

Psychology and/of Climate Change

ENVI/PSYC 194 // Fall 2019

Tuesday & Thursday 3:00 – 4:30 pm // Neill 400

Prof. Christie Manning

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Office: OLRI 158A // Office hours: Monday 2:00 – 3:30; Tuesday 4:45-5:15

Course preceptor: Laura Botero

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Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 4:30-5:30; Wednesday 3:30-5:30

Course Description

Climate change is no longer a distant, hypothetical threat. Its impacts are increasingly obvious around the world. Yet, despite growing acknowledgement of the climate crisis, few Americans are taking significant personal action, and only a small minority are involved in civic efforts to address the issue.

This course examines the behavioral causes of, and solutions to, climate damage. We will discuss the many ways our changing climate affects people around the world, and how it may affect human society in the long term. We will take a broad psychological perspective on the question, “Why are we not doing enough to address the global climate crisis?”, drawing upon research from many psychological sub-fields (evolutionary, biological, cognitive, social, industrial/organizational). Throughout the course we will engage with the community, hearing from climate activists, local politicians (both Republican and Democrat), scientists, city planners, business owners and health care workers to understand their experience and perspective on the issue.

Course goals

- Encounter psychological perspectives on the issue of global climate change
- Examine original research through journal articles and chapters
- Connect psychological research to the real world through field trips, activities, and interviews
- Develop research skills through reviewing psychological literature and proposing a research study
- Enhance analytical skills through critical reading and discussion

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to discuss how psychologists from diverse subfields are contributing to perceiving, communicating, mitigating, and adapting to global climate change. They will have carefully and critically read and discussed current psychological research, written a literature review on a topic of their choice, and proposed a psychological research study.

Students will leave the class able to use evidence from psychology to explain to others why individuals respond to climate change in certain ways. They will also be able to suggest better approaches to engaging people in efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

My hopes/expectations of you

- Attend every class
- Be present and engaged. Listen. Ask questions. Offer your perspective.
- Leave your technology in your backpack!
- Communicate with me. Early. Often. Especially if you are struggling with any aspect of the course.
- Take responsibility for your own learning and growth.
- Be open to the diversity of perspectives that are available from your peers in this class.
- Come to my office hours to chat - not just about class, but about your life and ambitions, who you are and what you want to do to help fix what's broken in our world.
- Work with Laura, the class preceptor.

Course materials

Required Book (available at college bookstore, library reserve, and for sale online):

Stoknes, P.E. (2015). *What we think about when we try not to think about global warming: Toward a new psychology of climate action*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Other Readings:

All other readings listed in the Readings Schedule are available through the course Moodle website.

Course requirements and evaluation

Final grades for the course will be based on the following:

1. Completion of weekly reading preparation 10%
2. Engagement and attendance 15%
3. In-class presentation of relevant news item and discussion questions 5%
4. Writing portfolio 55%
5. Research question and literature review presentation 10%
6. Final reflection 5%

Final Grade Scale: A (95 – 100), A- (91 – 94), B+ (88 – 90), B (84 – 87), B- (81 – 83). Similar ranges apply for C grades and D grades. Below 60 is a failing grade.

Assignments

1. Reading preparation 10%: You will post a short response to each reading assignment. The intention of this requirement is that we all come to class familiar enough with the material that we can spend a significant amount of time thinking through it rather than explaining it. For each reading, I will post the format of your reading response on Moodle.

Response postings are due by 11 p.m. on the evening before class (Monday at 11 p.m. for Tuesday's class, Wednesday at 11 p.m. for Thursday's class). Be concise - the best responses are short and to the point. Writing thoughtfully and thoroughly within a word limit is an important academic skill that this assignment will help you master. After you have posted your response, Moodle will allow you to read the responses from the other students who have already posted theirs. You may want to take a few minutes at some point during the evening or morning before class to look through the reading responses from your peers.

You must upload your assignment to the Moodle site for that date. NOTE: The Moodle clock does not always correspond to yours – Moodle will timeout at 11 p.m. so don't wait until the last minute. DO NOT e-mail reading responses to me. I cannot accept late reading responses.

Your reading responses will be evaluated on a 0 (no credit = F), 1 (needs work = C), 2 (satisfactory = B/B-), 3 (good = B+), 4 (very good = A-), 5 (truly outstanding = A) basis. Average reading response grade is generally 3.5 (B+/A-).

Note: I understand that sometimes life gets stressful and class readings are the last on your priority list. To give you flexibility during the busiest weeks of the semester, I will drop your two lowest reading response grades.

2. Engagement and attendance 15%: The quality of the course, and value of the experience for all of us, depends on careful preparation for class by everyone. Thus it is critical that you read the readings carefully and on time and be prepared to discuss them and apply them to in-class assignments. Your attendance and full engagement during class discussions are required for the entire session of each class. Great engagement has these foundations:

- *Regular attendance* is required in order to receive a passing grade for the course, regardless of how well you do on your written assignments. More than two unexcused absences results in no evaluation (0).
- *Preparation* - Carefully and critically read the class readings and complete the required Moodle posting.
- *Active participation* - Contribute regularly and thoughtfully to the discussion and class activities.
- *Listening* - Support your peers by hearing their ideas. Refer to others' contributions, do not dominate the discussion, and allow/encourage others to speak.

Note: If you are having serious difficulties with any part of my expectations for engagement, please talk to me outside of class so that we can work together to develop a strategy.

Assignments, continued.

3. In-class presentation of relevant news item and discussion questions 5%: To connect material from class with the real world, each student will choose one topic/reading during the semester for which they will find a relevant popular press news item. During the class discussion for your topic, you will give a short (5-minute) presentation on the news item you found, and explain why it is relevant. In addition, you will submit to Christie three discussion questions that we can share with the class. A detailed description of the assignment will be available during the second week of class.

4. Writing portfolio 55%: Over the course of the semester, you will write and re-write four writing assignments (described on Moodle), as well as complete written evaluations of your own and your peers' work. Both you and I will store these writing assignments in an electronic "writing portfolio" that will be evaluated at the end of the semester.

Writing portfolios will be evaluated using the "Contract for B" method. Basically, with this grading method I will provide you with feedback on your writing throughout the semester, both in written comments and during in-person feedback meetings, and you may revise all writing assignments as much as you would like. I will not grade your writing assignments until the end of the semester, when you turn in your portfolio of revised written work. At the end of the semester, all students who have fulfilled the requirements listed below are guaranteed to receive at least a B (84%) on the writing portfolio portion of the final grade, regardless of the quality of writing. Students who fulfill these requirements can also receive a higher grade than a B depending on the quality of their writing.

Contract for B requirements:

- (1) Complete all assignments by their due date.
- (2) Demonstrate obvious care and effort on each assignment, including using the correct format and proofreading/spellchecking your work.
- (3) Attend all feedback meetings ready to talk about your writing and take notes on how to improve it.
- (4) Respond thoughtfully to instructor and peer feedback on your writing.
- (5) Incorporate instructor and peer feedback into your future writing.
- (6) Constructively evaluate and criticize your own and your peers' writing.
- (7) Meet with Laura to discuss your writing at least once before 10/22/19.

The four writing assignments include: Your climate story; Write-up of an interview with a peer; Write-up of an interview with a climate activist; Research question and short literature review. Detailed descriptions of each assignment will be given on the dates they are assigned.

5. Research proposal presentation 10%: You will present your research proposal and literature review to your peers and others during the final week of class. Details about the presentations will be available after fall break.

6. Final reflection 5%: A detailed description of this assignment will be available after Thanksgiving.

Academic integrity

All students will be required to abide by the Macalester College academic integrity guidelines. Instances of suspected academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, and using the same paper in more than one course) will be handled as outlined in the guidelines.

<https://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>

Accommodations

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course, and I urge you to speak with me about unique learning needs or accommodations. Accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please meet with the Director of Disability Services, Melissa Fletcher (mfletche@macalester.edu), who coordinates accommodations. It is important to meet with her at the beginning of the semester to ensure that your accommodations are approved and in place so that you can begin the semester with greatest chance for success.

If you are working with Melissa, or someone else in the Office of Student Affairs, and need accommodations for this class, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that we can discuss arrangements. Additional information regarding the accommodations process for students with disabilities can be found at: www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/

Academic resources

The Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center (x6121; Kagin Commons) is here to help you do your best at Macalester in meeting your own goals and highest standards. Through academic enrichment and support services, ranging from workshops to individual assistance, the MAX Center can help you excel in your academics.

Professional counselors and peer tutors in writing, mathematics, science, and study skills provide personal assistance in:

- Writing for any college course, from brainstorming to final editing
- Content areas such as calculus, statistics, organic chemistry, or cellular biology
- Sharpening study and time management skills

General hours are 9:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., M-F and 7 P.M. – 10 P.M., S-Th. Peer tutors are usually available in all areas during the evening, but as schedules vary during the day, it is useful to call x6121 (daytime) or x6193 during evening hours to schedule an appointment.

The MAX Center also provides testing accommodations. Students must verify the need for accommodations through the Office of Student Affairs.

Health and well-being

Here at Macalester, you are encouraged to make your well-being a priority throughout this semester and your career here. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academic experience. Remember that beyond being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities with you. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, financial, etc., and how they can have an academic impact. I encourage you to remember that you have a body with needs. In the classroom, eat when you are hungry, drink water, use the restroom, and step out if you are upset and need a break. Please do what is necessary so long as it does not impede your or others' ability to be mentally and emotionally present in the course. Outside of the classroom, sleep, moving your body, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you be resilient at Macalester. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please don't hesitate to contact me and/or find support from other resources listed on the class Moodle page.

Title IX

In accordance with Title IX, Macalester College does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in its educational, extracurricular, athletic, or other programs or in the context of admissions or employment. The College prohibits all forms of sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, sexual violence, and differential treatment.

For more information, [please see the Title IX page of the Macalester website.](#)

As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe and equitable learning environment. That includes ensuring that all students are aware of and have access to the resources they need if and when they find themselves in crisis. [More information about resources is available here.](#)

Day	Date	Topic	Readings	Notes and deadlines
R	29-Aug	First meeting		
T	3-Sep	Course Intro	Bain Ch. 1 & 2	
R	5-Sep	What is climate change?	IPCC 1.5 degrees report	In class: The climate crisis, 101
T	10-Sep	Intro to the psychology of climate change	Reading on Moodle (APA pp 6-20, 29-41)	In class: Check in; First writing workshop
R	12-Sep	Psychology of climate change, continued	Stoknes 1 - 53	In class: First library session
T	17-Sep	Climate science, revisited	IPCC 1.5 degrees report	In class: First session on sleep; Climate science Q&A with Dr. Louisa Bradtmiller
R	19-Sep	Perceptions	Reading on Moodle	
F	20-Sep	(no class meeting)		Youth climate strike 11:30-2:00 in Saint Paul
T	24-Sep	Nobel Conference	(no reading)	Field trip to Gustavus for climate change conference. Writing assignment 1 draft deadline
R	26-Sep	Communication	Reading on Moodle	
T	1-Oct	Climate storytelling	Stoknes 132 - 150; Video link on Moodle	In class: Climate storytelling workshop with Jothna Harris from Climate Generation
R	3-Oct	Youth action	Youth story selections	Isra Hirsi EnviroThursday Writing assignment 2 draft deadline
T	8-Oct	Story slam!	(no reading)	In class: Story Slam
R	10-Oct	Fear appeals	Reading on Moodle	
T	15-Oct	Social context	Stoknes 54 – 69; Reading on Moodle	In class: Check in; Second session on sleep
R	17-Oct	Identity and diversity	Reading on Moodle	In class: Second library session (maybe)
T	22-Oct	TBA	Bain Ch. 3 & 4	In class: Individual writing meetings
R	24-Oct	(no class meeting)	(no reading)	FALL BREAK
T	29-Oct	Dragons of inaction	Reading on Moodle	
R	31-Oct	Dragons of inaction	(no reading)	In class: Second library session (maybe) Writing assignment 3 draft deadline
Sa-Su	2-3-Nov			Class overnight to Eagle Bluff
T	5-Nov	From barriers to solutions	Stoknes 87 – 131; 151 - 162	
R	7-Nov	Economic and other objections	Reading on Moodle	In class: Visit with the Registrar Writing assignment 4 outline due
T	12-Nov	A climate realist's views	(no reading)	In class: Visit with John Hinderaker
R	14-Nov	Mental health impacts	Reading on Moodle	In class: Check in; Christie's research presentation
T	19-Nov	(no class meeting)		Christie at conference Writing assignment 4 progress deadline
R	21-Nov	Climate activism	Reading on Moodle	In class: Third session on sleep
T	26-Nov	Building individual resilience	(no reading)	In class: Conversation with Dr. Leah Prussia Writing assignment 4 draft deadline
R	28-Nov	(no class meeting)	(no reading)	THANKSGIVING BREAK
T	3-Dec	Resilience	Stoknes 165 - 227	

R	5-Dec	Presentations		In class: Presentations
T	10-Dec	Class reflections		
	12-15-Dec			Individual portfolio meetings
W	18-Dec			Final writing portfolio deadline (4pm)