

Course Title: Environmental Psychology

Course Code: BEH332

Recommended Study Year*: 2nd/ 3rd year

No. of Credits/Term: 3

Mode of Tuition: Lecture and tutorials

Class Contact Hours: 3 hours per week

Lecturer: Lis Ku (email: lisku@ln.edu.hk; office: SO312; phone: 2616-7183)

Brief Course Description

Environmental Psychology can be best summarized as an interdisciplinary science that focuses on the interplay between the (natural and built) environment and the people who occupy the environment. This course examines a) how people perceive and represent the environment, b) how the environment influences people's behaviour and cognition, c) the impact of people's behavior on the environment, and d) how we can help change people's attitude and behavior towards the natural environment.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, you should:

Knowledge:

- K1) have a better understanding of the complex relationships humans have with the environment;
- K2) be able to develop an understanding of how human cognition, values and attitudes, as well as resulting behaviour, can aid or hinder solutions to environmental pollution and natural resources shortage problems.

Skills:

- S1) be able to apply psychological theories to design and carry out empirical studies related to human-environment interaction; and
- S2) be able to critically evaluate issues related to urban planning and environmental politics.

Values:

- V1) appreciate the importance and urgency of environmental issues in the contemporary world;
- V2) develop an awareness of how our contemporary value, thoughts and actions impact the environment; and
- V3) acquire a greater concern for the environment.

Teaching Method

There are one 2-hour lecture and one 1-hour tutorial per week. You are required to attend all tutorial classes. Grades will be deducted if fail to do so.

Assessments ¹

1. Empirical study, presentation and report: 40%
2. Reflection writing: 20%
3. Final Examination: 40%

Assessments of learning outcomes:

Empirical study, presentation and report (40%) (Outcome-based components: K1, K2, S1, & S2)

Based on the topics covered in the course, you are to conduct an empirical study (15%). The study can take the form of experiment, questionnaire survey or field observation. You have to submit a proposal that outlines the research topic, the design and the hypotheses of your study prior to the actual commence of your study.

Findings of your empirical study are to be presented in the tutorial classes (10%), and the final report (15%) is to be written in the format of a journal paper with complete parts on Introduction, Method, Results and Discussions.

Reflection writing (20%) (Outcome-based components: K1, K2, V1, V2, & V3)

For the part of reflection writing, you can choose between the following two topics:-

- A. Write a brief environmental autobiography (one-to-two pages, complete with photos and/or illustrations). The objective is to reflect on places that have been very important to you, with the focus particularly on reflecting the interactions between humans and the environment. You should consider how past experiences in certain places have shaped the person you are today. Going back to childhood, briefly discuss earliest and/or fondest memories of a place/places that has/have been influential to you, and consider how this/these place(s) has/have impacted the way in which you view the world. Move through childhood until the present and discuss current influential places.

- B. One of the aims of this course is to develop an awareness of how our contemporary values

¹ Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. According to Lingan University and Social Sciences Programme policy, plagiarism is "presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgment of the source". Plagiarism (unattributed copying) will be heavily penalised and may attract a zero mark and disciplinary action.

and attitudes, as well as our lifestyles and daily practices, impact on the environment. To reflect on these issues, keep an environmental “journal” that tracks and records your daily consumptions of resources (e.g., water, electricity) and production of wastes (e.g., plastic bags, disposable containers). Record as much details as possible for two weeks. Afterwards, examine the entries by critically evaluate your own daily practices in relation to resources consumption and waste production. Do you classify yourself and your lifestyle as ‘environmentally friendly’? In what ways are these patterns of behaviour related to your values and attitudes? Are there any practical ways to cut down on your consumption and to reduce waste production? Summarize your reflections in one-to-two pages.

Final Exam (40%) (Outcome-based components: K1 & K2)

Indicative content

Module 1

Perception and cognition towards (natural and built) environment

Module 2

Personal space and territorial behaviour

Module 3

Effects of urban life on human affect and behaviour

Module 4

Satisfaction with (work and residential) environment

Module 5

Space identity and space attachment

Module 6

Pro-environmental attitudes and behaviour

Essential reading

Bell, P. A., Greene, T. C., Fisher, J. D., & Baum, A. (2001). *Environmental Psychology*, 5th Ed., Wadsworth/Thompson.

Relevant Readings

- Bechtel, R. B. & Churchman, A. (2002). *Handbook of environmental psychology*. New York: J. Wiley & Sons.
- Bonnes, M., Lee, T., & Bonaiuto, M. (2003). *Psychological theories for environmental issues*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Carp, F. M., & Carp, A. (1984). A complimentary/congruence model of well-being or mental health for the community elderly. In I. Altman, M. P. Lawton, & J. Wohlwill (Eds.), *Human behaviour and the environment: The elderly and the physical environment*, 279-336. New York: Plenum Press.
- Clayton, S. & Opatow, S. (2003). *Identity and the natural environment: the psychological significance of nature*. London: MIT Press.
- Kahana, E. (1982). A congruence model of person-environment interaction. In M. P. Lawton, P. G. Windley, & T. O. Byerts (Eds.), *Aging and the environment: Theoretical approaches*, 97-121. New York: Springer.
- Kaiser, F. G., Wolfing, S., & Fuhrer, U. (1999). Environmental attitude and ecological behaviour. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19: 1-19.
- Sundstrom, E., Bell, P. A., Busby, P. L., & Asmus, C. (1996). Environmental Psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 47, 485-512.
- Wister, A. V. (1989). Environmental adaptation by persons in their later life. *Research on aging*, 11, 267-291.