psychology?*

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**Week 2: September 3<sup>rd</sup>, What is Identity?**

Overview:

This class explores the concept of identity at the individual and group level with a focus on why identity research may be important to conservation.

Pre-class Reading:

- a) Baumeister, R. F. (1998). The self. In D. Gilbert, S. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, (Vol. 1, pp 690 – 740). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- b) Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel, & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson Hall.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Bring to class two 3" x 5" index cards. One card should summarize the key concepts explained by Baumeister and the other card should identify the key implications of Tajfel and Turner's framing on Baumeister's work. Write only on one side of each card. Be as brief as possible. Bring a yellow highlighter to class.

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**Week 3: September 10<sup>th</sup>, Identity and the Natural Environment:**

Overview:

This class will consider concept of identity from the perspective of independent agency and conflict with social norms. This class will include watching the movie "*Fast, Cheap and Out of Control*" followed by a discussion with an eminent scholar who will be available to discuss research into identity and conflict in rangeland policy debates in the American west.

Pre-class Reading:

Three selections from: Clayton, S., & Opatow, S. (Eds.). (2003). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- a) Clayton, S. & Opatow, S. (2003). Introduction: Identity and the Natural Environment.
- b) Clayton, S. (2003). Environmental identity: A conceptual and an operational definition.
- c) Opatow, S. & Brook, A. (2003). Identity and exclusion in rangeland conflict.

Pre-class Assignment: a) Students should prepare at least one question for discussion in class about how identity theory can inform the study of environmental conflict.

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**Week 4: September 17<sup>th</sup> Class cancelled.**

Required Reading:

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). Chapter 2: Thinking about Nature: Concepts, Values, and Attitudes In *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- b) Zavetoski, S. (2003) Constructing and Maintaining Ecological Identities: The Strategies of Deep Ecologists. In Clayton, S., & Opatow, S. (Eds.). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Pre-class Assignment: None

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### **Week 5: September 24<sup>th</sup> Thinking About Nature 1**

Overview:

This class will discuss the readings and an overview of conservation psychology with specific reference to the previous class and the ethical implications of using psychology to change human behavior. During class, we will review the APA Code of Ethics and the readings from the past two weeks.

Pre-class Reading:

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). Chapter 3: Ethical Issues: Moral Psychology and the Environment. In *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- b) American Psychological Association (2003). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. Available online at <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>  
(note: We will only discuss the Preamble and General Principles sections)

Pre-class Assignment: None

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**No classes October 1<sup>st</sup>**

**and**

**No classes on October 9<sup>th</sup>**

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### **Week 6: October 15<sup>th</sup>, Thinking About Nature 2**

Overview:

This class will review and discuss the basic ideas related to how we think about nature, with specific reference to identity research discussed in previous classes, how theory can inform practice, and why scientific findings may not be adopted by policy makers or the general public.

Pre-class Reading:

Two selections from: Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc

- a) Chapter 4: Environment and Identity: The Connection Between Self and Thinking Nature.
- b) Chapter 5: Theoretical Perspectives: Explaining the Psychological Significance of Nature.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Bring one 3" x 5" card containing one sentence describing what nature means to you personally. That is, *What does nature offer to your sense of who you are as a person? Bring an 8" x 10" photograph (color or b&w print) of something that you feel illustrates your feeling for nature.*
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### **Week 7: October 22<sup>th</sup>, Caring for Nature**

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Overview:

This class will discuss concepts of stewardship, presentation, landscape management and the personal expression of caring.

Pre-class Reading:

Two selections from: Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc

- a) Chapter 6: Domestic Nature: Cohabiting with Plants and Animals
- b) Chapter 7: Managed Nature: Zoos, Aquariums, and Public Parks  
and
- c) Kalof, L. (2003) The Human Self and the Animal Other: Exploring Borderline Identities. In Clayton, S., & Opatow, S. (Eds.). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Each student should bring one picture 8" x 10" of a domesticated landscape that they feel represents the nature that matters to them.  
  
Bring an item that fits in a pocket to represent how wild nature informs domestic landscapes.

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**Week 8: October 29<sup>th</sup> , What is Wild?**

Overview:

This class will consider what is the psychological importance of understanding wildness. What are the nuanced meanings and the psychological significance of categorizing something as *wild*.

Pre-class Reading:

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). Chapter 8: Wild Nature: Encounters with Wilderness. In *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- b) Myers, O. E. & Russell, A. (2003). Human Identity in Relation to Wild Black Bears: A Natural-Social Ecology of Subjective Creatures. In: Clayton, S., & Opatow, S. (Eds.). *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Bring one 3" x 5" index card with the common name of a wild animal filling the card to the extreme edges.
- b) Wear to class either your hair or an article of clothing (or both) that illustrates the meaning of the word wild to you.

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**Week 9: November 5<sup>th</sup> Encouraging Care**

Overview:

This class will focus on the concept of empathy as an attribute of care, and the distinction between care for individuals and care for systems.

Pre-class Reading:

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). Chapter 9: Promoting Sustainable Behavior. In *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- b) Schultz, P. W. (2000). Empathizing with nature: The effects of perspective taking on concern for environmental issues. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 391-406.

- c) Schultz, P. W. (2002). Inclusion with nature: Understanding the psychology of human-nature interactions. In P. W. Schultz, & P. Schmuck (Eds.), *The psychology of sustainable development*. Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Write a three-sentence description of your first memory of feeling the perspective of a non-human animal or plant and bring it to class. We will share these statements with each other prior to our discussions.
- b) Bring something to class that you feel is the “cutest” representation of an animal you can find.

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**Week 10: November 12<sup>th</sup> Two Topics:**

- a) **In-group Relationships**
- b) **Data collection:**

Overview:

This class will explore the idea of social norms and how culture shapes action. We will explore the decision-making processes through an in-class comparison of our own experiences as people concerned with animal behavior and conservation and those we encounter in our social lives.

Pre-class Reading:

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). Chapter 10: Community-Based Conservation. In *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- b) Dietz, T., Stern, P. C. & Guagnano, G. A. (1998). Social structural and social psychological bases of environmental concern. *Environment and Behavior*, 30(4), 450-471.
- c) Stern, P. C. (2000). Toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3). 407-424.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Bring to class one sentence written on a 3” x 5” recipe card about a value, belief or norm that you see in your daily life that is counter-productive to pro-environmental action, but is accepted as the status quo in our ABC community at Hunter College.
- b) Wear any logo t-shirt or cap to class that you feel illustrates an organization whose values you *actively* support.

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**Week 11: November 19<sup>th</sup> What is Environmental Education?**

Overview:

This class will consider how people learn about the environment and the evidence we see in the data collected during the Blackrock Forest field trip. Students will develop a few shared hypotheses about how learning experiences lead to decision-making in later life. Students will be assigned their question for the final paper.

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). Chapter 11: Environmental Education. In *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Complete data entry of completed surveys in the online data entry form. Each student should bring one 3” x 5” index card with a sentence explaining one behavior that they personally engaged in during the week that reflects an environmentally positive act.

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**Week 12: November 26<sup>th</sup> Distinguishing Facts from Beliefs**

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Overview:

The class will start with a discussion about how we can distinguish between a fact and a belief, why some beliefs may be perceived to be facts, and how acting on beliefs can lead to different environmental consequences. Following this discussion, we will look at samples of the data to consider how answers to questions contain both statements of fact and statements of belief. Together, we will learn how to construct a code-book that identifies beliefs in individual answers and how to look across answers in a survey.

Pre-class Reading: None

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Students will have organized their data for analysis and, if working collaboratively, will have discussed their project. Time will be set aside for questions about the assignment.

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**Week 13: December 3<sup>rd</sup> Evidence and Truthfulness**

Overview: This class will consider the rules of evidence in social science research. We will consider the importance of how populations are understood. We will discuss what it means to generalize about a class or group, and how such generalizations may serve or hinder animal conservation.

Pre-class Reading: None

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Students will have completed a first draft description of the study population for the final assignment. The description will be detailed enough to determine who else may share the values that are explored in the research, and the limits to which we can generalize about groups or people not interviewed for the study. Bring these descriptions to class for discussion.

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**Week 14: December 10<sup>th</sup> Meaning-making**

Overview:

This class will focus on reading and writing the discussion section of human subjects research. We will review two survey research papers for clarity of the discussion section.

Pre-class Reading:

- a) Woods, B. (2002). Good zoo/bad zoo: Visitor experiences in captive settings. *Anthrozoös*, 15(4), 343-360.
- b) Kals, E., Schumacher, D., & Montada, L., 1999. Emotional affinity as a motivational basis to protect nature. *Environment and Behavior*, 31(2) 178-202.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Students will have completed writing a draft of the discussion section of their final paper and will bring these to class for discussion.

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**Week 15: December 17<sup>th</sup> Synthesis**

Overview: This class will discuss the idea of happiness

- a) Clayton, S. & Myers, O. E. (in press). Chapter 12: The Psychology of Hope. In *Conservation psychology: the how and why of saving nature*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Inc.
- b) Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). Positive psychology, positive prevention, and positive therapy. In Snyder C. R. & Lopez, & S. J. (eds), *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 3 –12.
- c) Redford, K. & Sanjayan, M. A. (2003). Retiring Cassandra. *Conservation Biology* 17(6) 1473-1474.

Pre-class Assignment:

- a) Students will seek out information on the measurement of *Gross National Happiness*.
- b) Students will submit a Microsoft Word version of the **final assignment** by email to the instructor with a companion posting of a PDF to the class blackboard folder **prior to class**.

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Revised: July 16th, 2008