

FYSM 6: It's Not Easy Being Green: The Psychology of Sustainable Behavior

Dickinson College, Fall 2023

Class meetings: MWF 12:30-1:20 p.m. Althouse 206

Instructor

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Office hours, Kaufman 100

Tuesday 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Wed 2-3 p.m.

By appointment

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Library Liaison: Kendall Thompson thompken@dickinson.edu

Course Description

The changing environment is one of the most critical challenges of the 21st century. Heat waves are becoming more frequent, stronger storms are damaging coastal areas, sea levels are rising, and there are more floods and droughts. The message from scientists and climate activists is that we must act quickly and aggressively to avoid devastating consequences for human and animal life. Meanwhile, we see little decisive action and little change in terms of government policy or individual behavior. How can we understand this disconnect between the urgency of the situation and public inaction, and what can we do to counteract it? Psychological science offers important insights. In this course, we will examine how human behavior contributes to environmental problems and explore the personal, social, and cultural factors that explain why people engage in sustainable or unsustainable behaviors. We will also consider how insights from research in psychology can be applied to motivate sustainable choices. We will address several relevant questions. What can we learn from psychological science about why some people ignore or deny the reality of climate change? What are the psychological barriers that prevent even those individuals who understand the urgency of the situation from taking action? How can we apply psychological knowledge about persuasion and behavior change to change attitudes and encourage action? We will cover relevant psychological theories, methods, and research findings and apply this knowledge in class projects including a self-change project and a community-based group project.

Learning Goals

As a First-Year Seminar (FYS), the class aims to introduce you to Dickinson College as a “community of inquiry” by developing habits of mind essential to learning and study in the liberal arts. Through the study of issues surrounding the psychology of sustainable behavior, you will:

- critically analyze information and ideas in the texts we discuss;
- examine issues from multiple perspectives;
- discuss, debate, and defend ideas, including your own views, with clarity and reason;
- develop discernment, facility and ethical responsibility in using information, and
- create clear academic writing.

Required Texts

*Rosenwasser, D., & Stephen, J. (2019). *Writing Analytically*. Cengage Learning.
Wray, B. (2022). *Generation Dread*. Knopf.

***Be sure** to buy the 8th edition of *Writing Analytically*.

Course Requirements

Attendance. Attendance at class is mandatory and will be recorded. Excused absences may be granted due to illness, family emergencies and funerals, and participation in religious or cultural holidays. You must speak to me or email me prior to being absent for religious and cultural holidays. Speak to me or email me as soon as you can for absences due to illness or family emergencies. If I grant verbal permission for an excused absence, you must email me confirmation of the date and reason for the excused absence.

You will be allowed 3 unexcused absences for the semester. After these 3 absences, the attendance portion of your final grade will be reduced by 1 percent for each unexcused absence.

Dickinson will also host some fantastic guest speakers whose work is relevant to our course this semester. You are also required to attend three of these campus events this semester; details can be found below in the course schedule.

Readings/Preparation/Participation. I have prepared a reading list for this course that covers both content and habits of mind. To ensure lively, focused, and interesting discussions with participation by all members of the class, you must do the readings prior to the class for which they are assigned and you must have the day's readings with your annotations easily accessible during each class meeting. You should plan to spend about 6 hours each week reading and preparing for class discussion. I recommend setting aside specific blocks of time in your schedule each week for course reading/preparation.

You are expected to actively participate in during every class period in large group discussions, individual activities, paired and small group discussions. Your participation grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

- You join our class meeting having done the day's reading and demonstrate that during class.
- You prompt discussion and/or respond to your peers.
- You enter the conversation without dominating or silencing others.
- You offer more than just personal opinion or anecdote – that is, you root your comments in the text we are discussing. (People who try to comment on things they have clearly not read will not gain points and may lose them).
- You attend peer review sessions with a complete draft.
- You work collaboratively with people to achieve learning goals when you are placed in a small group.
- You are present and engaged in every class.

Throughout the semester, I will ask you to self-evaluate your participation, and then I will provide you with details about my evaluation of your participation. I understand that some of you may feel shy about speaking in front of the whole class. However, confidence in public speaking is one of the major life skills that a liberal arts education can give you and participation by

everyone is very important. If you find it difficult to speak up, I encourage you to schedule a time to meet with me and we can work together to think of ways to help make participation easier.

Journal Responses. For many of the course readings, you will write a response to be posted on Moodle (due by 8 am on the day of class). These responses are designed to accomplish three things. First, they should help improve your reading skills. Second, they should enable you to participate more fully in class discussion that day, since you will have your writing to share with the class. Finally, these reading responses should give you practice in the rhetorical moves that define good college writing: each reading response will be prompted, using ideas and exercises explained in *Writing Analytically*.

Papers. You will write 3 papers for this course:

Paper 1: Personal Narrative Essay. You will write a 3-page personal narrative essay, examining your values as they relate to sustainability, exploring your current habits, and considering how you can make your personal activities more consistent with your values. At the conclusion of this essay, you will commit to making a specific change that will then serve as the focus of Paper 2.

Paper 2: Behavior Change Guide. For this project, you will develop a 4-page guide to changing a specific unsustainable behavior. This paper will extend Paper 1 because you will now develop an argument about why it is important to change the behavior you have chosen and offer an effective behaviour change plan based on our course readings and your experience.

Paper 3: Community-Based Project. For your final project, you will work in small groups to select a behavior to target on campus. You will then conduct library and survey research to identify barriers and benefits to changing the behavior. You will then develop and propose a social marketing campaign to promote behavior change in the campus community. Each group will prepare an 8-10 page report to be submitted to the Center for Sustainability Education. You will also present your plan to the class and representatives from CSE.

All papers (first and final versions) must be uploaded to Moodle as a Word document and should meet standard formatting practices: they must be double-spaced, must use 12-point font; must include page numbers; and must include the title, your name, as well as the date of submission on a separate cover page (see <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/title-page>). Throughout the paper, the citations and documentation style should be consistent. For your formal essays, you will be using the APA style of citation.

I will provide you with a detailed rubric for each of the three papers. In general, I will use the Writing Program's criteria for evaluating your writing. This considers how well you have achieved the following goals:

1. The author crafts an introduction that identifies a question, frames that question, and states a thesis.
2. The author organizes the writing, demonstrates a progression of ideas, and maintains a consistent focus or thread.
3. The author contextualizes the question and supports it with evidence.
4. The author sustains analytical inquiry throughout the assignment.
5. The author effectively incorporates relevant outside information.
6. The author engages the intended audience with a consistent, distinctive voice appropriate to the task.
7. The author adheres to appropriate standards for language use.

8. The author conforms to appropriate formats for citation of source material.

Please note that college papers cannot be successfully written the night before the due date. Each paper that you write needs invention, drafting, feedback, and revising. The process of revision and the ultimate success of the paper depend upon a thoughtful first draft, as well as a polished final draft. For each paper, you will have ample time for writing the first version and for revising after receiving feedback on a draft.

Finally, you are required to schedule and attend an individual appointment with our Writing Associate (or another tutor in the Writing Center if necessary) at least once this semester. This appointment can be for any of the 3 papers, and can take place at any stage of the writing process (generating ideas, initial drafting, revising drafts in response to peer review, editing). To schedule your appointment, go to <https://dickinson.mywconline.com/> and select Noor Al Hamadani as your tutor.

Final Course Grade

Your grade will be based on the following elements:

Attendance/participation: 10%
Information Literacy Assignments: 5%
Journal Assignments: 20%
Peer Review: 5%
Group presentation: 10%
Essay 1: Personal Essay: 10%
Essay 2: Researched behavior change guide: 20%
Essay 3: Researched community-change project: 20%

Academic Integrity and Required Tutorial. All first-year students and other students new to Dickinson College are required to complete our Academic Integrity tutorial. The entire process takes most students less than an hour to complete. Students who do not complete this instruction by the deadline will have a hold placed on their accounts that prevents them from requesting courses during the mid-fall registration period for spring courses.

DUE DATE

Monday, Sept 11, 2023 no later than 8 AM.

Students can access the tutorial by clicking “Academic Integrity Tutorial - 2023” on Moodle. Students receive credit only after completing the entire tutorial, answering all questions, and clicking the “Finish attempt” button, followed by “Submit all and finish.” ***The “Submit all and finish” button must be clicked at the end of the tutorial in order for students to receive credit for completing the tutorial.***

Course Polices

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Consistent with Dickinson College's Student Code of Conduct, cheating of any kind may lead to disciplinary action, which often includes failing the course. Submission of someone else's written work or using sources without proper credit is unacceptable. Enrollment at Dickinson represents a commitment to abide by the college's principles of academic integrity. Please read Dickinson's plagiarism and academic integrity policy, available at http://lis.dickinson.edu/library/documents/Academic_Integrity_Info.pdf

Your use of ChatGPT or any other AI program, at any stage of the writing process, is prohibited in this class. Because the goals of the first-year seminar include developing ethical responsibility in using information and creating clear academic writing, you would undermine your learning by using AI text generators. If you need help with any of the course papers, you can meet with me and I will be happy to assist you. You can also reach out to Kendall Thompson, our library liaison, for help with finding sources or make an appointment Noor Al Hamadani, our Writing Associate, for help with all stages of the writing process.

Dickinson Policy on Recorded Material

Individual students with accommodations might record this class, by permission from ADS and the instructor. Students may not share, send, post, publish, make public, or duplicate any recordings without the written authorization of those recorded. Failure to abide by these rules is a breach of privacy and violation of copyright laws. Recording of any session in this course other than for the above purpose is strictly prohibited, and would be a breach of Dickinson's Community Standards and subject to disciplinary action. It may also be a violation of Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance laws. Unless informed otherwise, students are to destroy all recordings at the end of this semester.

Due Dates

Due dates for assignments are clearly indicated in the course schedule and assignment descriptions. It is important that assignments are turned in on time. Being able to structure your time to complete long term projects and meet deadline is one of the most important skills you will need to succeed in college.

Five percent will be deducted from the assignment for each day it is late. Assignments will not be accepted after 7 days past the due date and you will receive a zero for the assignment.

Extensions of due dates can be granted in rare circumstances if you experience an emergency or sudden illness. *Extensions will not be granted because you have other assignments due on the same day or the same week as an assignment for this class.*

Electronics Use

Our class atmosphere depends on the full attention of all members, and electronics detract from this. Turn your cell phone off and silence notifications to your smart watch prior to entering the classroom or prior to 12:30.

Laptops or tablets are only allowed by written permission and for a specific purpose. Please visit office hours to discuss this, if needed. I do not give permission verbally before/after class.

Course Resources

Connecting with Me

Please plan to meet with me individually at least once this semester. Meetings in office hours can be a wonderful way to connect about your progress in the course, clarify course material, discuss ideas related to our course, and strengthen relationships. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, please email me and we will find another time to meet.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Dickinson values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded equitable access to participate in all learning experiences. If you have (or think you may have) a learning difference or a disability – including a mental health, medical, or physical impairment – that would hinder your access to learning or demonstrating knowledge in this class, please contact Access and Disability Services (ADS). They will confidentially explain the accommodation request process and the type of documentation that Dean and Director Marni Jones will need to determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to www.dickinson.edu/ADS or email access@dickinson.edu. If you've already been granted accommodations at Dickinson, please follow the guidance at www.dickinson.edu/AccessPlan for disclosing the accommodations for which you are eligible and scheduling a meeting with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your accommodations and finalize your Access Plan.

Writing Associate and The Writing Center

Writers of all levels and abilities need feedback in order to develop their ideas and grow as writers. In our course, we have a dedicated Writing Associate (Noor Al Hamadani), who is able to provide this kind of feedback. However, for other courses, or if you would like additional help in this course, Dickinson's trained writing tutors can help you generate ideas, begin drafting, revise a rough draft, figure out your professor's preferred documentation style, understand and respond to professor feedback, edit your writing, and other things. You can make an appointment by calling (717) 245-1620 or by using [WCONLINE](#). For more information about hours and procedures, visit the [website here](#).

Reference Librarians

Librarians are professionals who help library users find, evaluate, and cite information resources. Whether it be for this course or any other, you can always contact a librarian to get feedback and support throughout your research process. The librarian assigned to our class is [Kendall Thompson](#). You may contact Kendall directly or get help from any librarian using the contact information on the Ask a Librarian page (<https://dickinson.libanswers.com>).

Wellness and Emotional Health

I encourage you to find ways this semester to manage stressors and practice self-care. Practices you can engage with on your own include: maintaining friendships; keeping a consistent sleep, wake, and eating schedule; journaling, drawing, and fiber arts; yoga, meditation, and deep breathing; exercise and physical movement; and going outside. It can also be useful to reach out to others who are trained to help. The [Wellness Center](#) offers counseling services on campus to students for a variety of concerns, and there are multiple [groups](#) forming this semester

Course Schedule

Wk	Date (Day)	Topic	What to Read for Class Today	What to Prepare for Class Today
O R I E N T A T I O N	Aug 24 (Th)	Welcome and Introductions		
	Aug 26 (Sat)	Reading and Writing in College	WA Chapter 1: "The Five Analytical Moves" (1-36) Mishra 2021 (FYS Excellence in Writing Award Winning Essay)	IL Lesson 1: Library Overview JNL: After reading the chapter, what do you think you will need to do differently in college than you did in high school when it comes to reading, researching, and writing?
1	Aug 28 (Monday)	What is sustainability?	Finish/revisit reading assigned for Saturday	
	Aug 30 (Wednesday)	What is sustainability?	WA: "Notice and Focus" (17-18) Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010	IL Lesson 2: How to Locate and Access a Journal Article JNL: In today's reading, what is interesting? What is strange? What is revealing?
	Sept 1 (Friday)	How we got here	WA: "Asking 'So What?'" (21-24) Jahren Ch. 1 & 2	IL Lesson 3: How to Locate and Access Books JNL: In today's reading, where does the author answer the "So what?" question?
2	Sept 4 (Monday)	How we got here	WA: "Looking for Patterns of Repetition and Contrast and for Anomalies" (The Method)" (26-32) Jahren Ch. 3 & 4	JNL: Practice The Method on Ch. 1.
	Sept 6 (Wednesday)	Food and sustainability	WA: "Reading Analytically" (38-68) Jahren Ch. 5	JNL: Practice The Method again on a section of today's reading.
	Sept 8 (Friday)	FIELD TRIP TO COLLEGE FARM Depart from Kaufman Hall at 11:30 a.m.	Jahren Ch. 6 & 9	

Wk	Date (Day)	Topic	What to Read for Class Today	What to Prepare for Class Today
3	Sept 11 (Monday)	Campus Sustainability	WA: "Thesis Statements" (178-182; 207-212) and "Reasoning from Evidence and Claims" (148-155) and "1 on 10 and 10 on 1" (162-168) and "An Alternative to the Five-Paragraph Essay" (168-172) Spooner, 2014	Academic Integrity Tutorial should be completed by today. JNL: What are the pitch, complaint, and moment in today's reading?
	Sept 13 (Wednesday)	CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY TOUR with Lindsey Lyons Depart from Kaufman Hall at 12:30 p.m.		
	Sept 15 (Friday)	Sustainable Behavior	Heller et al 2021	Complete polished draft of Paper 1 due
4	Sept 18 (Monday)	Psychology & Climate Change	WA: "Personal Response" (105-107) Nielsen et al., 2021, pp. 130-136	JNL: Write a one paragraph personal response to today's reading.
	Sept 20 (Wednesday)	Psychology & Climate Change	Nielsen et al., 2021, pp. 136-140	Paper 1: Revision Progress Report
	Sept 22 (Friday)	Building Better Habits	Clear, Introduction and Chapter 1	Paper 1 Due
5	Sept 25 (Monday)	Building Better Habits	WA: "From Paragraphs to Papers" (266-298) Clear, Chapters 2 & 3	
	Sept 27 (Wednesday)	Implementation Intentions	Nickerson & Rogers, 2010	
	Sept 29 (Friday)	LIBRARY VISIT Meet in Library Classroom 1 at 12:30 p.m.		Complete this online quiz: Learning to Distinguish Among Source Types
6	Oct 2 (Monday)	Choice Architecture	WA: "Comparison/Contrast" (108-111) Thaler & Sunstein, Ch. 14, pp. 281-	JNL: Take today's reading and another reading from the class and practice Difference within Similarity.

Wk	Date (Day)	Topic	What to Read for Class Today	What to Prepare for Class Today
			300	
	Oct 4 (Wednesday)	Choice Architecture	WA: "Making a Thesis Evolve" (182-207) Thaler & Sunstein, Ch. 14, pp. 301-308	JNL: Translate into your own words the feedback you received on your first essay. What higher order concerns do you need to work on? Copy three sentences with grammatical/mechanical errors; find the rules in WA, Chapter 12 and paraphrase them; and then rewrite the sentences correctly.
REQUIRED EVENT				
Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 7:00 pm in Anita Tuviv Schlechter Auditorium (ATS). Tara Houska, The Sam Rose '58 and Julie Walters Prize at Dickinson College for Global Environmental Activism				
	Oct 6 (Friday)	Choice Architecture	Case Study from RARE	JNL: Write a one-paragraph personal response to today's reading.
7	Oct 9 (Monday)	Intrinsic & Extrinsic Motivation	Deci & Ryan, 2000	
	Oct 11 (Wednesday)	Motivation	Sheldon et al., 2011	JNL: Put two sources from class readings in conversation with each other.
	Oct. 12 (Thursday)	Ethics Gathering Meet in HUB Social Hall East 12-1:15 pm	TBD	
	Oct 13 (Friday)	NO CLASS		
8	Oct 16 (Monday)	NO CLASS: FALL PAUSE		
	Oct 18 (Wednesday)	Role of Emotion	Sinatra & Hofer, Chapter 8	
	Oct 20 (Friday)	Emotional Appeals	Williamson & Thulin, 2021	
9	Oct 23 (Monday)	Emotional Appeals	Huntley, 2020 Kirk, 2020	

Wk	Date (Day)	Topic	What to Read for Class Today	What to Prepare for Class Today
	Oct 25 (Wednesday)	Emotional Appeals	Skurka et al., 2018	JNL: Discussion questions
	REQUIRED EVENT Thursday, Oct 26 th at 7 p.m. Stern Center, Great Room Know-Do Gap: A Fallacy for Scale-Up & Sustainability Malabika Sarker, Brown University			
	Oct 27 (Friday)	Social Norms	Nolan et al., 2021	Paper #2 Due
10	Oct 30 (Monday)	Global Issues in Sustainability Guest speaker: Katie DeGuzman, Dickinson CGSE	TBD	JNL: Discussion questions
	Nov 1 (Wednesday)	Community-based social marketing	McKenzie-Mohr, Lee, Schultz, & Kotler (2012)	
	Nov 3 (Friday)	LIBRARY SESSION	WA: "Finding, Evaluating, and Citing Sources" (242-265)	Required Tutorial: Choosing the Best Terms for Your Search Required Reading: Truncation Symbols and Boolean Operators
11	Nov 6 (Monday)	Generation Dread	Wray Ch. 1-2	JNL: Choose a passage from a source and make it speak.
	Nov 8 (Wednesday)	Eco-Distress	Wray Ch. 3-4	JNL: Choose a passage from a source and use it to raise a question.
	REQUIRED EVENT Wednesday, Nov. 8 th at 7 p.m. in ATS Uncertainty in Climate Change Research: An Integrated Approach Linda Mearns, National Center for Atmospheric Research			
	Nov 10 (Friday)	Consultations/work on group projects		JNL: Translate into your own words the feedback you received on your second essay. What higher order concerns do you need to work on? Copy three sentences with grammatical/mechanical errors; find the rules in WA, Chapter 12 and paraphrase them; and then rewrite the sentences correctly.

Wk	Date (Day)	Topic	What to Read for Class Today	What to Prepare for Class Today
12	Nov 13 (Monday)	Hope and Fear	Wray Ch. 7	JNL: Make a working outline of your final proposal. Explain the rationale for each bullet point and justify the placement of each point in the outline.
	Nov 15 (Wednesday)	Science Communication	Wray Ch. 8-9	JNL: Discussion questions
	Nov 17 (Friday)	Community & Connection	Wray Ch. 10-11	JNL: Discussion questions
13	Nov 20 (Monday)	TBD	TBD	Complete polished draft of Paper #3 due
	Nov 22 (Wednesday)	NO CLASS		
	Nov 24 (Friday)	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!		
14	November 27 (Monday)	Class Presentations		
	November 29 (Wednesday)	Class Presentations		
	December 1 (Friday)	Wrap-Up and Conclusions		Paper #3 due JNL: What are 3 skills that you developed in this course that you can highlight to future employers?

Additional Readings

- Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic habits: An easy & proven way to build good habits & break bad ones*. New York: Penguin Random House.
- Heller, K., Berger, M., Gagern, A., Rakhimov, A., Thomas, J., & Thulin, E. (2021). Six behaviors policymakers should promote to mitigate climate change. *Behavioral Science & Policy*, 7(2), 63–73. <https://doi.org/10.1353/bsp.2021.0013>
- Huntley, R. (2020, July 4). Stop making sense: Why it's time to get emotional about climate change. [*The Guardian*](#).
- Jahren, H. (2020). *The story of more: How we got to climate change and where we go from here*. New York: Penguin Random House.
- Kirk, K. (2010, Nov. 10). *What conversations with voters taught me about science communication*. [*Scientific American*](#).
- Kuhlman, T., & Farrington, J. (2010). What is sustainability? *Sustainability*, 2(11), 3436–3448. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su2113436>
- Nickerson, D. W., & Rogers, T. (2010). Do you have a voting plan?: Implementation intentions, voter turnout, and organic plan making. *Psychological Science*, 21(2), 194–199. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797609359326>
- Nielsen, K. S., Clayton, S., Stern, P. C., Dietz, T., Capstick, S., & Whitmarsh, L. (2021). How psychology can help limit climate change. *American Psychologist*, 76(1), 130–144. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000624>
- Nolan, J. M., Schultz, P. W., Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2022). The social norms approach: A wise intervention for solving social and environmental problems. GM Walton & AJ Crum (Eds.) *Handbook of Wise Interventions: How Social Psychology Can Help People Change*. Guilford Press.
- Thaler, R.H. & Sunstein, C.R. (2021). *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. Penguin.

- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 54–67.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020>
- Sheldon, K. M., Nichols, C. P., & Kasser, T. (2011). Americans recommend smaller ecological footprints when reminded of intrinsic American values of self-expression, family, and generosity. *Ecopsychology, 3*(2), 97–104. <https://doi.org/10.1089/eco.2010.0078>
- Sinatra, G. M., & Hofer, B. K. (2021). *Science Denial: Why It Happens and What to Do About It*. Oxford University Press.
- Skurka, C., Niederdeppe, J., Romero-Canyas, R., & Acup, D. (2018). Pathways of influence in emotional appeals: Benefits and tradeoffs of using fear or humor to promote climate change-related intentions and risk perceptions. *Journal of Communication, 68*(1), 169–193. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqx008>
- Spooner, D. (2014). Enhancing campus sustainability through SITES and socially equitable design. *Planning for Higher Education, 42*(4), 30-45.
- Williamson, K., & Thulin, E. (2022). Leveraging emotion-behavior pathways to support environmental behavior change. *Ecology and Society, 27*(3). <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-13363-270327>