

FOR 6934 – Conservation Behavior for Practitioners
University of Florida
School of Forest Resources and Conservation
Fall 2021

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Office Hours: on request

Conservation behavior is becoming an increasingly important concept as natural resource managers, development officers, educators, politicians, regulators, and business leaders consider what it takes to nudge people toward sustainable behaviors. Most acknowledge that our behavior plays an important role in creating and resolving environmental challenges. This course will explore what we know about human behavior and apply it to the design of helpful education and communication tools.

Many of the useful theories and models about human behavior come from psychology. We have selected a few of the most popular and relevant to environmental behaviors. Understanding these theories can make our work in education and communication more effective.

This course is geared toward those people who wish to nudge, cajole, persuade, and help shift environmental behavior in their work and personal lives. Whether you wish to become an advocate, an educator, or a choice architect, this course can offer some strategies for thinking about effective efforts to change behavior in formal and informal settings. While we will read about a few theories, the emphasis will be on applying them in practice, not research.

Course Overview:

Link theories of human behavior and change to education and communication strategies designed to move toward sustainability.

Course Objectives:

- Use about 10 theories and models of behavior change to explain: Why do some people demonstrate environmentally responsible behaviors (ERB)? What are some psychological barriers to pro-environmental behavior? What encourages the formation and adoption of ERB? Students will identify the similarities and differences among these models and become comfortable using them.
- Explain a range of education and communication strategies and identify the underlying theoretical assumptions about human behavior.
- Examine current programs that are working toward sustainability by identifying how the programs address change, the behaviors that are targeted, the strategies that are used, and the theoretical frameworks/assumptions that might drive the programs.
- Explore your own ideas and experiences regarding personal and workplace behavior change and utilize these theories to develop a plan to address behavior change at your workplace.

Required Readings:

There is one textbook and a number of reading materials for this course. It is imperative that you read the materials and use them in discussions online. The readings are available on electronic reserve at <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ares/> and there is a link to them in the Canvas course at <https://elearning.ufl.edu>. Access from off campus is through the UF VPN client. For more information on downloading, installing and using the VPN client, please go to <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/login/vpn.html>. For general information on course reserves, please contact the Course Reserves Unit at 352-273-2520, or email at eres@uflib.ufl.edu.

To find readings, please use the tags within the course reserves. The tag Week 3, for example, will have the readings for this course in Week 3.

The text should be available at bookstores or Amazon: McKenzie-Mohr, Douglas. 2011. *Fostering Sustainable Behavior, third edition*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers. You will be reading this book for discussion starting in week 10.

Course Policies

This course depends on active student engagement. You will read and discuss a number of models and research studies that contribute to our understanding of conservation behavior. The workload is heavy on theory and thinking in the first half of the course to give you a practical, working knowledge of this literature. The time you spend on reading probably correlates with your ability to engage in productive discussion and the amount you will learn about each theory.

Each week students are expected to watch and read the materials, engage in discussion, and submit assignments. Short absences can usually be accommodated within the regular weekly assignments. Lengthy absences without access to the Internet will be addressed on an individual basis. Assignments should be uploaded to Canvas by midnight on the day they are due.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Please also refer to the UF guidelines on plagiarism at <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/msl/07b/instructorplagiarism.html> and plan on avoiding all types of plagiarism: stealing, misquoting, insufficient paraphrasing, and duplication.

UF Campus Resources

Resources are available on campus for students having concerns or challenges related to their personal life, their academic progress, or their future that might interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 3921575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Academic Resources E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf
On-Line Students Complaints: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaintprocess>

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Grades

Your grade will be determined by online participation and 5 assignments, for a total of 200 points. The following scale will be used:

Grading Scale

A	3.67 – 4.0	93 – 100%	C	1.67 – 1.99	73 – 76%
A-	3.33 – 3.66	90 – 92%	C-	1.33 – 1.66	70 – 72%
B+	3.00 – 3.32	87 – 89%	D+	1.00 – 1.32	67 – 69%
B	2.67 – 2.99	83 – 86%	D	0.67 – 0.99	63 – 66%
B-	2.33 – 2.66	80 – 82%	D-	0.33 – 0.66	60 – 62%
C+	2.00 – 2.32	77 – 79%	E	0	59% or below

Assignments

Every week you will listen to a brief lecture or two, read the required readings, and discuss the readings and the application/examples of theories in practice on the discussion thread. 5 points will count toward participation each week based on discussion. **Total 75 points.** In addition, each week you will have a short quiz to review the new theories/ideas learned. The quiz will not be graded for accuracy but will count toward your participation (1 point each). **Total 15 points.** Additional assignments are explained here and in Canvas:

- 1. Introduction Discussion** **10 points**
Let us know where you live, what you do, and what your interest is in conservation behavior. Participate in this icebreaker introductory discussion thread by Sep 6.
- 2. Reflect on behavior change in your life** **30 points**
It is often easier to understand the relevance of the theories when we consider how we react and relate to them, and how they may have played out in our own lives and experiences. Please select a conservation behavior (it is easiest to think about a habit or something that you need to do repeatedly, like bringing cloth bags to the store) that you have successfully adopted or changed and another with which you have failed to make a change. Fill out and submit the worksheet hypothesizing why you did or didn't succeed in changing these behaviors (due Sep 13, 5 points). You will then continue to reflect on your behavior changes in the context of the theories we are reading about between weeks 2-7. As we learn about the theories, think about how they may have played out with respect to your two behaviors. By the end of week 7, please upload a discussion of your behavior changes (success and not-yet success) and the theories you think are relevant and why. Explain how the theories match or illuminate your experience (20 points). Due Oct 18.
- 3. Social Marketing Case Study** **30 points**
For this assignment you will identify a social marketing program or project that is designed to encourage people to engage in or change environmental behavior. There

are a number of cases on Doug Mackenzie-Mohr's website (cbsm.com) as well as RARE (<https://www.rare.org/about>) and Tools of Change (<http://www.toolsofchange.com/en/home/>). Describe the case, critique the degree to which the program is successful, and explain which theories are or are not working. Focus on explaining why these theories are relevant to this case. Create a poster or slide presentation that describes the case and makes clear the connection to theory. Upload this file by Nov 15. During week 11 you will review others' posts and reflect on similarities and differences in the discussion.

4. Apply behavior change to your work life

40 points

Please identify a behavior at your workplace that you believe should change and develop a plan to change this behavior. You do not have to implement this plan. You might plan to change your behavior, but you could also design a process that would change others' behavior. You could think about policy, users, visitors, or anyone. Using at least 4 theories or concepts from class, explain why this behavior is occurring and how you could nudge people toward a change. This 5-page (single spaced) paper should outline the reasons you would use these theories and what you anticipate they would result in. Explain why these theories are valuable (justify using them). Your paper is due by Dec 18. Please emphasize the links to theories, and include citations.

Course Schedule

Overview:

Module	Dates	Topic(s)	Assignment(s) Due
1	Aug 23-29	Introductions	VoiceThread Intro due Sep 6 (10 points)
SECTION 1: EXPLORING THEORIES			
2	Aug 30-Sep 5	Isn't It All About Information?	Assignment 2 worksheet due Sep 5 (5 points)
3	Sep 6-12	Rationality Meets Attitude	
4	Sep 13-19	Motives and Identity	
5	Sep 20-26	Theory of Planned Behavior	
6	Sep 27-Oct 3	Diffusion of Innovation	
7	Oct 4-10	Reasonable Person Model	
8	Oct 11-17	Morality and Worldviews	
9	Oct 18-24	Encompassing Theories	
10	Oct 25-31	Theory Review	Assignment 2 due October 24 (20 points)
SECTION 2: APPLYING THEORIES			
11	Nov 1-7	Social Marketing	
12	Nov 8-14	More Social Marketing	Assignment 4 due Nov 14 (25 points)
13	Nov 15-21	Pushback on Social Marketing	
14	Nov 22-Dec 5	Using Theories to Achieve Change	Start working on final project
SECTION 3: SYNTHESIS AND REVIEW			
15	Dec 6-17	Tie It All Together	Assignment 5 due December 16 (40 points)
Each week: Quiz (1 point), 2 posts in discussion (4 points): Total 75 points participation			