Environmental Psychology
(PSY. 362)
ASH 1310
T/TH 10:00-11:15pm

Instructor: Prof. Eaaron Henderson-King
Office: 2206 ASH, phone: 331-2938
e-mail:henderse@gvsu.edu
Office hours: Tues. 1-2pm and Thurs. 1-2pm or by appt.

Readings:


All other readings will be available on Blackboard under “Course Documents”.

Overview: Environmental psychology is the study of how humans affect, and are affected by, the environment they inhabit. It examines human behavior, well-being, perceptions and attitudes and how each of these is influenced by the socio-physical environment. Environmental psychologists look at how the natural environment, homes, offices, educational settings, neighborhoods and communities, and technology shape, and are shaped by, those in the environment.

Thus, in this course we will ask, and address, questions such as: How do we find our way around the environments in which we live and work? What factors lead us to like, or dislike, the places in which we live? What are the effects of overcrowding, pollution, and noise on our psychological well-being?

Exams: There will be three exams in the course. The first will be based on the lecture and reading material that will be presented in the first three weeks of the semester, and the second will cover weeks 4 through 8. The final exam will be cumulative and will cover the readings assigned in the latter half of the semester as well as the material covered in the first eight weeks of the semester.

Pop quizzes on readings (three) – 30 points (10 points each)
Exam 1 – 50 points
Exam 2 – 50 points
Final Exam – 80 points

The exams will be a mix of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. The questions will be taken from BOTH the lecture material and the course readings. THIS MEANS THAT YOU MUST TAKE SOLID AND COMPLETE NOTES IN CLASS.

**Action Project:** One of the primary foci of those who are interested in environmental psychology and those who conduct research in the field is change. How can we change people’s behavior or the environment in which they live for the better? **Climate Change is the focus of this semester’s action project. Develop an intervention that would maximize the likelihood that people, an institution, or an organization will a) seriously consider the possibility of anthropogenic climate change and/or b) work on modifying their behavior to address the climate change dilemma.** Thus, the action project will provide you with an opportunity to attempt to make a positive change on some level (on people’s behavior or perceptions, or on the environment in which people live and work). For example, a group could, using the Bloomberg and Pope (2016) readings as a starting point (Chapters 1, 2, 7-10), examine what a local community (University, town, or city) has done to mitigate the effects of climate change. Then determine what additional step(s) could be taken and provide strong evidence that such action(s) should, and could, be taken. The group would also consider the social and psychological impediments to people taking action on such an issue. A central part of the project would be assessing the feasibility and effectiveness of talking to relevant stakeholders and summarizing those discussions. In those discussions, they would have read the relevant literature and be able to both discuss the idea/issue with the stakeholders as well as write to about it in the paper. Thus, your task is to develop an intervention that is designed influence the person-environment relationship.

**The project should consist of the following components:**

1) a theoretical and empirical rationale for the project

2) conducting the project (meeting with the relevant stakeholders, discussing the issue, attempting to initiate change etc.) Note: This could be something like bring people in the community together to discuss the relevant issue at a city hall meeting; getting people to advocate for the issue, talking with family, friends, students about what stops them from acting to mitigate climate change etc.

3) an assessment component in which you propose how you would assess the project’s effectiveness

4) writing an 8 to 10-page paper that incorporates the relevant theoretical and empirical issues, the practical issues with initiating change, what you did, and an assessment and critique of the project’s effectiveness (what happened in conducting the project, what were its effects, what did you learn, what would you do differently in the future and why, etc.).
Each group will be responsible for gathering readings (theoretical, empirical, and/or applied) that address the problem. They will then select two readings for the class to read. These readings must give the class a clear understanding of what the issue is AND the relevant empirical background that assisted the group to determine how they would approach addressing the issue. These readings will be used as the basis for the group leading a class presentation and discussion of their action project. Also, note that the final exam will include questions based on these readings. The readings must be submitted to me in a PDF format by February 29th. A set of discussion questions, which may be revised, should also be submitted.

In the second half of the semester, each group will lead a discussion on the readings, and both present and discuss their action project in its entirety. The presentation will last 45-minute. Groups will be graded on the quality and appropriateness of the readings they give the class to read; their leading of the discussion of the readings; their understanding and grasp of the issue they have selected and their ability to link it to relevant course material (where appropriate); and the exhibited effort put forth in conducting the project.

Every person in the group must be actively involved in the project and be able to demonstrate the person’s understanding throughout the course of the semester. A portion of your grade will be based on my assessment of how well you understand what your group project is and your involvement in it. This assessment will be based on discussions with each group over the course of the term. In addition, each person will be evaluated by the group at various points during the semester.

**Paper – 50 pts**
**Class presentation – 30 pts**
**Individual portion of project – 20 pts**
**Group evaluation of individual member’s contribution and performance – 30 pts**
**Submission of readings – 15 pts**

Total points for the course -- 355 pts

Grade Distribution:

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Schedule of classes and readings

(Week 1)
1/8 – 1/10

Introduction: What is Environmental Psychology?

Readings:


(Week 2)
1/15 – 1/17

Readings:


(Week 3)  
1/22 – 1/24

**Guest Lecture**

Research Methods in Environmental Psychology

Assignment to groups and discussion of action project

Readings:


(Week 4)  
1/29 – 1/31

Ecology and a Multi-Level Perspective

Discussion of Projects

Readings:

Systems Theory Folder_


(Week 5)  
2/5 – 2/7

2/2 – *Take-home Essay posted on Blackboard by NOON*

Perception, Cognition and the Environment

Readings:

Perception and Cognition Folder


2/9– Take-home essay response submitted via Blackboard by NOON

(Week 6)
2/12 – 2/14

**2/12 (Tues.) Exam 1 (Covering Weeks 1 through 5)**

Personality and Socio-cultural factors in Attitudes Toward the Environment

Readings:

Personality and Socio-cultural Folder


(Week 7)
2/19 – 2/21

Determinants of Pro-Environmental Behaviors

**Guest lecture**

Readings:

Attitudes Folder


Behavioral, Social and Health Effects of Environmental Stressors

Discussion of Project

**3/1 – Group readings submitted in PDF format by noon. **

Readings:

Behavioral, Social, and Health Folder


**********SPRING BREAK**********

3/3 – 3/10

(Week 9)

3/12 – 3/14

3/10 – Take-home Essay posted on Blackboard by NOON

Sustainability & Human behavior and environmental problems

Readings:

Sustainability & Human Behavior Folder


3/17 – Take-home essay response submitted via Blackboard by NOON
**3/19 (Tues.) Exam 2**

3/21 – Group 2

Media and the Environment

Readings:


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3/26 – Group 3

Media and the Environment

Readings:


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4/2 – Group 8

FILM

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4/4 – Group 5

Film

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***PAPER DUE (IN CLASS)***
4/16 – Group 1
4/18 – TBA

4/20 – Take-home portion of final exam due by NOON.

(Week 15)

April 24 Final exam (CUMULATIVE) 8:00-9:50am