

**Ecological Psychology**  
**Professor Sue Koger**

**Class Meetings:** Monday & Wednesday, 3 - 4:30

**Office Hours:** Friday, 10 - 11 am; or please email me for an appointment *after* checking the schedule posted outside my office.

**Email:** skoger@willamette.edu (*best way to reach me*) Phone: 370-6341

**Psychology 105**  
**Spring, 2004**

Smullin 222

My primary role is to help you learn, so please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or questions. Have a great term!

**Course Description:** Environmental degradation is one of the most pressing problems society faces. Because human behavior is at the root of the problem, understanding individual and societal processes is critical to addressing and solving the problem. As a general education, “Understanding Society” mode of inquiry, this course will explore the role of social institutions and individual human behavior in terms of the creation of this problem, as well as how psychological research and theory can help to formulate solutions. Our discussion will include an overview of psychology as it may be applied to environmental issues. We'll study global problems and explore possible solutions based on behavioral interventions. Employing the principle “Think Globally, Act Locally,” we will conduct community and personal ecology projects to illuminate the ways in which our own conduct contributes to larger global patterns.

The success of a class depends on both the teacher (me) and the learners (you) accepting and fulfilling our respective responsibilities. In that regard, I expect you to come to class having *completed* the reading assignments and *prepared* to participate in discussions.

**Required Texts:**

Quinn, Daniel (1992). *Ishmael: An adventure of the mind and spirit*. New York: Bantam Books.

Schlosser, Eric (2002) *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York: HarperCollins.

Winter, D.D. & S.M. Koger (2004). *The Psychology of Environmental Problems*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

**Student Evaluation:** Your performance on quizzes, participation in class discussions, submission of written comments, and completion of three major projects will determine your grade in the class.

**Discussions:** For each assigned reading, I expect you to *read carefully and think about what you've read*. Then, please develop 2-3 questions or comments. You may

- apply the reading to your own experience;
  - discuss implications for your own behavior, for the discipline, or for society;
  - compare the concept to earlier material, contrasting theories or points of view;
  - pose a question or raise a problem, suggesting possible resolutions or answers;
  - describe a contradiction.
- Note: Simply saying that you like/dislike or agree/disagree is not sufficient.

Please submit comments/questions to the Blackboard discussion group (instructions will be given in class) *before* our discussion on the reading (*no later than 2:30 on class day*). This exercise is intended to prepare us for group discussions, so promptness is critical. Late submissions will not be read for credit. I encourage you to read and comment on other students' submissions.

Projects:

**Act Locally!** You are free to formulate your own ideas to create projects that excite you, but all projects (personal and group) are subject to my approval. The general structure should be as follows:

1. A personal project examines one or more of your environmentally relevant behavior patterns, and your attempts to become more aware, to document, and to change the behavior. You could do a behavioral analysis as briefly described in Winter and Koger, ch. 4 (see also the guidelines on *Blackboard*), or some other kind of analysis which examines the cognitive or emotional dimensions of your target behavior. Progress reports will be collected throughout the term. Please keep a separate, small notebook with *daily* entries regarding your project that you can turn into me periodically. I will provide feedback and answer any questions that arise. These progress reports will count toward your project grade. You will also present your work to the class. Power point or poster presentations should include pictures and quantitative measures (e.g., graphs).

2. A campus or community project will examine an environmentally relevant practice of the Willamette campus or surrounding community. It involves assessment of the situation, followed by educational and organizational efforts to work for improvement. This will be a collaborative project, which you will conduct as part of a group of students from this class as well as students from Prof. Davis's class at TIUA. You may use ECOS (Environmental Community Outreach Society, the WU environmental group), and Mari Morando (the Director of Community Service Learning) and her staff as resources to develop this project. Please see additional guidelines on *Blackboard*.

**The Power of One!** Environmental destruction is a reality, but each one of us has the power to work for and effect change. In this project, you will explore your own power or research someone else's. I encourage you to identify a cause or causes which arouses your passion and interest.

- *Direct Action:* Many organizations provide support and suggestions for direct action including rallies, protests and letter-writing campaigns. Your assignment is to participate in 4 such activities throughout the term, and write a short (1-2 page) report on each. I encourage you to participate in diverse activities with different groups. In your report, include the following:

- background on the issue;
- why the issue is important to you;
- what you did;
- your reactions to participating in the campaign.

Note: If you wrote a letter, include a copy of the letter (an email copy is acceptable).

OR - *Book Report/Research*: There are countless individuals who have made significant contributions to the environmental movement. Several of them have biographies or autobiographies available, others have written expose's. This assignment involves reading about the individual or their cause, and writing a report (5-7 pages) including:

- background on the issue;
- why the issue is important to you;
- what the person/people did;
- your reactions to reading about the person/people;
- a list of the references you used for your research. If you chose to do a book report, simply identify the book you read.

<u>Final Grade Determination:</u>	<u>points</u>
Quizzes	30
Discussion comments/questions	30
Participation in class and at related events (to be announced)	20
Projects: <u>Act Locally</u> - <i>Personal</i> (including progress reports & presentation)	50
- <i>Group Community Project</i>	30
 <u>The Power of One:</u>	
- Direct Action (4) OR Book Report/Research	40
	<b>Total = 200</b>

Notes: Trees are a valuable resource, so please be conservation-minded in ALL assignments. Print on junk-paper or use 2-sided printers whenever possible. Cover pages are not necessary, and please try to reduce the number of pages (don't make writing assignments any longer than they need to be). ☺

*See course calendar for due dates.* Late submissions will result in a grade reduction or loss of credit, depending on the assignment.

\*\* A CAUTION \*\*

**Plagiarism:** I believe that a very small minority of students actively attempt to cheat or plagiarize, but I take this issue very seriously. If I find evidence of either, I will pursue the matter to the full extent of University guidelines (i.e., you will automatically fail the assignment, and possibly the course). Further, the matter will be given over to the Dean's office for consideration of further penalties including expulsion. Please contact me if you have any questions about this policy. *Ignorance does not constitute a valid excuse for plagiarism.*

Course Calendar

Week of	Topic	Reading Assignment
Jan 19	Introduction	W&K Forward, Preface, Ch 1
26	<i>Ishmael</i> ** Note – this is a whole novel, so plan ahead! **	Quinn
Feb 2	Freudian Psychology ** <i>Act Locally Personal Project Proposals</i> due on Wed, 2/4 **	Ch 2
9	Social Psychology ** <i>Power of One</i> Topic Statements due on Wed, 2/11 ** (Note: If you're doing Direct Action, let me know & on which issues)	Ch 3
16	Behavioral Psychology & Social Dilemmas	Ch 4
23 **Fri, 2/27	Physiological & Health Psychology 3 pm: Global Warming -- colloquium by Professor Don Negri	Ch 5
Mar 1	Debrief colloquium; Physiological & health, continued ** <i>Power of One Papers</i> due on Wed, 3/3 (Note: If you're doing Direct Action, your 1 <sup>st</sup> 2 actions are due this week)	
8	<i>Fast Food Nation</i> **Note - this is a complete text, so plan ahead! **	
15	Cognitive Psychology	Ch 6
17	<i>Act Locally Group Project</i> introductions & small group meetings	
22	<i>No Classes! Have a great spring break ☺</i>	
29	Holistic Approaches	Ch 7
April 5	The environment meets global security: Issues of war and peace (reserve readings to be announced)	
12	<i>Act Locally Group Project</i> progress reports due Monday, 4/12 <b>Note: No classes Wed, 4/14: Student Scholarship Recognition Day. Attendance is encouraged!</b>	
19	Sustainability <i>Act Locally Personal Project presentations</i>	Ch 8
26	<i>Act Locally Group Presentations</i>	
May 3	Wrap-Up <i>Power of One Direct Action</i> , final 2 actions due	