

SOSC3540 Environmental Psychology
Fall 2022
Course Outline

Aim

This course examines the interactions between humans and physical environments from a psychological perspective. It discusses how human behavior is affected by, and affects, their natural and built surroundings. It also explores the human dimension of environmental issues.

Intended learning outcomes

On completion of this course, you are expected to be able to (1) recognize the interactions between humans and physical environments and explain them with reference to theories in psychology and other social sciences; (2) analyze the human dimension of environmental issues from psychological and behavioral perspectives; (3) analyze your own experience and everyday encounters regarding physical environments; and (4) understand, explain, and evaluate research studies that examine human-environment relationships.

Design features

- *4 modules:* With four modules, this course offers an in-depth analysis of the scientific concepts and empirical evidence in the environmental psychology literature.
- *Experiential learning:* You will learn through various activities and hands-on experience (e.g., videos, music, outdoor observations).
- *Collaborative learning:* There are a lot of opportunities for you to learn from each other. There is no competition in this course, as we don't grade you against each other.
- *Support for your learning:* You will receive plenty of learning support from the teaching team through guidelines, workshops, seminars, and so forth.

Teaching team

Kevin Kim-Pong Tam kevintam@ust.hk

Vivien Pong vivienpong@ust.hk

Learning activities (detailed guidelines will be released in due course)

- *Lectures.* The lectures form the foundation of your learning in this course. Each lecture will introduce the essential theoretical and methodological tools that scientists use to understand a certain aspect of the interactions between humans and physical environments.
(Lectures will NOT be recorded.)
- *Reading List.* For each topic, a reading list will be provided. Some readings are required, some optional. You can find various kinds of resources (e.g., scientific reports, magazine articles, websites, documentaries, movies) that guide you to different corners of the world to observe how humans interact with their physical surroundings and the psychological processes behind.
- *Investigative Project 1 (35%).* The investigative project presents an opportunity for you to develop the ability to apply what you have learned to address a real-world problem. It will start with some assigned learning materials and guiding questions. You will submit an interim report and receive comments from the teaching team. As collaborative learning is encouraged, you will also have a chance to share and discuss your ideas with your peers in a seminar. Based on the support and feedback from the teaching team and your peers, you will finalize your ideas and submit a written report.
(Interim report deadline: 4 Oct; Final report deadline: 19 Oct)
- *Investigative Project 2 (35%).* The design of this project is similar to that in Investigative Project 1, except that you will work as a team of 5 people and will present your output with a video presentation instead. You will submit an interim report and receive comments from the teaching team with a consultation session. You will also have a chance to learn from each other in a seminar. After submitting your video presentation, you will receive some comments from the teaching team, to which you will submit your written responses.
(Interim report deadline: 8 Nov; Video presentation: 25 Nov; Written responses deadline: 5 Dec)
- *Exam (30%).* The exam assesses your basic conceptual understanding. It will cover all four modules and materials discussed in the lectures and required readings. Questions include multiple-choice questions and short answer questions.
(Date: during the exam period)
- *Other activities.* There will be other learning activities that are aimed to engage you in more active, contemplative learning and foster a more interactive learning environment.

Recommended textbook

- Steg, L., van den Berg, A. E., & de Groot, J. I. M. (Eds.). (2019). *Environmental psychology: An introduction (2nd Edition)*. UK: John Wiley & Sons. (online access via library)

Recommended reference books

- Clayton, S. (Ed.). (2012). *The Oxford handbook of environmental and conservation psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (on library reserve)
- Clayton, S., & Manning, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Psychology and climate change: Human perceptions, impacts, and responses*. London, UK: Academic Press. (online access via library)
- Gifford, R. (Ed.). (2016). *Research methods for environmental psychology*. UK: John Wiley & Sons. (online access via library)
- Kopec, D. (2018). *Environmental psychology for design*. Fairchild Books. (on library reserve)

Schedule (subject to minor changes)

15:00 – 16:20, Wednesday and Friday, LSK1033

Introduction

- 2 Sep Overview; General learning advice
- 7 Sep Research methods

Module 1: Humans and Nature

- 9 Sep Nature and health I
- 14 Sep Nature and health II
- 16 Sep *Workshop (for Investigative Projects)*
- 21 Sep Human-nature relationship
- 23 Sep Nature and culture

Module 2: Humans and Cities

- 28 Sep Urban living and health
- 30 Sep Urban living and social behavior
- 5 Oct *Seminar (for Investigative Project 1)*
- 7 Oct Urban design
- 12 Oct *Interim wrap-up*

Module 3: Humans and Places

- 14 Oct Sense of place
- 19 Oct Human agency

Module 4: Humans and Climate Change

- 21 Oct Impacts of environmental change
- 26 Oct Public understanding of climate change
- 28 Oct Pro-environmental behavior I
- 2 Nov Pro-environmental behavior II
- 4 Nov Behavioral interventions I
- 9 Nov *Team consultation (for Investigative Project 2)*
- 11 Nov *Seminar (for Investigative Project 2)*
- 16 Nov Behavioral interventions II
- 18 Nov Policy
- 23 Nov Technology
- 25 Nov *No lecture*
- 30 Nov *Final wrap-up*

Points to note

1. *Learning attitude*. We emphasize experiential learning, peer learning, and self-improvement. Learn by actively take part in the lecture activities. Your participation will not only help yourself and your peers learn more but also enable the teaching team to teach better. Also, take feedback from your peers and scores and comments from us seriously to find out how much and how well you have learned and how you can improve.
2. *Lecture slides*. The lecture slides will be available on Canvas before each lecture. Note that some contents (mainly examples) will be excluded from this version; this is to encourage you to take your own notes and generate your own examples. Research has shown that personal notetaking and example generation improve learning and course performance.
3. *Academic integrity*. We will investigate every suspect case of cheating or plagiarism. We will heavily penalize confirmed cases and report them to the Head of the Division of Social Science for further review or action. Read <http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/index.html>. Make sure you understand what constitute academic honesty.