

ER 190-002 Behavior and Sustainability

Spring 2012 (3 credits)

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00 – 6:30 pm

56 Barrows Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The aggregated effects of billions of individual decisions each day have large adverse effects on human and ecosystem health, natural resource stocks, and global climate change. While the causes of environmental degradation are anthropogenic, so too are the solutions. This course examines different perspectives on the motivations of human behavior, drawing on diverse disciplines, including psychology, economics, and sociology. Theories of behavior change and behavioral intervention case studies will inform student efforts to design viable programs that promote improved sustainability through behavior change.

INSTRUCTORS

This course will be led by doctoral students Chris Jones and Joe Kantenbacher of the Energy and Resources Group under the direction of Professor Isha Ray.

Chris Jones – cmjones@berkeley.edu

Joe Kantenbacher – kantner@berkeley.edu

Office hours available by appointment.

Course grader (and champion emeritus):

Sophia Ashton – sophiaashton@berkeley.edu

GRADING

- 1. Mini Write-ups: 20%** - Students are expected to be actively engaged with course materials, and to discuss, debate, opine, and ask questions. Throughout the semester, students will do 10 mini write-ups (each worth 2% of the final grade) in response to provided prompts. Write-ups will be due on before class on Thursdays.
- 2. Lesson plan and discussion session: 20%** – Working in pairs, students will be responsible for leading one class discussion over the course of the semester. Discussions should highlight material from lectures and readings, but are by no means limited to those subjects. Students will submit a final written lesson plan the day they lead discussion.
- 3. Midterm exam (Tuesday, March 13): 30%** – The midterm will cover material from the first eight weeks of class, including concepts discussed in class and those from the reading. The exam will also require students to draw on work from their group project/individual research.

- 4. Group project or individual research (due May 3): 30%** - The class project involves student groups (of up to four members) selecting from a range of “clients” from on campus and in the community who have or are interested in developing or improving a behavioral intervention. Students will evaluate the needs of the client as well as the relevant characteristics of the intervention and its target population. Students disinclined to participating in a group project may complete this part of the class by writing an independent research paper.

READING

All required readings will be posted to the course bSpace site. Assigned readings should be read prior to class on the day for which they are listed.

Week 1 – Introduction and Organization

Tuesday (1/17) – Introduction (Chris and Joe)

Discussion of course objectives and syllabus

Thursday (1/19) – Brainstorming session

Prior to the formal introduction of material, students will identify sustainability-related behaviors to change and develop ideas for promoting that change

* SIGN UP FOR DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP

Week 2 – Community-based Social Marketing

Tuesday (1/24) – Lecture (Chris)

Discussing the CBSM approach to structuring behavior change campaigns

ASSIGNED READING:

Mckenzie-Mohr, Doug. Fostering Sustainable Behavior: Community-based Social Marketing. Online book. <http://www.cbsm.com/pages/guide/preface/>
Read Preface, Steps 1,2,3 (all - through “Developing Strategies Revisited”). Steps 4,5 and concluding remarks are recommended.

Thursday (1/26) – Semester project discussion

* WRITE-UP 1 DUE

Week 3 – Theories of Behavior and Behavior Change

Tuesday (1/31) – Lecture (Joe)

Major models of behavior: Rational Actor, Behavioral Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, Value-Belief-Norm Theory, Triandis’s Model

ASSIGNED READING:

Jackson, Tim. "Motivating Sustainable Consumption" ESRC Sustainable Technologies Program working paper, Sustainable Development Research Network.

Read sections 3, 4, 5, 6.3-4, 7.2-4, and 10.2-3. Much of the rest of Part 2 is interesting and relevant, though.

Thursday (2/2) – Discussion

* WRITE-UP 2 DUE

Week 4 – Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

Tuesday (2/7) – Lecture (Chris)

A look at how personal factors guide behavior

ASSIGNED READING:

Rhode, D. L. & Ross, L. 2007. Environmental Values and Behaviors: Strategies for Encouraging Public Support of Global Warming Initiatives.

Thursday (2/9) – Discussion

* WRITE-UP 3 DUE

Week 5 – The Social Context of Behavior

Tuesday (2/14) – Lecture (Joe)

Examining the influences of other people/groups on behavior

ASSIGNED READING:

Deutsch, Morton and Harold B. Gerard. 1955. "A Study of Normative and Informational Social Influences Upon Social Judgment." *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. 51:629-36.

Cialdini, Robert, 2003. "Crafting normative messages to protect the environment." *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(4), 105-109

Goldstein, et al, 2007. "Invoking Social Norms : A Social Psychology Perspective on Improving Hotels' Linen-Reuse Programs." *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* ,48(2), 145-150.

Thursday (2/16) – Discussion

* WRITE-UP 4 DUE

Week 6 – Habits and Choice Architecture

Tuesday (2/21) – Lecture (Joe)

Exploring automaticity and not-fully-conscious decision-making

ASSIGNED READING:

Ji Song, M., & Wood, W., 2007. "Purchase and consumption habits: Not necessarily what you intend." *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 17, 261-276.

Maréchal, Kevin, 2010. "Not irrational but habitual: The importance of 'behavioural lock-in' in energy consumption." *Ecological Economics*, 69(5), 1104-1114.

Thursday (2/23) – Discussion

* GROUP PROJECT/INDEPENDENT PAPER DECLARATIONS DUE

* WRITE-UP 5 DUE

Week 7 – Messaging, Marketing, and Cognitive Considerations

Tuesday (2/28) – Lectures (Chris)

Cognitive factors and the effect of language and framing on behavior

ASSIGNED READING:

Debika Shome and Sabine Marx, 2009. *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication: A Guide for Scientists, Journalists, Educators, Political Aids, and the Interested Public*. Center for Research on Environmental Decisions.

Nisbet, Matthew. 2009. *Communicating Climate Change: Why Frames Matter for Public Engagement*. *Environment*, Vol 51, Number 2.

Thursday (3/1) – Discussion

* WRITE-UP 6 DUE

Week 8 – Community Capacity Building

Tuesday (3/6) – Lecture (Hazel)

ASSIGNED READING:

McKnight, John L. (1987) "Regenerating Community." *Social Policy*. 54-58.

Hester, Randolph T. (2006). "Introduction." *Design for Ecological Democracy*. The MIT Press. 1-12.

De Souza Briggs, Xavier (Spring 2004) *Social Capital: Easy Beauty or Meaningful Resource?* *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 70(2): 151-158.

Lederach, John Paul (2006). "Doodle Six: Expanded Framework for Peacebuilding." *The Moral Imagination: the Art & Soul of Building Peace*. The MIT Press. 144.

Week 9 – Midterm

Tuesday (3/13) – **Midterm Exam**

Thursday (3/15) – Discussion

Week 10 – Consumption

Tuesday (3/20) – Lecture (Joe)

Happiness and status as drivers of consumption behavior

ASSIGNED READING:

Chancellor, J and S Lyubomirsky. 2011. “Happiness and thrift: When (spending) less is (hedonically) more.” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 21(2), 131-138.

Frank, Robert. 2004. “How Not to Buy Happiness.” *Daedalus*, 133(2): 69-79.

Neliseen, R. and Meijers, M. 2011. “Social benefits of luxury brands as costly signals of wealth and status.” *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 32(5), 343-355.

Jill M. Sundie, Douglas T. Kenrick, Vladas Griskevicius, Joshua M. Tybur, Kathleen D. Vohs, and Daniel J. Beal. 2011. "Peacocks, Porsches, and Thorstein Veblen: Conspicuous Consumption as a Sexual Signaling System." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Read either the piece by Chancellor and Lyubomirsky or the piece by Frank. (They're both good.) Also read either Neliseen and Meijers or Sundie, et al. It's Choose Your Own Adventure week.

Thursday (3/22) - Discussion

* WRITE-UP 8 DUE

Week 11 – Special Topics 1

Tuesday (4/3) – Speaker TBD

Thursday (4/5) – Discussion

* WRITE-UP 9 DUE

Week 12 – Special Topics 2

Tuesday (4/10) – Speaker TBD

Thursday (4/12) – Discussion

* WRITE-UP 10 DUE

Week 13 – Special Topics 3

Tuesday (4/17) – Speaker TBD

Thursday (4/19) - Discussion

Week 14 – Wrapping Up

Tuesday (4/24) – Lecture (Chris and Joe)

Thursday (4/26) – Discussion

RRR Week – Project Party

Thursday (5/3) – Final briefings on semester reports

* FINAL PROJECT REPORTS DUE