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 firmly rooted in psychology, we also explore sociological perspectives as change can occur at the individual and community scales. Disciplines as varied as anthropology, engineering, recreation, economics, and health may also be tapped as we consider motives for and applications of behavior change research.

While it is important to understand environmental issues and solutions, 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 or working with the public in a variety of formal and nonformal 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 alternative models or theoretical frameworks that can be used for analyzing the questions: Why do some people demonstrate environmentally responsible behaviors (ERB)? What are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior? What encourages the formation of ERB? Identify the similarities and differences among these models.
- 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/). You can set your page with your courses and can find this one under FOR 6005 or Monroe. You can also access these readings through Canvas, the online course system.

Off-campus students are encouraged to access the electronic course reserve system through the UF VPN client. The new VPN client is easily installed and configured, and provides easy access to electronic materials. 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 human assistance, please contact Rhiannon Pollard or Sandy src-online@ifas.ufl.edu. For general information on course reserves, please contact the Course Reserves Unit at 352-273-2520, or email at eres@uflib.ufl.edu.


**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 and designed 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 if accompanied by advanced notice or appropriate paperwork. Assignments are to be turned in during class on the day they are due.

**Academic Honesty**

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: “I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in their academic work. I agree to this commitment to academic
honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.” Please also refer to the UF guidelines on plagiarism at http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/ml/07b/instructorplagiarism.html and plan on avoiding all types of plagiarism: stealing, misquoting, insufficient paraphrasing, and duplication.

UF Counseling Services
Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals with interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:
1. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575 (personal and career counseling);
2. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171 (personal counseling);
3. Center for Sexual Assault /Abuse Recovery and Education (CARE), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161 ext. 4231 (counseling related to sexual assault and abuse);
4. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601 (career development assistance and counseling).

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 have the right to equal access, use, and benefit of course materials. Please contact me with specific needs and suggestions for how the course can best serve you. It may be helpful to register with the University of Florida Disability Resource Center. They can assist in accommodation. For more information on services for students with disabilities, contact the University of Florida Disability Resource Center at 352-392-8565 or at accessuf@dso.ufl.edu

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>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.33 – 2.66</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>2.00 – 2.32</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>1.67 – 1.99</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>0.67 – 0.99</td>
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<td>0.33 – 0.66</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59% or below</td>
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Course Schedule

Aug 27 1. Introduction, General Framework, Getting Started
Assignments and Theory Chart
Discuss ideas for personal habitual behavior changes

Section 1: Exploring Theories

Sept 3 2. Intuitive and traditional models of human behavior change
Begin to complete the comparison chart


Sept 10 3. Motives, values, emotion, and behavior change
Due: Assignment 1: Barriers and motives for personal behavior


Sept 17 4. Responsibility, hope, identity and behavior


Sept 24 5. Major models of behavior


October 1 6. Communication and social change


Section 2: Review and Compare Theories

October 8 7. Presentations and Review (Assignment 3) – no class in NZ this week. Everything is online.

Upload presentations and handouts by classtime on October 8, though you can upload it any time prior to this, of course. View all and comment on at least six presentations by Oct 15 and then complete Assignment 4.

Oct 15  8. Discuss Assignment 4 and Other Theories

Come with questions and a completed chart (Assignment 4).

Section 3: Apply Theories

Oct 22  9. Social Marketing


Oct 29  10. Adult Audiences and Behavior Change


Nov 5  11. Designing campaigns and questioning their value


### Nov 12 12. Using Education and Reaching Youth


### Nov 19 13. Poster Presentations (Assignment 5)

Bring poster to class, review and discuss.

### Nov 26 No Class Thanksgiving Break

### Section 4: Synthesis

### Dec 3 14. Putting it All Together with Climate Change


OR
Dec 10  15. Your Behavior Change Projects (Assignment 6)
Submit your journal and synthesis. Present on what worked and didn’t as you engaged in behavior change.

Assignments

1. Barriers and motives for personal behavior  Sept 10  5 points
Throughout this semester you will use readings and class discussions to change your own behavior regarding food, transportation, or energy. During the first two weeks you will select a behavior. For this assignment, you will 1) define the behavior you wish to change, 2) explain why you think this is an important behavior to change, 3) why you haven’t changed it yet, 4) what you think are barriers to making this change, and 5) your motivations for wanting to change it. 1-2 pages single spaced. Please keep a journal on your efforts to use for Assignment 6.

2. Three research articles on theories  10 points each
Between weeks 2 and 6, select three theories, models, or authors that you are interested in and find a research-based article that explores this theory with a topic of interest to you. Read the article, write a 1-2 page paper in which you summarize the findings and reflect on the theory, and come to class prepared to discuss how the theory we read has or has not worked in this case. To find cited works, go to www.uflib.ufl.edu, Databases tab, Project Starters, Web of Knowledge, Web of Science, Cited Reference Search, and input Cited Author and Cited Work. Narrow search with social science, etc.

3. Present another behavior change theory  Oct 8  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. Partner with someone from the online section. Read the author’s explanation and find one application of it. 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 8.

Antonovsky  Sense of Coherence
Bandura  Self efficacy and outcome expectancy
Brehm and Brehm  Reactance
Chawla  Significant Life Experience
Deci and Ryan  Self Determination
Fazio  Attitudes and Behavior
Haidt  Moral Foundation Theory
Kahneman & Tversky  Cognitive Heuristics  
Kals & Schumacher  Emotional Affinity  
Krasny  Civic Ecology Education  
Millar and Millar  Direct Experience, Information  
Prochaska  Stages of Change  
Ryff  Scales of psychological well-being  
Sansone  Self Regulation  
Schwartz  Norm Activation  
Seguin & Pelletier  Environmental activism  
Tuan  Sense of Place (see Jorgensen and Stedman)  
Vaske and Donnelly  Value-Attitude-Behavior Model, Cognitive Hierarchy

4. Application of Theories  
Oct 15  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 15. Everyone submit their original responses and new reflections after class discussion.

5. Case study of a program/project  
Nov 19  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. Online students upload to Voice Thread by Nov 19.

6. Reflection & Model of Personal Behavior Change  
Dec 10  15 points
Throughout the semester you have worked on changing a behavior that you selected. Return to your first assignment and reflect on your initial ideas about motivations and barriers. Reflect on your attempts to alter your behavior and what worked and why. What incentives did you try? Did commitment work? To what extent is perceived control or subjective norm a relevant factor? Using what did or did not work for you, describe an all-encompassing model that explains your behavior change using at least four of the theories and models that resonate most strongly with your experience. Consider 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 etc.? Then describe how you could use this model to design communication or education programs to change personal behaviors. Due in our last class. About 5 pages, single spaced.

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 readings to support conservation behavior


Advisory Committee for Environmental Research and Education. 2009. Transitions and tipping points in complex environmental systems. A report by the NSF Advisory Committee for Environmental Research and Education. 56 pages.


**Specific Theories and Concepts**


**To select a behavior:**
