**PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHTS INTO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS (PSY 109)**

**Block 1, 2018**

Professor: Alice Ganzel

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Student Success Instructor: Angie Bauman Power; Student Success Mentor: Rose Shimaoka

Class times: 9:00-11:00 and 1:00-3:00 (there will be some exceptions—listen for announcements in class)

Texts: *Psychology for Sustainability* **4th Ed.** (Scott, Amil, Koger, & Manning, 2016)

*Make It Stick* (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014)

Office hours: **By appointment**; I am usually in my office by 8:30 and stay until 4:30-5:00

**COURSE GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The overarching goal of a first-year seminar is to introduce you to college-level expectations within the context of a specific discipline. My three broad goals in this course are to (1) help you learn how to be an effective learner; (2) acquaint you with psychology’s insights into environmental issues; and (3) school you in using a problem-solving approach to a societal issue. As you view the Course Schedule you’ll find that these goals roughly correspond to each of the weeks throughout the block.

Performing well in the course means that by the end of the block you will have:

* learned what neuroscience tells us about learning, gained insight into your own thinking processes, and developed strategies you can use in subsequent courses (and throughout life);
* increased your knowledge of the variety of environmental problems, the human behaviors that underlie those environmental problems, and some approaches to changing behaviors; and
* learned how to effectively collaborate with others in developing a plan of action for an issue.

Additionally, you can expect to:

* gain practice in writing;
* learn how to differentiate scholarly from non-scholarly works, know how to find and use each type, and properly document sources;
* develop a basic understanding of the role and importance of different academic disciplines.

All colleges and universities have a mission statement and educational outcomes; you can view Cornell’s [here.](https://www.cornellcollege.edu/about-cornell/mission/index.shtml) Activities in this class are designed to foster and enhance your ***knowledge,*** and your abilities at ***inquiry, reasoning, communication****,* and***citizenship***(addressed further under each portion of the course below). Hopefully the class will also cultivate your well-being.

**BROAD COURSE OVERVIEW**

Before we get to the topic of environmental psychology, we’ll take a brief tour into what neuroscience tells us about *learning processes.* During our second week we’ll cover the psychological principles that apply to sustainability, and by the end of Week Two we will have selected a specific environmental issue/problem to address. (This can either be one issue for the entire class, or if groups want to address different issues, we can consider this.) During Week Three, we’ll use a problem-solving approach and develop a plan of action to address behavioral change toward greater sustainability. This will be continuously developed and revised each day. During our final half-week, we’ll apply what we’ve learned in the course to other venues and disciplines, and do some preliminary career exploration.

**CLASS FORMAT AND DAILY ACTIVITIES**

(adapted, with permission, from Kara Beauchamp)

In an immersion calendar like ours, daily attendance and preparation is *essential*. We’ll generally meet both mornings and afternoons, and will spend the bulk of time discussing and workshopping ideas. Because daily activities build on previous ones, students will be allowed only ***3 excused absences*** (morning and afternoon count separately). If you must miss a class, contact me beforehand, and plan to check with your classmates or me as to what was covered.

**Your responsibilities:** Each of us comes into this class with our own backgrounds and interests, which may vary widely. What we share, at the very least, is that we all inhabit the only planet we know of that supports life, and that we all currently live in one of the wealthiest societies that has ever existed on this planet. What I ask you to bring to this course is a willingness to both share your perspective with the rest of us and to question your own perspective.

As a student at a liberal arts college, you are responsible for your own engagement in the academic conversation. This means being a prepared and active participant. This includes reading the syllabus and all the assigned material, but more importantly, it means thinking critically, asking questions, coming to class having formulated your own ideas and responses to the course material, and engaging in dialogue with others. If you do not understand a topic of discussion, an assignment, a grade, or have any other questions or concerns, please come and talk with me; you and I are partners in our endeavors.

**Class Discussions:** The classroom is a space for learning together. You should be respectful of your professor and your classmates. To participate in this class, you need to be an informed participant—your comments should be related to the course material and should add to the topic being discussed. You also need to listen to each other—which requires patience, empathy, and mutual respect. You should be willing to share your ideas and be open to opposing perspectives. It is possible to disagree and still interact respectfully. Listening carefully, asking questions, and responding to what people have said all demonstrate respectful engagement. Effective class discussions will cultivate your skills in ***inquiry, reasoning***, and ***communication***.

To participate productively in class discussions, you must:

Read the assignment. The entire class suffers if even a few people haven't completed the reading.

Listen carefully. Rather than anticipating your response to a speaker's point and working out in advance how you want to reply, listen to all of what members of the class are saying; reflect on their words and then formulate a response. You might consider what other members of the class are not saying as well as what they are saying.

Speak constructively. A discussion is not a time for speech-making. Craft your remarks so that they help the entire class move forward in its search for meaning. If you tend to be quite comfortable speaking in groups, you may need at times to restrain yourself and give others a chance to speak. Conversely, if you are quite shy, you will need to find ways of speaking up.

Ask questions. If you tend to be reticent about talking in class, one strategy for participating is to ask clarifying questions of your classmates. Doing so can help others to simplify and/or expand their ideas. As always, however, questions should be honest and respectful.

**Work Expectations:** According to the US Department of Education, in order to receive credit for with a block course (which is equivalent to a 4 semester-hour course), a student is expected to spend at least 150 hours on coursework. This includes both in-class and out-of-class time. We will spend 3-4 hours each day in class. That means that you should spend 3.5 – 4 hours a day on coursework outside of class time every day, including weekend days.

**THE LEARNING JOURNAL (also known as the Interactive Notebook)**

(adapted, with permission, from Kerry Bostwick)

*Reading* is not the same as *studying.* To help you prepare for daily activities, you will keep a learning journal. You and I will jointly assess your learning journal three times during the block.

**What is the Purpose of the Learning Journal?**

The purpose of the Learning Journal is to enable you to be a creative, independent thinker, learner, and writer.

**What Goes in Your Learning Journal?**

EVERYTHING we do in class and for class goes in your learning journal. First, as you can see, you have daily readings to complete. I recommend that you take handwritten notes on your reading, but I also strongly encourage you to include any questions, objections, and/or ideas that are generated by the reading. For example, note ideas that resonate with you, things that surprised you, things that you question, things with which you disagree, etc.

Furthermore, you will want to takes notes on our discussions in class. This includes ideas generated in small group discussions and any information I convey. You will likely want to record others’ ideas (and be sure to credit your classmates for these). Generating your own visual images, metaphors and analogies is highly effective in cultivating your learning.

You and I will assess your learning journal three times during the course; this Friday (8/31); next Friday (9/7) the final Wednesday of the block (9/19). **Note the due times for each Learning Journal** on the Course Schedule.

The purpose of the first assessment is to have you **reflect on your own learning processes**. Our readings in the book *Make It Stick* should engender ideas here. This process, thinking about thinking, is known as *metacognition* and is a powerful tool in learning.

Your reflection narrative should not exceed two pages, double-spaced, and must be typed, printed, and stuck in the front of your notebook. (See general guidelines for written assignments later in the syllabus.) You will turn in both your narrative and the notebook itself by **9:00 a.m**. on Friday 8/31 (and late penalties *will* apply); I will return the notebook and my assessment later that day.

The second and third assessments of the Learning Journal will incorporate similar reflections on your learning for the week, but will incorporate additional requirements, so be sure to attend to those subsequent guidelines; **these will be posted on Moodle.**

The overarching goal of the Learning Journal and these self-assessments is to ***encourage you to be responsible for your own learning.*** The Learning Journal will help to inculcate your ***inquiry*** and ***communication*** skills.

**SUSTAINABILITY PLAN/PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH/WORKING IN TEAMS**

Putting Learning into Action

Although knowledge for the sake of knowledge is important and laudable, most of us don’t have the luxury of simply taking for classes for fun. And while there are many varying understandings of the idea of “liberal arts,” for me, the following pieces are essential: being broadly educated, being able to think logically and creatively, and *applying one’s knowledge to real-world problems and issues*. Nowhere is this likely to be more true than when it comes to environmental issues. Thus, a large portion of the course will involve introducing you to working in teams on a project—in this case, to complete a sustainability plan. There are a variety of approaches to team problem-solving; we will be using a method developed by researchers from Stanford University called **Design Thinking**. The entirety of Week 3 will be dedicated to this.

The mantra of sustainability is to ***think global, act local***. Any of us can—and *do*—influence the behaviors of those around us. By the end of Week 2, after reviewing what psychology tells us about environmental problems, we will decide on a specific ‘local’ behavior—in this case, something related to the Cornell community—and will develop a sustainability plan. This may be one thing of interest to the entire class, or different groups may pursue different behavioral targets. Note however, that your plan will focus on impacting ***behavior(s)*** (as opposed, for example, to a technological fix).

We will be using the *Design Thinking for Educators* (DTE) guide, which is on Moodle. Note that this is geared toward teachers, school administrators, etc. and **not** toward environmental issues. However, the fundamental process is outlined in this booklet. You will submit a rough draft of your sustainability plan by 9:00 a.m., Friday, 9/14. In this case, ‘rough draft’ means I will not be grading you on having polished writing, but I do expect that your essential ideas will be in place by this time.

As you read the DTE guide, you’ll see they recommend a variety of *written* steps in the process. Plan on submitting at least one written report each day, as outlined in the plan. This allows me to give you feedback, and also documents your work product for that day.

As you develop your plan, you will want to link your ideas to what you’ve learned during the course. For example, what aspects of your plan are related to cognition, and which specific facets of cognition are you trying to tap? What social psychological principles will you employ? Will your plan address different personality types? Will you incorporate motivational concepts in your plan? etc.

This assignment is designed to cultivate the Educational Outcome Priorities of ***knowledge,*** ***inquiry, reasoning, communication****,* and***citizenship.***

**APPLYING VARIOUS ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

One of the goals of a liberal arts education is to develop your understanding of how various disciplines can enlighten our perceptions of any given issue, and nowhere is this more evident than when considering environmental topics. Thus, a final assignment in this course is that you consider and assess how various disciplines might be applied to environmental issues. Of course, the natural sciences are obvious candidates, but I encourage you to think more broadly. Can **history** offer any enlightenment? Is there a role for the **arts** in this discussion? and so on. This assessment should include not only the disciplines that could apply but also an explanation of *how* they might do so. This assignment will give you practice in ***inquiry***.

**CORNELL POLICIES**

HEALTH ISSUES: If medical or psychological conditions arise during the block, please consult with me, and/or with a medical or psychological health provider, before your progress in the course may become impeded. If health concerns make the completion of this course not viable, you may petition for a health withdrawal (WH), but you should be aware that Cornell counselors and health professionals will not normally issue support for a WH unless you have consulted them at or near the onset of the problem.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.  Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format.  For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity.  An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others.  A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known.  When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source.  If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, **whether intended or not,** this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.  The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading “Academic Honesty.”

**COURSE AND CLASSROOM POLICIES**

As noted earlier, daily attendance is essential, and students are allowed only ***3 excused absences*** (morning and afternoon count separately). If a student misses more than three classes (excused or unexcused), the course grade will be lowered by 1/3 of the letter grade (e.g., from A to A-). (I reserve the right to adjust this policy in the case of individual unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances.) Furthermore, habitual tardiness will result in the same penalty.

**General Guidelines for written assignments**

During your time here at Cornell you will learn standard writing formats (APA, MLA, Chicago style). In psychology, we use APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines. There are many, many specifications for this, but for now I would like you to particularly incorporate three of these: *everything* is double-spaced, every page has 1” margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, right), and font size throughout is 12-point Times New Roman.

Several of your papers will be submitted via an assignment folder on Moodle and **MUST BE IN WORD FORMAT (no exceptions!).** Like many of you, I prefer Macs, but currently the College only has resources to support Office (Microsoft) formats. Given my handicaps, I find it difficult to grade by hand, so I use the Word program to offer comments and suggestions. If I cannot open your paper, you will accrue the same late penalties described below.

LATE POLICIES: All written work is due at the beginning of class or as noted on the Course Schedule and/or Moodle, and if turned in late will be penalized 2% per hour up to 5 hours, and 10% per day thereafter. Note also that although you will be working extensively with your classmates, ***all written work must be your own*** (unless I state otherwise).

**Cell phones and laptops.** Although technology has afforded additional luxuries to our lives, it brings concomitant problems—most notably in the form of distractions. Thus, I have a **STRICT NO-CELL-PHONE POLICY IN THE CLASSROOM** including during class breaks. If you must use your cell phone you must **exit the classroom** to do so and should do so *only* during breaks. Further, your phone must be **put away, out of sight.** Furthermore, although we will use laptops daily in the classroom, I expect you to use it *only* for class activities: no surfing the web, checking your e-mail, watching videos, etc. Any of these violations will also result in a lower participation grade … and I do not give warnings; I’ll just do it. While we are addressing the issue of distractions you should also avoid things like reading the newspaper, knitting/crafts, etc.

**Food and drink**. You may bring coffee/water/soda/etc., with you to class, but please ask me (and other professors) before bringing food into a class.

**ASSESSMENT AND COURSE GRADES**

In summary, here are the assignments you will complete for me, and how each is weighted:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | % of course grade  (sans Student Success activities) |
| Daily attendance, participation and classroom etiquette | 10% |
| Learning Journal, 1st review | 5% |
| Learning Journal, 2nd review | 10% |
| Learning Journal, 3rd review | 15% |
| Retrieval practice (quiz) 1 | 5% |
| Retrieval practice (quiz) 2 | 15% |
| Sustainability Plan | 30% |
| Application of Academic Disciplines | 10% |

Final course grades will be determined on a percentage basis using the following:

94 to 100% 🡪 A 84 to 86% 🡪 B 74 to 76% 🡪 C 64 to 66% 🡪 D

90 to 93% 🡪 A- 80 to 83% 🡪 B- 70 to 73% 🡪 C- 60 to 63% 🡪 D-

87 to 89% 🡪 B+ 77 to 79% 🡪 C+ 67 to 69% 🡪 D+ below 60% 🡪 F

Given the rigor of the course and the intense workload, I encourage you to work extensively with me, your classmates, and the support systems in the College, especially College librarians and personnel from the **Center for Teaching and Learning**. Here is their contact information:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Writing Studio | http://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/ctl/ws/index.shtml |
| Research | <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/ctl/research/index.shtml> |
| Quantitative Reasoning | <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/ctl/qr/index.shtml> |
| Academic Technology | http://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/ctl/ats/index.shtml |

**COURSE SCHEDULE\***

\*Sometimes it is necessary to make adjustments on the block plan. Please be prepared to be flexible, and so will I.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Topic | Assignment (completed *before* class) | Assignments due |
| 8/27 | Openers/orientation |  |  |
| 8/28 | How do we *learn*? | *Make It Stick*: Preface and Chpts 1, 2 & 3 |  |
| 8/29 | What is env psych? | *Psych for Sustain:* Foreward, Preface and Chapt 1 |  |
| 8/30 | Hist/Fund principles | *Psych for Sustain:* Chapts 2 & 3 |  |
| 8/31 | Cognition & Motivation in learning | *Make It Stick*: Chpts 4 & 5 **OR** Chpts 6 & 7 (jigsaw) ***to be assigned*** | **Learning journal due 9:00 am** |
|  |  |  |  |
| 9/3 | **Retrieval practice (quiz)** | Afternoon—discuss environmental problem/s to address  Time management workshop\*\*\* |  |
| 9/4 | Cognition and its influences on env issues | Chapt 1 from *Nudge* (on Moodle)  *Psych for Sustain:* Chapt 6 |  |
| 9/5 | Personality/Identity in environmentalism | *Psych for Sustain:* Chapt 7 |  |
| 9/6 | Motivation in sustain | *Psych for Sustain:* Chapt 8 |  |
| 9/7 | Behaviorism & Social Psych | *Psych for Sustain:* Chapt 5  Intro from *Nudge* (on Moodle) | **Learning journal due 5:00 pm** |
|  |  |  |  |
| 9/10 | **Retrieval practice (quiz)** | Afternoon: Decide on environmental behaviors to target  Wellness workshop\*\*\* |  |
| 9/11 | Pulling it together | *Design Thinking for Educators* (on Moodle)  *Psych for Sustain:* Chapt 11 & Appendix | writing assignment based on *DTE* |
| 9/12 | Collaborative Design Workshop |  | writing assignment  based on *DTE* |
| 9/13 | Workshop |  | writing assignment  based on *DTE* |
| 9/14 | Workshop |  | **Rough draft of plan due 9:00 am** |
|  |  |  |  |
| 9/17 | Preliminary career exploration | Complete Type Focus accessed [here](https://v6.typefocus.com/); available through Berry Career Institute | **App. Academic Disciplines due 9:00 am** |
| 9/18 | Continue in-class work |  | **Final draft of Sustainability plan due 9:00 am** |
| 9/19 | Next Steps (in class)  *mandatory attendance* |  | **Learning Journal due 9:00 am** |

\*\*\*All students in FYS courses will complete six brief activities designed to acquaint you with support systems available to help you in transitioning to college. These will be completed over the first three blocks. The time management and wellness workshops indicated here are the two that are completed during Block 1. See the separate pages on Moodle (STUDENT SUCCESS) for information.