Psy 650: Independent Studies in the Psychology of Environmental Sustainability

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Hours: Via Zoom, Thursdays 1-2 p.m., and at other times by appointment
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Course location and meeting time
Class meets on-line via zoom, Wednesdays, at 2 p.m.

Overview
Society faces many challenges related to the environment (e.g., global warming, pollution, scarce natural resources). In our seminar, we focus on some important psychological theories and findings to engage these issues. Course readings are a blend of review chapters and empirical articles on environmental issues and relevant psychological processes. In addition to weekly discussion of readings, the course focuses students on writing to encourage analyses of course material (though weekly reaction papers), to identify interconnections between and among topics (two reflection papers), and to develop a final paper project to pull course material together (the paper either proposes a novel empirical study or develops a real-world intervention project).

Activities and assignments

1) Weekly class conversations (10 weeks, 2 points per class, 20 points max)
Students are expected to read and actively engage in class discussions of readings each week in class.

2) Weekly reaction papers (10 weeks, 4 points per paper, 40 points max)
To support discussion of weekly readings, students will submit weekly reaction papers (via Canvas, to be uploaded by Wednesday at 12 Noon on weeks with assigned readings), responding to prompts provided for each week's readings (available in Canvas). The instructor will review reaction papers right before class and provide comments on them (electronically) so students have feedback before class begins at 2 p.m.

3) Reflection papers (twice during course, 10 points per paper, 20 points max)
Twice during the semester, students will complete a reflection paper assignment, which focuses on building connections between and among readings from different weeks. Reflection papers are due by Wednesday at 12 Noon on due dates, and there are no reading assignments or formal class meetings on these two weeks (Reflection Paper #1 is due during Week #8 right before Spring Break, Reflection Paper #2 is due during Week #14 right before the last week of class). The instructor will provide feedback on these papers, and material from these papers may help students in developing their final paper project (see next item).

4) Final paper (due at the end of the semester, 20 points max)
Students will submit a final paper project by the final day of the semester (i.e., before 12 Noon on May 6). This final paper project can take one of two forms: a research proposal to test a novel research idea that could be conducted by the student in the future (and be worth conducting) or for a real-world intervention project leveraging psychological principles that could be conducted in the future (and worth conducting).

Course evaluation summary
1) Weekly class conversations (10 weeks, 2 points per class)......................... 20
2) Weekly reaction papers (10 weeks, 4 points per class) 40
3) Reflection papers (twice during the semester, 10 points per paper) 20   *Due by March 16, April 27*
4) Final paper project... 20   *Due by May 6*

Total points available in the course 100

Letter grades are assigned based on standard 10 percent gradients, including plus and minus designations (e.g., 100 ≤ A ≤ 93, 92 ≤ A- ≤ 90, 89 ≤ B+ ≤ 87, 86 ≤ B ≤ 83, 82 ≤ B- ≤ 80, 79 ≤ C+ ≤ 77, 76 ≤ C ≤ 73).

Statement on academic misconduct
Both Miami University and the Department of Psychology are dedicated to providing a learning environment based not only upon academic excellence but academic integrity as well. In this course, it is expected that students will adhere to all Miami University guidelines regarding academic misconduct (for details, see Part 5, Miami Student Handbook: Academic Misconduct). Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:
- Submitting work (tests, homework, papers, etc.) done for another course without gaining approval.
- Submitting the work of another (whether in part or in whole) as one's own.
- Possessing prohibited materials during a test or quiz.
- Providing or receiving assistance from another student unless explicitly permitted by the professor.

Engaging in academic misconduct can result in penalties ranging from a minimum of an F on the assignment to an F in the course, an "AD" signifying academic dishonesty on your Miami transcripts, academic suspension, and expulsion from Miami University. "Misunderstanding of the appropriate academic conduct will not be accepted as an excuse for academic misconduct" (see Student Handbook). Please visit with the professor if you need any of these policies clarified. Also, the professor encourages students to meet with him if they suspect that another student in the course has engaged in academic misconduct.

Class policies
Assignments: Assignment <u>due dates</u> are posted in the syllabus. Unless noted, all assignments are due on the due date before 12 Noon EDT. All assignment deadlines are U.S. Eastern Daylight Time (i.e., Oxford time).

Accommodations: Students with a disability who feel that they may need a reasonable accommodation to fulfill the essential functions of the course listed in this syllabus, or students with physical, medical or psychiatric disabilities, or students with AD(H)D or specific learning disabilities are encouraged to contact the Miller Center for Student Disability Services (https://miamioh.edu/student-life/sds/; 513.529.1541, V/TTY). The professor is happy to support students who need accommodations, but it is each student's responsibility to document these circumstances with the Miller Center.

Writing competency: Writing competency is expected in all assignments. Students needing assistance with their writing skills should contact the Howe Center for Writing Excellence (http://miamioh.edu/hcwe).

Uploads and electronically-submitted assignments: All assignments require uploading documents to Canvas. Uploaded documents <u>must</u> in one of three formats and <u>only</u> these three formats: PDF (Acrobat's Portable Document Format), DOC (Microsoft Word's Document format), or RTF (Rich Text Format). Microsoft Word (DOC) is the preferred format. All other formats (e.g., JPEGs of handwritten work, Mac Pages, Google docs) will receive zeros because Canvas cannot process them for grading (if you are unsure about how to produce documents in PDF, DOC, or RTF formats, ask the professor *long before* any assignment is due). Missing assignments will receive zero points if not uploaded by deadlines.

Incompletes: Except for cases of documented medical (see previous point) or family emergencies, incompletes will not be given. Deadlines for dropping classes and withdrawals are provided by the Office of the Registrar. Students who miss these deadlines assume responsibility for the consequences. Please consult Miami's official websites regarding deadlines and university policies.

Illnesses and significant health disruptions: Should a student become seriously ill and unable to complete assignments for a sizable portion of the class because of illness, the student should contact the professor immediately by email to determine how alternative arrangements might be made. Students who fail to stay in contact with the professor assume the consequences for reduced options and remedies.

Diversity and inclusion

The Miami Department of Psychology is strongly committed to diversity and inclusion (for details, visit https://www.miamioh.edu/cas/academics/departments/psychology/about/diversity-inclusion/index.html). Here is a statement adopted by the Department of Psychology on diversity and inclusion:

> We, members of the Department of Psychology, value diversity and inclusion because the goal of psychology is to improve understanding and outcomes for all individuals. We value persons of all identities, including dimensions such as age, culture, national origin, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and others. As psychologists, we understand that diverse groups bring diverse perspectives; this diversity produces better outcomes in a variety of contexts, including learning and decision making, and our ability to work with one another. Consistent with these values, our department actively seeks opportunities to increase and improve understanding of diversity. These enduring efforts include conducting research with diverse populations on topics related to intergroup understanding and asking questions that are relevant to different groups. We promote the academic and professional development of students, faculty, and staff from different backgrounds and provide education to improve intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes for all members of our academic community. We endeavor to actively engage in positive behaviors in order to achieve these goals. In sum, we value diversity because multiple perspectives improve our ability to understand psychological processes and to understand and contribute to the communities we serve.

Semester schedule

Written assignments should be uploaded to Canvas on the day indicated before 12 Noon EDT. Readings listed (available on Canvas as PDFs) should be read before class meetings on the date listed (supplemental readings are *optional* and listed to provide background material for each week's content). It is recommended that students read the primary papers in the order that they are listed below. Syllabus updated on 12apr2022.

January 26 • Organizational meeting

February 2 • General overview
Gifford, R. (2014). Environmental psychology matters. *Annual Review of Psychology, 65*, 541-579.

Supplemental reading:
Mortensen, C. R., Cialdini, R. B. (2010). Full-cycle social psychology for theory and application. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 4*, 53-63.

February 9 • The role of psychology in pro-environmentalism
Swim, J. K., Stern, P. C., Doherty, T. J., Clayton, S., Reser, J. P. Weber, E. U., Gifford, R., & Howard, G. S. (2011). Psychology's contributions to understanding and addressing global climate change. *American Psychologist, 66*, 241-250.
Clayton, S., Devine-Wright, P., Swim, J. K., Bonnes, M., Steg, L., Whitmarsh, L., & Carrico, A. (2016). Expanding the role for psychology in addressing environmental challenges. *American Psychologist, 71*, 199-215.

February 16 • Predictors of and barriers to pro-environmentalism
Hornsey, M. J., Harris, E. A., Bain, P. G., & Fielding, K. S. (2016). Meta-analyses of the determinants and outcomes of belief in climate change. *Nature Climate Change, 6*, 622-627.
Schmitt, M. T., Neufeld, S. D., Mackay, C. M. L., & Dys-Steenbergen, O. (2020). The perils of explaining climate inaction in terms of psychological barriers. *Journal of Social Issues, 76*, 123-135.

Supplemental readings:
Gifford, R. (2011). The dragons of inaction: Psychological barriers that limit climate change mitigation and adaptation. *American Psychologist, 66*, 290-302.
Brick, C., & Lewis, G. J. (2016). Unearthing the "Green" Personality: Core traits predict environmentally friendly behavior. *Environment and Behavior, 48*, 635-658.

February 23 • Social dilemmas
Van Vugt, M. (2009). Averting the tragedy of the commons: Using social psychological science to protect the environment. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 18*, 169-173.
Van Lange P. A. M., Joireman, J., Parks, C. D., & Van Dijk, E. (2013). The psychology of social dilemmas: A review. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Making Processes, 120*, 125-141.

Supplemental reading:
Komorita, S. S., & Parks, C. D. (1995). Interpersonal relations: Mixed-motive interaction. *Annual Review of Psychology, 46*, 183-207.

March 2 · Values and motivations

Brick, C., Bosshard, A., & Whitmarsh, L. (2021). Motivation and climate change: A review. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *42*, 82-88.

DeGroot, J. I. M., & Steg, L. (2010). Relationships between value orientations, self-determined motivational types and pro-environmental behavioural intentions. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *30*, 368-378.

Supplemental readings:

Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Are there universal aspects in the structure and content of human values? *Journal of Social Issues*, *50*, 19-45.

Schultz, P. W. (2001). Assessing the structure of environmental concern: Concern for the self, other people, and the biosphere. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *21*, 327-339.

March 9 · Norms and social influence motivations

Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social influence: Compliance and conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *55*, 591-621.

Schultz, P. W., Nolan J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2007). The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms. *Psychological Science*, *18*, 429-434.

Supplemental readings:

Goldstein, N. J., Cialdini, R. B., & Griskevicius, V. (2008). A room with a viewpoint: Using social norms to motivate environmental conservation in hotels. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *35*, 472-482.

Costa, D. L., & Kahn, M. E. (2013). Energy conservation "nudges" and environmentalist ideology: Evidence from a randomized residential electric field experiment. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, *11*, 680-702.

March 16 · Reflection Paper #1 due (no class meeting)

March 23 · Spring Break (no class meeting)

March 30 · Positive emotions, the self, and pro-environmentalism

Piff, P. K., Dietze, P., Feinberg, M., Stancato, D. M., & Keltner, D. (2015). Awe, the small self, and prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *108*, 883-899.

Jacobs, T. P., & McConnell, A. R. (2022). Self-transcendent emotion dispositions: Greater connections with nature and more sustainable behavior. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *81*, 101797.

Supplemental readings:

Stellar, J. E., Gordon, A. M., Piff, P. K., Cordaro, D., Anderson, C. L., Bai, Y., Maruskin, L. A., & Keltner, D. (2017). Self-transcendent emotions and their social functions: Compassion, gratitude, and awe bind us to others through prosociality. *Emotion Review*, *9*, 200-207.

Zelenski, J. M., & Desrochers, J. E. (2021). Can positive and self-transcendent emotions predict pro-environmental behavior? *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *42*, 31-35.

McConnell, A. R., & Jacobs, T. P. (2020). Self-nature representations: On the unique consequences of nature-self size on pro-environmental action. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *71*, 101471.

April 6 · Place attachment

Williams, D. R., Stewart, M. P., & Kruger, L. E. (2013). The emergence of placed-based conservation. In W. P. Steward, D. R. Williams, & L. E. Kruger (Eds.), *Placed-based conservation: Perspectives from the social sciences* (pp. 1-17). Springer.

Daryanto, A., & Song, Z. (2021). A meta-analysis of the relationship between place attachment and pro-environmental behaviour. *Journal of Business Research*, *123*, 208-219.

Supplemental readings:

Mazumdar, S., & Mazumdar, S. (2004). Religion and place attachment: A study of sacred places. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *24*, 385-397.

Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2017). Place attachment enhances psychological need satisfaction. *Environment and Behavior*, *49*, 359-389.

April 13 · Culture and community

Tam, K-P., & Chan, H-W. (2017). Environmental concern has a weaker association with pro-environmental behavior in some societies than others: A cross-cultural psychology perspective. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *53*, 213-223.

Korach, J., & McConnell, A. R. (2021). The Triadic Framework: Integrating nature, communities, and belief systems into the self-concept for sustained conservation action. *Sustainability*, *13*, 8348.

Supplemental readings:

Western, D., & Wright, R. M. (1994). The background to community-based conservation. In D. Western & R. M. Wright (Eds.), *Natural connections: Perspectives in community-based conservation* (pp. 1-12). Island Press.

DeCaro, D., & Stokes, M. (2008). Social-psychological principles of community-based conservation and conservancy motivation: Attaining goals within an autonomy-supportive environment. *Conservation Biology*, *22*, 1443-1451.

Brooks, J. S., Waylen, K. A., & Mulder, M. B. (2012). How national context, project design, and local community characteristics influence success in community-based conservation projects. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *109*, 21265-21270.

April 20 · Environmental persuasion and resistance

Hall, M. P., Lewis, N. A., & Ellsworth, P. C. (2018). Believing in climate change, but not behaving sustainably: Evidence from a one-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *56*, 55-62.

Druckman, J. N., & McGrath, M. C. (2019). The evidence for motivated reasoning in climate change preference formation. *Nature Climate Change*, *9*, 111-119.

Supplemental readings:

Fazio, R. H. (1986). How do attitudes guide behavior? In R. M. Sorrentino & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation and cognition* (Vol. 1, pp. 204-243). Guilford Press.

Petty, R. E., & Briñol (2012). The Elaboration Likelihood Model. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 224-245). Sage.

April 27 · Reflection Paper #2 due (no class meeting)

May 6 · Final paper due by Friday, May 6 at 12 Noon (no class meeting)