

Psych 121: Psychology for Sustainability

Spring, 2015

Professor Sue Koger

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My primary role is to help you learn, so please contact me if you have any concerns or questions!

Class Meetings: M, W, F, 11:30-12:30

SML 222

Course Description: Environmental degradation (e.g., resource overconsumption, pollution, climate change) is the most pressing problem confronting contemporary society: Without a livable planet, humans, like other animals, cannot survive. Because human behavior is at the root of the problem, Psychology, the science of behavior, offers important insights for understanding and changing unsustainable individual and societal systems. Due to the applied nature of the material, a ***service learning component*** is included.

This course satisfies the *Understanding Society* General Education requirement. It also serves as an *introduction to psychology*, and thus may substitute for Psych 210 as the prerequisite for other Psychology courses (see a Departmental advisor for assistance).

Learning Objectives: This course will enable students to

1. Recognize the myriad ways in which humans live unsustainably;
2. Appreciate the cultural context in which unsustainable lifestyles developed;
3. Understand the scientific method as utilized in the study of human behavior;
4. Describe psychological theory and research illuminating situational, social, cognitive, and individual difference factors underlying unsustainable behaviors, and how these factors can be recruited to promote alternatives;
5. Realize that human health and well-being is inextricably connected with environmental health;
6. Envision behavioral and social systems that are more compatible with ecological systems;
7. Apply conceptual and empirical knowledge to promote individual and group behavioral change.

Competencies assessed by successful completion of Psyc 121, as detailed below.

Required Text:

Koger, S. M., & Winter, D.D. (2010). *The Psychology of Environmental Problems: Psychology for Sustainability*. New York: Taylor & Francis, Psychology Press.

Supplemental readings will be posted on our course WISE website.

Course Requirements and Student Evaluation: Willamette's Credit Hour Policy holds that for every hour of class time, there is an expectation of 2-3 hours work outside of class. Thus, for a class meeting three days per week, you should anticipate spending 6-9 hours outside of class engaged in course-related activities. *Your preparation and participation in class, performance on exams, and completion of two major projects will determine your final grade.*

Class Participation. The success of this class is as dependent upon your preparation and participation as it is on mine. Thus, I expect you to be consistently present in class (both physically *and* mentally), and overtly engaged in the material (answering and asking questions, taking notes, etc.). You should *come to class having completed the reading assignments*. I will supplement the reading and discussions with lectures and occasional films.

Classroom Etiquette. Cell phones and other electronics are distracting, so they must be turned off or placed in silent mode *and put away* prior to the start of class. Repeated instances of a device sounding in class or its use will result in its confiscation. iPads or Laptops are **only allowed** when I have specifically requested you to use them (i.e., if there were supplemental readings/homework assigned). Please grant your peers and me your respect by listening and attending to whomever has the floor at the moment.

Exams. There will be three exams over the course of the semester, consisting of multiple choice, true/false, and fill in the blank questions. Exams are *semi-cumulative*, to the extent that early material is foundational for later concepts, and some content will be revisited throughout the course. Questions are based on assigned readings, as well as lectures, videos, *and* class discussions. Thus, attendance and participation, as well as good reading, note-taking, and study habits, are all critical for successfully completing the course. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero for that exam. There are no make-ups, and an exam may not be taken earlier than it is scheduled, so please don't ask. Medical excuses provided *prior* to the exam may be considered for exemption to these rules. (*Exams assess SLO 1-6.*)

Term Projects: In the spirit of the well-known dictum to **think globally and act locally**, students will complete two major projects over the course of the term: One project is focused on his/her behavior as an individual, and the other focuses on our larger community. You are free to formulate your own ideas to create projects that interest you, but all projects (personal and group) are subject to my approval. (SLO 7)

1. For the *individual project*, you will examine one or more of your environmentally relevant behaviors, including: gathering baseline data, evaluating obstacles to change, implementing an intervention, tracking your progress in a journal or blog, and writing a final report and reflection. (See WISE Assignments for details).

2. *Campus or community service learning project:* For this project, you will **work in pairs** to address an environmentally relevant practice or problem within the Willamette campus or the larger Salem community. Your team will:

- a) assess the situation and identify target behavior(s);
- b) engage in *6-8 hours of service learning/volunteering* to begin mitigating the problem;
- c) develop a strategy or program to help solve the problem for the long term, such as creating and producing a video-taped *public service announcement, website*, or other appropriate educational/outreach product(s), which you will share in a presentation;
- d) write individual reflection papers on your experience; and
- e) complete and submit a self- and peer- evaluation.

Further details will be posted on WISE; see also relevant due dates on the course calendar. Note: This project is in lieu of a final exam (consider it a “Take Home, Collaborative Exam”!).

Please note: Trees are a valuable resource, so please be conservation minded in ALL assignments. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are **due electronically on WISE** prior to the start of class (usually **by 9 am**). **Assignments turned in as hard copies or after the due date/time will not be accepted for credit.** See course calendar for due dates.

Research Participation. Because this course may count as a substitute for Psyc 210 (Intro to Psych), and because all Introductory Psychology students are required to complete a research participation assignment for course credit, you will need to a) either participate in ongoing research projects conducted by faculty and/or advanced students in the Department; or, as an alternative, b) write an essay on research ethics in response to readings supplied by the Department. Failure to complete this requirement will result in a grade of “Incomplete” for this course. I encourage you to participate in the research option, as it is designed to afford you additional insight into the methods and techniques of experimental psychologists. *Be sure to **watch your email** for announcements about research opportunities, and note that you need to participate in ALL of them in order to get course credit.* More details will be provided in class. (SLO 3)

Grading:	Exams (3 at 20% each)	60%
	Class Attendance and Participation	3%
	Homework & In-Class Writing Assignments	7%
	<i>Act Locally</i> Term Projects	
	Personal Project, incl. progress reports	12%
	Group - Campus or Community Project	<u>18%</u>
	TOTAL:	100%

Academic Honesty is essential to the educational process, and I trust that you agree with me. In fact, I believe that a small minority of students actively attempts to cheat. However, my experience suggests that I should say something about cheating and plagiarism. As described in the Willamette CLA catalog, “cheating is any form of intellectual dishonesty or misrepresentation of one’s knowledge. Plagiarism, a form of cheating, consists of representing someone else’s work as one’s own.” Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in this course and will be treated severely, including failure of the course and possibly (at the Dean's discretion) suspension or dismissal from the college. If you have any question about what constitutes cheating, please see me for clarification. *Ignorance does not constitute a valid excuse for plagiarism or cheating.*

Course Calendar (may be subject to change)

Week of...	Topic(s)	Reading Assignment
Jan 19 (M) (W, F)	Introductions & Overview What on Earth are we doing?	Ch 1
	F, 1/23, by 9 am: "Emotional impact statement" due on WISE	
26	Becoming conscious and <i>Active Hope</i> The Nature of Western Thought	3 2
Feb 2 (M)	Personal Ecological Footprint & Topic Statement due (see WISE) Western Thought cont'd, & Research Methods in Psych	(ch 4 from 4e)
9 (M) (W, F)	Unit 1 Exam Social Psychology	4
16	cont'd, & Community Based Social Marketing – McKenzie-Mohr, American Psychologist, 2000	
23 (M)	Group - Service Learning topic statements and proposals due Behavioral Psychology	5
Mar 2 (M) F, 3/6	Cognitive Psychology Personal Project Reflection due	7
9	Psychology of Climate Change Communication – CRED Guide http://guide.cred.columbia.edu/pdfs/CREDguide_full-res.pdf	
16 (M) (W, F)	Unit 2 Exam Group meetings F, 3/20 Group projects – PSA (or other outreach) statement and outlines due	
23	** No classes this week – enjoy your spring break! **	
30	Neuropsychology	6
Apr 6	Disorders, Health & Developmental Psych	8 & 9
13	Gaia and Ecopsychology	10
20 (M,F)	Putting it together & social movements W, 4/22 SSRD – No classes! Please support your peers' presentations ☺	11
27 (M) (W, F)	Unit 3 Exam Group project presentations - ppts due on WISE by 9am, Wed, 4/29	
May 4 (M only)	Finish presentations & wrap up... Peer & self evaluations due on WISE by 5 pm!	