

Faculty of Health
Department of Psychology
PSYC 3450/6710 3.0: ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY
(Las Nubes, Costa Rica version)
Summer 2022

This course will be delivered in person (indoors and outdoors) at York's eco-campus in Costa Rica. It will be an intensive 10-day course including lectures, guest speakers, experiential exercises, presentations, group work, and field trips. Full attendance and participation in all activities is expected. There will be readings to do and videos to watch before the course; several small assignments and quizzes, as well as a group project, during the course itself; and a paper due after the course.

This course can be taken as a 3rd or 4th year undergraduate course (Psychology 3450) or as a graduate level Readings Course (Psychology 6710). The classes and activities will be the same for both levels but grad students will have extra readings and more in-depth expectations for assignments.

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne Perry

Email: perry@yorku.ca

Course Prerequisite(s)

- York U. undergraduate Psychology majors must have HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology), with a minimum grade of C
- York U. Graduate students should have permission of the instructor and inform the Grad Office and their Area Head
- All students must have their eligibility confirmed individually via the Las Nubes program

Course Description

Environmental Psychology is the study of the bi-directional interaction between people and their environments. It includes the effect of natural and built environments on people's well-being and also the impact humans are having on the environment broadly. Environmental psychologists examine people's thoughts, feelings, attitudes, motivation, resistance, and behaviour in relation to environmental factors. In particular, this course will focus on human behaviour and how to encourage pro-environmental behaviour.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge in environmental psychology.
2. Articulate trends in environmental psychology.
3. Express knowledge of environmental psychology in written form.
4. Describe and explain limits to generalizability of research findings on environmental psychology.
5. Demonstrate ability to relate information on environmental psychology to own and others' life experiences.

Specific Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic theories and empirical research findings in Environmental Psychology including:

- The ways in which built and natural environments impact (positively or negatively) adults and children
- The impact humans are having on the environment broadly (e.g., climate change, species extinction, pollution of air, land, and water) but also positive initiatives
- Theories and factors to consider related to behaviour change and methods for encouraging pro-environmental behaviour in ourselves and others

2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of research methods used in Environmental Psychology. They will be able to articulate the importance of taking an evidence-based approach, while considering the strength and limits of different research methods for particular applications

3. Students will identify a behaviour of their own that is contributing negatively to the environment in some way, and design a pro-environmental behaviour change project, with a sound empirical methodology, and articulate this via a brief oral presentation.

4. Students will practise critical thinking and reflection on their own worldview, conceptual frameworks and assumptions, and behaviour with respect to the environmental issues discussed in the course.

Required Texts (available in digital form)

- Steg, L. & DeGroot, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Environmental Psychology: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Wiley. (referred to below as **EP**)
- Scott, B.A., Amel, E.L., Koger, S.M., & Manning, C.M. (2021). *Psychology for Sustainability* (5th ed.). Routledge. (referred to as **P4S**)

Other Resources

Brochure: Environmental Psychology: Enhancing our world.

http://web.uvic.ca/~esplab/sites/default/files/Enhancing%20Our%20World_0.pdf

Abrahamse, W. (2019). *Encouraging pro-environmental behaviour: What works, what doesn't, and why*. Academic Press.

Clayton, S. D. (Ed.) (2012). *The Oxford handbook of environmental and conservation psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Clayton, S., & Myers, G. (2015). *Conservation psychology: Understanding and promoting human care for nature*. Wiley Blackwell.

Fleury-Bahi, G., Pol, E., & Navarro, O. (Eds.). (2017). *Handbook of environmental psychology and quality of life research*. Springer International Publishing.

Gifford, R. (2014). Environmental psychology matters. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 541–579.

Gifford, R. (2014). *Environmental psychology: Principles and practice*. (5th ed.) Colville WA: Optimal Books.

Gifford, R. (Ed.). (2016). *Research methods for environmental psychology*. Wiley Blackwell.

Harré, N. (2018). *Psychology for a better world: Working with people to save the planet*. Auckland University Press.

Relevant Journal Articles will be added to the final version of this Syllabus. Two major journals are:

- ***Journal of Environmental Psychology***
- ***Environment and Behavior***

See also Dr. Gifford's (University of Victoria) website which has pdf's of many papers:

http://web.uvic.ca/~esplab/?q=recent_publications

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Quiz on Readings x 3 (5% each)	Day 2, 4, and 8	15
Brief Journal Self-reflection x 3 (5% each)	Day 3, 6, and 9	15
Participation in Discussions, Activities		10
Individual Behaviour Self-change Project	Day 8, 9, or 10	20
Group Project on Larger Scale Behaviour Change	Day 10	10
Final Paper	Aug. 15	30
Total		100%

Description of Assignments

Quizzes. There will be 3 short quizzes, consisting of 10 multiple choice questions that you will complete in class. The purpose of these is to ensure your understanding of the theories and concepts discussed in the assigned readings. It is important to keep up with the readings as the time is very tight during the course. These will be in classes 2, 4, and 8.

Journal Self-reflections. Students will be provided with a journal notebook. You are strongly encouraged to make frequent notes about your observations, experiences, and feelings about the various topics and activities in the course. These will also be where you write your 3 brief self-reflection assignments on particular aspects of the experience you are having during the course. Your reflections might include any personal learnings you are having, emotional reactions to things we are doing or talking about in the course, etc. There are no right or wrong answers for these. They should be about 1 page max. and must be *legible* please. They do not need to have references or be linked to the readings (though you may do so). They could include a drawing or poem or other kinds of creative expressions if that works for you. The 3 topics will be: 1. how immersion in the natural environment of the rainforest affects you; 2. what you have learned about your own behaviour contributing to climate change; and 3. what you have learned from getting to know your homestay families and experiencing a different culture and way of life. These will be due by the end of the day on class 3, 6, and 9.

Class and Activity Participation. You are expected to participate actively in the various field trips and outings and to attend all classes and participate actively. That includes listening respectfully to our guest presenters and hosts at various field trips and asking them pertinent questions; as well as listening to each other, giving constructive feedback to each other, sharing knowledge or experiences you may have that are relevant for the topic at hand.

Individual Behaviour Self-change Project. You will be asked to identify a particular behaviour that you engage in that is harmful to the environment and/or yourself and that you wish to change. This could include things like: using less fossil fuel, biking or walking more, eating less meat, spending more time in nature, improving your built environment, decreasing plastic use, cleaning up an environment, etc. It should be something over which you have control. Based on the factors discussed in the class about what affects people's behaviour and ways to bring about behaviour change, you will design a behavioural program for yourself. You will complete a

brief template form to hand in about your project and will give a brief (5-minute) presentation to the class on your plan. These will happen in classes 8, 9, and 10. You are encouraged to carry out your plan once you return home after the course. **Graduate students** will be expected to actually carry out the project, collect and analyze (graphically or statistically) their data and write up a journal style brief report on their study including a literature review, methods, results, discussion.

Group Environmental Intervention Project. You will work in groups (approx.. 5 people) to design a larger scale intervention project to tackle a bigger environmental issue. Topics will need to be determined early in the course based on student interest and you will be given time to work with your group. You will need to think about the factors that are maintaining these “behaviours” and what level(s) of intervention are needed to address these tough and complex issues. There are many topics to choose from here as well, such as plastic in the oceans, species extinction, dying coral reefs, education for girls/women, tree planting on large scale, environmentally friendly farming practices, improving urban environments, etc.

Final Paper. The final paper will be due 2 weeks after the course and may be submitted directly to be by email (perry@yorku.ca). It can be on any topic you are interested in related to the course. It should include primary literature and research on a topic related to Environmental Psychology, preferably a topic we have not been able to cover in detail during the course. You should check with me during my “office hours” to discuss your choice of topic. The paper should be written in APA style. **Undergraduates:** The paper should be 8-10 pages with at least 6 primary sources. **Graduate students:** The paper should be 12-15 pages with at least 10 primary sources.

ASSIGNMENTS BEFORE ARRIVAL

A. Videos to watch before arrival:

1. Six short videos on Climate change and various solutions on Project Drawdown website:

<https://drawdown.org/climate-solutions-101>

2. David Attenborough (2020) “A Life on our Planet” on Netflix

B. Readings to be done before arrival:

All students: **Environmental Psychology** text chapters 1,2,3

Grad students extra reading: Gifford, R. (2014). Environmental psychology matters. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 541-579. Doi: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115048

C. Activity to complete before arrival:

Conduct an energy audit of your home. List all appliances and machines that use a) fossil fuels and b) electricity (including basement & garage if applicable)

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change)

Day	Theme, Topics	Readings (to be read before class)	Activities, Field Trips	Assignments
Day 1	Intros & Orientation to Costa Rica, ASBC Corridor Las Nubes Built environments → people	EP Ch 4, 11, 12, 14	Guest speakers Class/activities at Eco-campus Scavenger hunt (explore eco-campus grounds)	
Day 2	Research methods for Env Psych	P4S ch 4	Hiking Class/activities at Eco-campus Guest speaker	Quiz #1
Day 3	Natural environments → people's health & well-being	EP ch. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	Forest experience Class/activities at Eco-campus Guest speaker	Reflection #1 due
Day 4	People → environment esp. climate change	P4S ch 1 & 2	Field trip: Orlando's farm, birding, pineapple, coffee Class/activities at Eco-campus	Quiz #2
Day 5	People → environment – identifying our behaviours (e.g., food, energy)	P4S ch 3	Class/activities at Eco-campus	
Day 6	Behaviour change theories & approaches Dragons of Inaction	P4S ch 6 & 7	Field trip: Marvin's farm Visit: Casita Azul Class/activities at Eco-campus	Reflection #2 due)
Day 7	Behaviour change/ABA	P4S ch 5 and Appendix	Class/activities at Eco-campus Designing program to change an environmentally harmful behaviour of our own	
Day 8	Encouraging pro-environmental Behav	P4S ch 11 & 12	Field trip: Uvita Beach and Marine Park Dinner & Night Hike	Quiz #3 Individual Presentations
Day 9	Pro-environmental Behav on larger scale		Field trip: Los Cusingos: hiking, history, indigenous petroglyphs Guest speaker	Individual Presentations Reflection #3 due
Day 10	Putting it all Together, Course wrap-up		Presentations Guest speaker Eve Event for Homestay families	Individual Presentations Group Poster Presentations

General Information:

Class Format and Attendance Policy

This course will be delivered at our Eco-campus in Cosata Rica in an intensive 10-day format. Some work will be required before travelling to Costa Rica and final assignments will be due after the course. Students are expected to attend and participate actively in each day's activities and class sessions while in Costa Rica.

Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2021-22](#)

Academic Integrity for Students

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#)

Test Banks

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as "Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation" (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or "encouraging, enabling or causing others" (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

Course Materials Copyright Information

These course materials are designed for use as part of the Psychology 3450/6710 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#).