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.

A variety of disciplines have something to contribute to the field of conservation behavior. While this class will be firmly rooted in psychology, we will also explore other social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, and communication.

While it is important to understand environmental issues, that is not the purpose of this course. Education and communication play essential roles in creating a sustainable future. We will explore the theoretical foundation and application of using education and communication strategies in our collective efforts to reach this goal. This course is geared toward those who will be conducting research on behavior change through work with the public in a variety of formal and informal settings to develop strategies that support responsible environmental behavior.

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

Course Objectives:
- Explain the models or theoretical frameworks that can be used to analyze the questions: 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.
- Increase familiarity with social science research designs and goals to discuss what we can learn from theories and models and how they add value to your research.
• 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 behavior change and develop a composite model of what you think works to support behavior change in people like you.

**Required Readings:**

There is one textbook and a pile of reading materials for this course. It is imperative that you read the materials before class, as much of our class time will be spent discussing the readings. The readings are available on electronic reserve at [https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ares/](https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ares/) and there is a link to them in the Canvas course at [https://elearning.ufl.edu](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](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. Required readings are tagged by the week they should be read (i.e., Week 3). Loads of goodies are tagged Optional and Background.


**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 to your ability to engage in productive discussion and the amount you will learn about each theory.

Students are expected to attend class, engage in discussion, submit assignments on time, and participate in group work. Absences will be excused only if accompanied by advanced notice or appropriate paperwork and if students join the online discussion for that week. Non excused absences will result in a deduction of .5 points from the participation score. 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/scrr/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/


Student Complaints Campus:
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 from the level and frequency of class participation, class worksheets and presentations, attendance, and 8 take-home assignments that total 100 points. The following scale will be used:

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

Aug 22  1. Introduction, General Framework, Getting Started
Assignments and Comparison Chart
Thinking behind the course design
Discuss ideas for personal habitual behavior changes
Sign up lists
Section 1: Exploring Theories

Aug 29  2. Intuitive and traditional models of human behavior change


Sept 5  3. Motives, values, attitudes and behavior change

Due: Assignment 1: Barriers and motives for personal behavior
And Assignment 2a


Sept 12  4. Responsibility, hope, identity and behavior

Due: Assignment 2b


**Sept 19**  
**5. Major models of behavior**  
Due: Assignment 3a


**Sept 26**  
**6. Communication**  
Due: Assignment 3b


**October 3**  
**7. Moral and worldview contributions to behavior**  
Due: Assignment 4a; Start working on Assignment 5


October 10  8. Using motives and supportive environments
    Due: Assignment 4b; Keep working on Assignment 5


Section 2: Review and Compare Theories

October 17  9. Presentations and Review (Assignment 5)

Upload presentations and handouts by midnight Sunday October 7, though you can upload it any time prior to this, of course. Come to class prepared to give your presentation, ask questions of others, and answer questions about yours.


Oct 24  10. Discuss Assignment 6 and Other Theories

Come with questions and a completed chart (Assignment 6).

Section 3: Apply Theories

Oct 31  11. Social Marketing
    Use your comparison chart to think about what theories social marketing uses!


Nov 7  12. Questioning and Using Social Marketing


**Nov 14**  
**13. Change at the Community Level and in Resource Management**


**Nov 21**  
**No Class**  
**Thanksgiving Break**

**Nov 28**  
**14. Poster Presentations (Assignment 7)**  
Bring poster to class, review and discuss.


**Section 4: Synthesis**

**Dec 5**  
**15. Putting it All Together**
Assignment 8 due
Submit your synthesis paper and model. Present your experiences with your Behavior Buddies to compare what worked and why to change your behavior. Organize a joint model with others who have selected a similar set of theories, discuss and draw a model. Present on your joint model.


Assignments

1. Barriers and motives for personal behavior Aug 29 5 points
Throughout this semester you will use readings and class discussions to change a personal behavior that you select. To give yourself the most fodder for contemplation, please select a behavior that you do frequently that relates to food, transportation, or energy.

For this first assignment, you will 1) define the behavior you wish to change, 2) explain why you think this is an important behavior to change, 3) explain why you haven’t changed it yet, 4) describe the barriers you experience to making this change, and 5) describe your motivations for wanting to change it. 1-2 pages, single spaced.

Then, throughout the semester you will keep a journal that records your attempts and measures your success, try different strategies to adopt a new behavior, discuss your efforts with “behavior buddies” and analyze your efforts in the context of the theories we discuss in this course. Aim to record evidence of your attempts, in addition to your thoughts about your behavior, and to reflect on your progress with your “behavior buddies” during class.

2, 3, and 4. Three research articles on theories 10 points each
For each assignment, select one theory/paper from class that you are interested in and find a research-based article that explores this theory with a topic of interest to you. Please avoid assigned reading for the course (you will have to check ahead in the syllabus). Read the article, write a 1-2 page paper in which you summarize the findings and reflect on the theory you selected, and come to class prepared to discuss how the theory we read has or has not worked in this case. Submit your paper on the day we discuss the theory.

- Assignment 2; If you select cognitive dissonance, motives, or any of the theories listed in the Dietz review, this is due Sept 5. If you select responsibility, hope, or environmental identity, it is due Sept 12.
- **Assignment 3:** Use TPB or Stern’s Coherent Theory for a paper due Sept 19, or use ELM or Diffusion for a paper due Sept 26.
- **Assignment 4:** Use Moral Reasoning or Cultural Cognition for a paper due October 3, or RPM, Flow, or Self-Determination for a paper due October 19.

Please note that some of these authors have written about many things – aim to find articles that reference these theories. In addition, some authors talk about someone else’s theory – please hunt for research articles that **test and explore the theory**. To find cited works, go to [www.uflib.ufl.edu](http://www.uflib.ufl.edu) and follow these steps: Click on Databases and Journals tab, then Project Starters, Web of Science, Cited Reference Search, and input Cited Author and Cited Work. Narrow your search with ‘social science,’ etc.

### 5. Present another behavior change theory  
**Oct 17**  **15 points**

Using Vining’s overview of behavior change theories (and others), identify one that we have not yet covered and become an expert on it. Please work in pairs on this assignment. You will explain the theory, find at least two articles that use the theory, and explain those too. Some may not have been applied to conservation topics yet. What can we learn from these authors? Prepare a 1-2 page handout for the class to accompany your short (10 minute) presentation that will help everyone complete their Comparison Charts. Upload your handout and presentation to Voice Thread by October 14 and narrate the presentation in Voice Thread. Respond to comments and questions in class on October 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Theory/Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bandura</td>
<td>Self efficacy and outcome expectancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brehm and Brehm</td>
<td>Reactance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chawla</td>
<td>Significant Life Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fazio</td>
<td>Attitudes and Behavior</td>
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<td>Hungerford and Volk</td>
<td>Environmental Citizen Model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kals &amp; Schumacher</td>
<td>Emotional Affinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krasny</td>
<td>Civic Ecology Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Millar and Millar</td>
<td>Direct Experience, Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prochaska</td>
<td>Stages of Change</td>
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<td>Sansone</td>
<td>Self Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schwartz</td>
<td>Norm Activation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seguin &amp; Pelletier</td>
<td>Environmental activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuan</td>
<td>Sense of Place (see Jorgensen and Stedman)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### 6. Application of Theories  
**Oct 24**  **10 points**

Complete a take home quiz that asks you to apply these theories to potential survey questions. We will discuss in class on October 24. Everyone will submit their original responses and new reflections after class discussion.

### 7. Case study of a program/project  
**Nov 28**  **15 points**

Identify a program or project that is designed to encourage people to engage in or change environmental behavior. Describe the program, critique the degree to which the program is successful, and suggest which theories are or are not working. Explain why. Create a
poster that describes your program or project and makes clear the connection to theory. Bring the poster to class.

8. Reflection & Model of Personal Behavior Change Dec 5  15 points
Throughout the semester you have worked on changing a personal behavior that you selected. Return to your first assignment and reflect on your initial ideas about motivations and barriers. Review your journal that noted your attempts to alter your behavior and the evidence of your effort. Reflect on what worked and why. What incentives did you try? Did commitment work? To what extent is perceived control or subjective norm a relevant factor? Summarize your experience in the language we used in the course (identifying variables, barriers, theories, etc.) in about 2 single spaced pages.

Then, using what did or did not work for you, develop and describe an all-encompassing synthesis model that explains your behavior change using at least four of the theories and models that resonate most strongly with your experience. You should consider and define the context in which this model might hold true – all behaviors, just personal behavior, just public behavior; any behavior or only self-selected behaviors; only when motivated by a class assignment, with peer support, etc. Then describe how you could use this model to design communication or education programs to change other people’s personal behaviors. Due in our last class. The model description should be about 3-4 pages. The final assignment should be a total of 5 pages, single spaced, with a graphic model.

Participation points from participation, questions, attendance  10 points
Asking questions, providing answers, facilitating conversation, attending class, and engaging in small group work are important components of this class.

Suggested background to support conservation behavior


Specific theories and papers to help with Assignment 5


**Optional readings that support class discussions**


**To help you select a personal behavior to change:**


Project Drawdown – [http://www.drawdown.org](http://www.drawdown.org)