

Psyc 398
Psychology of Environmental Issues
Fall 2018

Location: Coppee 105

Class time: Monday and Wednesday,
2:35 – 3:50

Instructor: Prof. Barbara Malt
524 Brodhead room 217
758-4797

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office hour: Tuesday 1:30-2:30* or by appt

*Since the Brodhead building is locked 24/7, please
contact me in advance if you plan to come



What is this Course About?

Environmental problems and solutions begin with the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individual people. We will examine how people think and feel about aspects of the natural environment, what psychological processes shape those thoughts and feelings, and how the outcomes of those processes drive behaviors with positive or negative consequences for the environment.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should:

- appreciate the critical role of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in creating environmental problems and solutions
- understand how cognitive processes play into environmental behaviors
- understand how social and situational factors play into environmental behaviors
- understand how motivational factors contribute to environmental behaviors
- understand sources of individual differences in environmental behaviors
- be familiar with basic behavioral research methods and how to apply them to environmental issues
- be familiar with means of increasing pro-environmental behaviors

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
Aug 27 M 29 W	Introduction Environmental Problems are Behavior Problems	29: Scott, ch. 1; Clay
Sept 3 M 5 W	Past and Future in Human Impact on the Environment	3: Scott, ch. 2; Kesebir 5: Scott, ch. 3; Medin
Sept 10 M 12 W	Studying Behavior and the Environment: Research Methods	10: Scott, ch. 4 12: Sorqvist; Thomas; Bley
Sept 17 M 19 W	Overview: Situational and Social Influences / roundtable: project topics nudges	17: Scott, ch. 5 19: Delprato <i>only up to Materialism on p. 1511</i> ; Campbell-Arvai; Schwartz
Sept 24 M 26 W	social norms persuasion	24: Bergquist; Seyranian; Sussman 26: Hormes; Cialdini; Bator
Oct 1 M 3 W	source credibility; attitude-behavior gap Overview: Cognitive Processes	1: Leiserowitz; Eom 3: Scott, ch. 6; Patt
Oct 8 M 10 W	judgment biases: availability judgment biases: framing, discounting, and forecasting	8: Li; Joireman ; Rapp 10: Hardisty; Nisbett; Schuldt
Oct 15 M	Pacing Break	
Oct 17 W	interpreting data	17: Budescu; van der Linden; Bosetti
Oct 22 M 24 W	mental models Overview: Individual Differences / roundtable: project development	22: Kempton; Ranney 24 Scott, ch. 7
Oct 29 M	political affiliation	29: Jost; Greene
Oct 31 W	more on political affiliation	31: Unsworth; Hardisty; Eveland

Nov 5 M	personality; education	5: Rozin; Lee; Loughnan
7 W	emotion	7: Smith, 2012; Smith, 2014
Nov 12 M	Overview: Motivation / roundtable: project development	12: Scott, ch. 8
14 W	motivated rejection	14 Hornsey; Lewandowsky
Nov 19 M	more motivated rejection; just world; intrinsic vs extrinsic motivation	19: Feinberg; Schwartz
Nov 21 W	more / roundtable: project development	21: Landrum
Nov 26 M	morals	26: Abrahamse; Feinberg; Mazar
28 W	more morals; legacy	28: Rottman; Evans; Zaval
Dec 3 M	Finale	3: Scott, ch. 11, and presentations
5 W		5: more presentations
Dec 12 W	exam week	Final paper due by 5:00

Assignments

(1) Readings are assigned for each class. You should complete them before coming to class. Readings that are not in the textbook are posted on CourseSite.

We may add, subtract, or change the readings listed on the syllabus from time to time, depending on how things are going.

For each journal article, please be prepared to summarize in class:

What research question were the authors addressing?

What method(s) did they use to address it?

What did the data show?

What did they conclude, in light of the data?

I will call on students to answer these questions.

For textbook chapters, focus on identifying the main theme of the chapter and the central points the authors are making.

(2) To help prepare for interesting discussions, you will turn in a “**Concepts & Questions**” page to CourseSite each day before class.

In the C & Q you should describe, in at least several sentences apiece, **three concepts** from the readings that you found particularly interesting or important. Then, raise **three questions** that the readings brought to mind and share some thoughts about the issue. Again, write at least several sentences apiece. Consider talking about, for instance, what raised this question in your mind and made it seem interesting or important to you, what are possible answers, what are implications of the answers?

When there are multiple readings for a day, your concepts and questions should be spread across all of them. Aim to show me that you read them all.

C & Qs are due by 1:00 p.m. on the due date. They will not be graded in detail but if satisfactory (meeting the expectations stated above), you’ll receive full credit. Unsatisfactory or missing C & Qs will receive proportionately less credit.

(3) Because this is a discussion-based seminar, being an active participant is critical. **You should expect to contribute in every class meeting.** Although I won’t be taking attendance per se, I will be tracking participation, so absences will count against your participation grade.

If you will be absent due to illness or emergency, please contact me *before* class if at all possible.

Quality as well as quantity counts! Aim to show that you read the readings with understanding and reflected on them. (However, never be afraid to say you didn’t understand something, or to question something, if you made a genuine attempt to digest a point and found it difficult, confusing, or possibly wrong.)

(4) There will be occasional **take-home exercises** during the semester asking you to explore a question related to our topic for the week. Each will require some activity on your part outside of class (a bit of data collection, analysis of a phenomenon, or other type of inquiry). Completion of these will not take long and will provide material for discussion in the next class. The completed exercise must be uploaded to CS before class on the due date.

(5) Final project: You'll design and carry out a small study that addresses a question of your choosing about environmental thoughts, feelings, or behaviors on campus. (We'll work on selecting topics, designing the studies, etc., together in class in addition to the work you'll do on your own.) You'll produce a written paper (roughly 10 pp.) reporting the results of your study, and you'll give a short presentation on it to the class.

Course Policies

The Principles of Our Equitable Community: Lehigh University endorses The Principles of Our Equitable Community [http://www.lehigh.edu/~inprv/initiatives/PrinciplesEquity_Sheet_v2_032212.pdf]. We expect each member of this class to acknowledge and practice these Principles. Respect for each other and for differing viewpoints is a vital component of the learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to uphold the University Code of Conduct (see the Student Handbook for details). Any violation will normally lead to a zero grade on that assignment for all of the individuals concerned and will be referred to the University Committee on Discipline. Inappropriate behavior in exam-taking or plagiarism (using material from a source without acknowledging the source) will be referred to the Committee on Discipline.

Accommodation for Disabilities: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact both your instructor and the Office of Academic Support Services, Williams Hall, Suite 301 (610-758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must have documentation from the Academic Support Services office before accommodations can be granted.

Electronics: In accordance with College of Arts and Sciences policy, all electronic devices, including computers, tablets, cell phones, and recording devices, should be silenced and put away out of sight during class. If you need to use an electronic device as an accommodation for a disability, please provide a letter from Academic Support Services documenting the need.

(Not) Leaving during class: If you will need to leave before the end of a class for any reason, please inform me before class starts and try to sit near the door so you can slip out quietly. Otherwise, you are expected to remain seated throughout class. This avoids distractions to me and your fellow students.

GRADING:

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade
Participation	30
Concepts & Questions (combined)	32
Homework Exercises	8
Final project and paper	30
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Total	100

Participation Grade Scheme

contributions 24 - 28 class days = 95

contributions 15 - 24 class days = 85

contributions 10 - 14 class days = 75

contributions 0 - 9 class days = 65

Quality counts! If you are talking but it is clear you didn't do the readings or didn't give them any real thought, your credit will be reduced below the values listed.

Final Grade cutoffs

94 and above = A

90-93 = A-

87-89 = B+

84-86 = B

80-83 = B-

77-79 = C+

74-76 = C

70-73 = C-

67-69 = D+

64-66 = D

60-63 = D-