

University of Southern California
Psych 456: Conservation Psychology

DRAFT SYLLABUS

Fall 2014

Instructor: Nicole Sintov, Ph.D.

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Office: SGM XXX

Classroom location: VHE 210

Class Meetings: MW10:00-
11:50am

Office Hours: Wed 1pm to 3pm
or by Appointment

Course Description

Welcome to Conservation Psychology! The field of psychology is the scientific study of behavior. This course will introduce you to Conservation Psychology, that is, how psychological processes influence behaviors that help or hurt the environment, and how psychology can help encourage environmental conservation. Conservation Psychology is an applied field, meaning that it involves the use of psychological principles, theories, or methods, to understand and solve a social issue. Readings will be drawn from all areas of psychology. At the end of this course, you should know several psychological theories that are relevant to environmental conservation, be able to design interventions based on them to promote conservation, and be able to design studies to evaluate whether those interventions are effective in achieving conservation goals. Class discussions, assignments, and projects will give you the opportunity to practice applying psychology to promote environmental conservation.

The course will be divided into roughly three sections. The first section will examine the scientific evidence regarding a number of environmental issues, including global warming, ozone depletion, and depletion of natural resources like fresh water, oil, and metal deposits. For each of these issues, we will examine the specific behaviors that lead to these problems. The second section of the course will examine psychological factors associated with conservation behavior. We will examine such topics as the commons dilemma, rational choice, values, and identity. The final section of the course will examine interventions designed to change human behavior. Topics covered in this module will include transportation choices, dietary choices, recycling, and energy use. This class is designed to be both enjoyable and useful for you; please let me know if at any time you are not enjoying or learning from it and we will work together to improve the situation!

Course Objectives

- (1) Review the psychological bases of environmental problems.
- (2) Understand, critique, and analyze theories and research in conservation psychology.
- (3) Apply these theories in designing an intervention program that promotes conservation with measurable impacts
- (4) Design studies to evaluate whether those interventions are effective in achieving conservation goals.
- (5) To understand that sustainability will require behavioral change and whether those changes affect the quality of your life.

Books

- Clayton, S. & Myers, G. (2009). *Conservation Psychology: Understanding and promoting human care for nature*. Wiley. ISBN: 978-1-40519409-9
- Koger, S. & Winter, D. D. (2010). *The psychology of environmental problems: Psychology for sustainability* (3rd ed.). Taylor & Francis. ISBN: 978-1-84872-809-7
- Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Percentage of final grade</u>
MyFootprint.org reflection (pass/fail)	5%
Facilitate discussion of one research article during class	5%
Film reaction sheets (2% each, drop lowest score)	10%
Midterm exam	20%
Self-change project	10%
Conservation Program Design Project	25%
Final exam	25%
Total	100%

Grading

A or A-	=	100-90%
B+, B, B-	=	89-80%
C+, C, or C-	=	79-70%
D+, D, or D-	=	69-60%
F	=	<60%

Exams

There will be two exams over the course of the semester to help you master the course material. The exams will consist of short answer and multiple-choice questions. No make-up exams will be given, except in the event of a “good excuse” (e.g., severe illness or emergency). You will be asked to provide documentation of the event. Make-up exams will be more difficult, so it is in your best interest to take the exam on the day it is scheduled.

Conservation Program Design Project

There are a number of environmental problems faced by our society that can be connected with people’s behavior. Imagine that you are a team of scientists employed by an environmental organization or government agency (or a group of students at USC working to increase campus sustainability!). In teams of 2 students (with at least one ES major and one psych major, so you can benefit from each others’ environmental and psychological expertise), you will design a program to address a specific environmental problem that is dependent on human behavior, such as global warming, habitat loss, etc. Your program must aim to decrease a behavior that is harmful to the environment, or increase an alternate behavior that is better for the environment. The program should apply theories and approaches that we learn in class. If you can identify a specific organization that could potentially implement your program (a zoo, environmental group, government agency, etc, so much the better!).

Part 1: First, research the current unsustainable attitudes and behaviors that are contributing to environmental problems. Settle on specific behavior that is problematic. Then, brainstorm psychological strategies derived from conservation psychology that may change the chosen behavior. Finally, propose a program that employs specific psychological strategies to address the behavior in question. Write a summary that describes and justifies your program. You are encouraged to meet with me / come to office hours to help shape your ideas. Your summary should include: background research, including information on the science of the problem itself; several potential psychological solutions that have potential to work for your program, including how they’ve successfully changed behavior in previous research; a description of your program, and why you think your program is the solution for your particular problem behavior (*about 5 pages due on November 5*). The purpose of turning in the draft is to obtain my feedback and make any adjustments before the final paper and your presentation are due – that is, to help you think through your projects and submit your best quality work!

Part 2: Design and propose a research study (ideally, an experiment) to evaluate the effectiveness of your proposed program. You are encouraged to meet with me / come to office hours to help shape your ideas. Describe the proposed method, measures, expected results, and implications of expected results – how would you need to revise

your planned program, depending on what you find in your study)? *(about 1-2 pages due on November 17)*. The purpose of turning in the draft is to obtain my feedback and make any adjustments before the final paper and your presentation are due — that is, to help you think through your projects and submit your best quality work!

Power Point Presentation. You and your partner will be responsible for one in-class presentation. The presentation (PowerPoint) should last 15 minutes with about 10 minutes of Q&A and class feedback. You will also be graded on your ability to provide constructive feedback on your classmates' projects.

Final Paper. You will write an 8-10 page final paper that: (a) describes the environmental behavior and the problems it poses to the environment; (b) thoroughly outlines the program proposed to address the behavior; (c) justifies the program with psychological theory and research; and (d) describes your evaluation plan/experiment and expected results.

MyFootprint.Org Self-Quiz and Reflection Write-up

To understand the impact of your own behaviors on the environment, you will go to www.myfootprint.org and take the “ecological footprint” quiz. *You will print out your quiz results and bring them to class along with a 1-page write-up due Mon Sept. 8* that addresses the following questions:

1. How does your individual footprint compare with the average footprint of a U.S. citizen (5 planets; 184 global acres)? Are you surprised by your score? Why or why not?
2. The tool breaks your footprint down into carbon, food, housing, goods & services; does the similarity between your lifestyle and that of the average American differ across categories? What do you think accounts for the differences or lack thereof?
3. What impacts might result if everyone in the world enjoyed the same lifestyle that you do? How would it impact you personally if this were the case?
4. What are three behaviors you can think of that you might be able to modify to reduce your footprint?

Self-Change Project

Since you will be actively engaged in applying theories to promote more environmentally sustainable behaviors, it is important for you to gain first-hand experience in understanding some of the challenges (e.g., thoughts, emotions) that can arise during the process of behavior change. You will select one important conservation behavior (e.g., drive slower, reducing paper use, taking reusable bags to the grocery store) and attempt to incorporate it into your behavioral repertoire over the course of the semester. For ideas on conservation behaviors, see the appendix of Koger & Winter's

(2010) textbook. *You will submit a one-paragraph description of your chosen conservation self-change behavior during class on Sept 10th.* From time to time, we will discuss your conservation self-change project during class. You should write an entry in a journal tracking your progress just about once a week (6 short entries total). *On October 27th, turn in your journal entries (typed) along with a 1-page typed summary of your experience.*

Article Discussion

A key aspect of this class is understanding and critiquing behavioral science research studies. To help you master these skills, you will facilitate discussion of one article (not a book chapter) of your choice. While you are leading the discussion, you should summarize key aspects of the article and pose questions to the rest of the class for discussion (e.g., how could the study be improved? What future research questions should be explored next, given the findings in your article?). This must be completed prior to the midterm. You should aim to touch on the following points during the discussion:

- Describe the primary research question / study objective
- What were the author's hypotheses?
- What were the Independent Variables (IVs)?
- What were the Dependent Variables (DVs)?
- Who participated (number and sample characteristics)
- What did the participants do (procedures)?
- What were the major findings / results?
- What were the author's interpretations of the findings?
- Were the author's hypotheses supported?
- Formulate a new hypothesis that logically follows this study
- Pose questions for class to discuss

Film Reaction Sheets

We will watch several documentary films in class that highlight the principles you will be learning. To help you connect what you have seen in the film with what you've learned through readings, lectures, and class discussions, after each film we watch, I will pass out a Film Reaction Sheet. Each sheet includes a few short-answer reflection questions specific to the film viewed that day, and will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. We will discuss our reactions, relating the film with other course material. Each Film Reaction Sheet must be completed in class and turned in at the end of the class during which the film is shown to earn credit. No late or make-up reaction sheets are offered—if you miss a film, you will not be able to make it up. However, you are permitted to drop the grade for one (1) Film Reaction Sheet.

Other Important Topics

Attendance. To do well in this course, it is important that you attend class. Additionally, it is in your best interest to attend class to take advantage of periodic in-class extra credit opportunities. If you have an emergency or severe illness, please notify me of your absence prior to class or as soon as possible. Remember to get notes from a classmate and make up any work that you missed.

Class Participation: Student Responsibilities and Preparation. This course is designed to be an *interactive* exchange between the instructor and students and between students themselves. It is each of your responsibility to complete all the assignments and readings before class. For your own learning and the learning of your classmates, you are expected to class prepared and energized to be an active class participant. That is, ask questions, request clarifications, discuss the material, and complete in-class activities. Be willing to take a risk to actively commit yourself in front of the class. Ask questions about things you don't understand. Being an active class participant also requires that you are mentally engaged in the class (see class decorum below).

You or others may hold strong opinions about topics we may discuss in class. We will practice the art of being respectful to other people's academic ideas, opinions, and values, regardless of whether we agree or disagree. The art of being respectful also includes being mentally engaged and not being disruptive. Please refrain from: talking to your peers during class (if you have a question, feel free to ask me), using cell phones, text messaging, and using laptops for non-course related material (e.g., checking facebook).

Office hours. Feel free to come to office hours to talk about your questions, concerns, experiences in the course, course material, or anything else. You may also contact me via email.

Policy Regarding Late Assignments and Papers. Unless otherwise stated, you must turn in hard copies (i.e., typed and printed) of all assignments on the stated due date at the beginning of class, if not before, for your assignment to be considered on time. Papers or assignments turned in electronically will be considered late until hard copies are provided. Each assignment that is turned in late will be marked down one letter grade for every 24-hour period it is overdue.

Academic Honesty and Integrity. Students are responsible for honest completion and representation of their work. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid

using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

Sexual Harassment. Immediately bring matters of sexual harassment to the attention of the instructor, dean, or other university authority.

Special Needs. If you have a disability (physical, learning, or psychological) that may make it difficult for you to carry out the course work as outlined and/or requires accommodations such as recruiting note takers, readers, or extended time on exams or assignments, please contact me and Disability Services & Programs (DSP) during the first week of classes. Keep in mind that students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Class Topic	Readings and Assignments Due
Week 1		
Mon. Aug 25	Syllabus & Course Overview	
Wed. Aug 27	Overview of Conservation Psychology and Research Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clayton & Myers, Ch 1 Bell, P.A., Greene, T. C., Fisher, J.D. & Baum, A. (2001). Excerpt from Chapter 1: How is research in Environmental Psychology done?. <i>Environmental Psychology</i>, New York: Harcourt, 10–19.
Week 2		
Mon. Sept 1		Labor Day – no class
Wed. Sept 3	Environmental Problems: Human Causes and Consequences Film #1: An Inconvenient Truth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clayton, S. & Brook, A. (2005). Can psychology help save the world? A model for conservation psychology. <i>Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy</i>, 5(1), 1-15. <p><i>Due at end of class: Film Reaction Sheet #1 for “An Inconvenient Truth”</i></p>
Week 3		
Mon.	Climate Science	<i>Due at start of class: MyFootprint.org quiz results and reflection</i>

Sept. 8	Overview Guest Lecturer: Catalina Oaida	<i>write-up</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook et al. (2013). Quantifying the consensus on anthropogenic global warming in the scientific literature. <i>Environmental Research Letters</i>, 8, 1-7. •
Wed. Sept 10	Cognitive Processing, Attitudes and Perceptions I	<i>Due at start of class: 1-paragraph description of chosen self-change behavior</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clayton and Myers, p. 24-27 • Koger & Winter, Chapter 7
Week 4		
Mon. Sept 15	Cognitive Processing, Attitudes and Perceptions II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading TBD
Wed. Sept 17	Morals, Ethics, and Values Guest Lecture: TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clayton & Myers, Chapter 3
Week 5		
Mon. Sept. 22	Affect: Guilt, Shame, Hope, & Pride I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading TBD
Wed. Sept. 24	Affect: Guilt, Shame, Hope, & Pride II Film #2: Food, Inc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading TBD <i>Due at end of class: Film Reaction Sheet #2 for "Food, Inc."</i>
Week 6		
Mon. Sept 29	Identity, Consumerism, and Happiness I Guest Lecturer, TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koger & Winter, p. 122-128 • Clayton & Myers, Chapter 4
Wed. Oct 1	Identity, Consumerism, and Happiness II Film #3: Human Footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hogg & Reid (2006). Social identity, self categorization, and communication of group norms. <i>Communication Theory</i>, 16, 7-30. • Griskevicius, V., et al. (2010). Going green to be seen: status, reputation, and conspicuous conservation. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i>, 98, 392-404.

		<i>Due at end of class: Film Reaction Sheet #3 for "The Human Footprint"</i>
Week 7		
Mon., Oct. 6	Social Influences 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koger & Winter – pp. 95-106 Schultz, P.W., Nolan, J.M., Cialdini, R. B., Goldstein, N. J., & Griskevicius, V. (2007). The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms. <i>Psychological Science</i>, 18, 429-434.
Wed., Oct 8	Social Influences 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading TBD
Week 8		
Mon Oct. 13-	Midterm	
Wed, Oct. 15	Putting The Pieces Together: Models of Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stern & Dietz. (1994). The Value Basis of Environmental Concern. <i>Journal of Social Issues</i> 50, 6584-xxxx. Koger & Winter, pp. 321-329
Week 9		
Mon Oct. 20	Behavior Modification I: Behaviorist Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clayton & Myers, Chapter 9 Koger & Winter, Chapter 5
Wed Oct. 22	Behavior Modification II: CBSM Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McKenzie-Mohr, D. (2009). Fostering sustainable behavior: Community-based social marketing. Download at: http://cbsm.com/public/images/FosteringSustainableBehavior.pdf -- pp. 32-37
Week 10		
Mon Oct. 27	Behavior Modification III: Using Psychology to Build a MEASUABLY more Sustainable World (Program Evaluation)	<p><i>Due at start of class: Self-change journal</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koger & Winter – pp. 330-354 De Young, R. (1993). Changing behavior and making it stick: The conceptualization and management of conservation behavior. <i>Environment and Behavior</i>. 25:485-505
Wed. Oct 29	Behavior Modification IV Guest Lecture: TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading TBD
Week 11		
Mon. Nov. 3-	Behavior Modification V: Persuasion, Message Framing, & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bator, R. & Cialdini, R. (2000). The application of persuasion theory to the development of effective proenvironmental public service announcements. <i>Journal of Social Issues</i>, 56(3), 527-541.

Wed Nov. 5	Film #4: A Convenient Truth	<i>Due at start of class: Conservation Program Part 1 write-ups</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koger & Winter, p. 321-353 <i>Due at end of Class: Film Reaction Sheet #4 for "A Convenient Truth"</i>
Week 12		
Mon. Nov 10	Guest Lecture: TBD Being in Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Koger & Winter, Chapter 9
Wed Nov. 12	Film #5: Blackfish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading TBD <i>Due at end of class: Film Reaction Sheet #5 for "Blackfish"</i>
Week 13		
Mon. Nov. 17	The Future of Conservation Psychology	<i>Due at start of class: Conservation Program Part 2 write-ups</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brook, A.T., Zint, M. & DeYoung, R. (2003). Landowners' responses to an Endangered Species Act listing and implications for encouraging conservation. Conservation Biology, 17(6), 1638-1649.
Weds Nov 19	Film #6: Tapped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading TBD <i>Due at end of class: Film Reaction Sheet #6 for "Tapped"</i>
Week 14		
Mon. Nov. 24	Team Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No readings today – you will work with your teams on your final papers and presentations
Wed. Nov.26	Happy Thanksgiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No class meeting today
Week 15		
Mon., Dec. 1	Jobs in Conservation Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading TBD
Wed. Dec. 3	Class Presentations	<i>Due at the beginning of class: Power Point Presentations (electronic ok) and Final Papers</i> What have we learned?
Week 16		
?? Location:	<i>x-x Final Exam</i>	

Note. The syllabus and/or course schedule may be modified at my discretion. I will announce any changes in class or via email.