

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Open Educational Resources

College of Staten Island

2021

Environmental Psychology: Open Syllabus

Valkiria Duran-Narucki

CUNY College of Staten Island, Valkiria.Duran@csi.cuny.edu

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/si_oers/51

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).

Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

Environmental Psychology

Department of Psychology

College of Staten Island CUNY

Open Syllabus

Created by: Valkiria Durán-Narucki in May 2021

E-mail: Valkiria.Duran@csi.cuny.edu

Office: 718.982.3775 (voice message transcribes to my e-mail)

Out of campus Google Voice: 917.740.0153 (emergency only)

Undergraduate Environmental Psychology Syllabus © 2021 by Valkiria Duran-Narucki is licensed

under [CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) 

Course Description: This course introduces students to environmental psychology, an interdisciplinary scientific field which tries to complicate, understand, and improve the dynamic relationship between peoples and places. The approach taken in this document is that of a participatory class where instructor and students share in the decisions of assignments and the emphasis of topics in the class.

Introduction - What is Environmental Psychology?

Environmental psychology is defined as the study of people in relationship to the environments in which they spend time. "Environment" is conceptualized in many different ways, it can mean the natural environment -as in grassy fields, trees, rivers, oceans and mountains- but it can also mean the built environment -as in buildings, homes, schools, and cities-. Environmental psychology is different from other fields in its the explicit consideration of the environment when trying to understand psychological phenomena.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this semester, students should be able to:

- Explain what environmental psychology is, and how its approach differs from other fields within psychology.
- Describe the ecological view of psychological issues.
- Describe what kinds of topics and problems environmental psychologists study.
- Name differences between the methods that environmental psychology uses and mainstream psychological methods.
- Describe the kinds of evidence that environmental psychologists collect.
- Increase awareness of the role of the physical environment in their lives.
- Have a better understanding of current environmental problems in their communities and possible solutions
- Continue the growth of a critical thinking mind frame around social and spatial issues at the individual level.

Relevant Textbooks (NOT REQUIRED):

- Bechtel, R. B. & Churchman, A. (2002). *Handbook of Environmental Psychology*. New York: Wiley & Sons
- Bell, P.A., Greene, T.C., Fisher, J.D., & Baum, A.S. (2005). *Environmental Psychology* (5th. Ed). Erlbaum.
- Gieseking, J., W. Mangold, C. Katz, S. Low, and S. Saegert. (2014). *The People, Place, and Space Reader*. New York, Routledge.
- Gifford, R. (2007). *Environmental psychology: Principles and practice* (5th ed.). Colville, WA: Optimal Books
- Heft, H. (2001). *Ecological psychology in context: James Gibson, Roger Barker, and the legacy of William James's radical empiricism*. Psychology Press.

This class is a Zero Cost Textbook course which uses either Open Educational Resources or readings that can be accessed via our Library. All required readings will be available on Blackboard.

Grading Policy

Grading for this class will be based on the total points obtained in the way:

Environmental Autobiography (1 paper)	10%
Four Environmental Assignments (to be created jointly in class)	60%
Final "Legacy" Project	15%
Online participation (DB posts, social media)	10%
Engagement & Class participation	5%

Total	100%
-------	------

The total number of points you achieve will be assigned a letter grade as follows:

A:	93 and above.	C+:	$77 \leq \% \text{-score} < 79$
A-:	$90 \leq \% \text{-score} < 93$	C:	$70 \leq \% \text{-score} < 76$
B+:	$87 \leq \% \text{-score} < 89$	D:	$60 \leq \% \text{-score} < 69$
B:	$83 \leq \% \text{-score} < 86$	F:	Less than 60
B-:	$80 \leq \% \text{-score} < 82$		

Description of Assignments

Environmental Autobiography (10%):

[Course Number goes here](#) | [Environmental Psychology](#) | [Semester goes here](#)

You will write an *environmental autobiography*. This paper tells the “story of your life” as it relates to the places that are meaningful to you. Write about the connection between you and your experiences of these places. Help the readers understand what about these places helps to understand who you are. Emphasize the physical environment and your interaction with it. What were the main things that you did in these places? How do people view this place? What emotions or thoughts do you associate with this place? Do you live there now? Do you go back to these place(s) often? What is the role of this place in who you are?

Suggested ideas on how to focus your paper, are for example: **“I am from...”** you can write about the community, culture, or country where you are from. It could be where you were born, or where you grow up. **“This is where I live”** write about the neighborhood where you currently live. **“This is my experience of CSI”** you may want to write about your experience of living (dorms or nearby), commuting, and/or taking classes at CSI.

“My utopia: the ideal place for me”: If you select this topic, you will write about a place where you would want to live. A place that you dream of for yourself and/or other people in the future.

About the format:

This paper should be about 3 pages long, double-spaced with standard margins (1 inch around) and a standard font (e.g. Times Arial or Helvetica) size 12. I am interested in quality more than in quantity; however, it is usually the case that in order to be both clear and thorough about a topic you need to use more words. Papers will be uploaded into Blackboard. Please make sure you spell check and re-read your paper at least two times before uploading it. It is also helpful to read your paper out-loud to yourself or someone before turning it in. Doing this will increase the flow and readability of the paper, and most likely your grade. A rubric that describes how grading will be done for this paper will be posted on Blackboard with the link to the assignment.

Assignments (60%): This class will be very dynamic and it will be structured around 4 thematic units. We will have one assignment to evaluate each unit worth 15% each. We will always be doing something related to the theme we are covering. This includes watching videos, listening to podcasts, reading news stories or reading scientific articles. The assignments will be designed in class, in a participatory way. The structure of the paper and the way it will be graded will be agreed upon during class time. Usually, I will present a draft assignment and students will help to make it meaningful and doable. These assignments will be completed during class time as well as outside of class time and will be graded individually. Specifics for each paper will be posted well before the paper is due. Deadlines are posted on this syllabus and will be posted on Blackboard.

Final “Legacy” Project (15%): I am often amazed by the work that CUNY students do. At the end of this semester, I hope that each student can contribute to a final project that can be shared online with our families and communities. This project will be created in a participatory way and will be housed at the CUNY Commons. Please create your account at the commons to participate, you must use your CUNY e-mail to register here but then you can change your e-mail preference later.

The final result of this project will be decided collectively (a single theme for the class) but students will work individually. Each individual can choose the form in which their contribution will be a part of the final project. For an example of a legacy project, please click [here](#).

Online Participation 10%:

Some of the participation will happen in discussion board format. In addition to discussion board posts on the topics that we are covering, the discussion board posts will help us start gathering materials for our final project, they can also help us further understand the topics that we are reading about. In addition to the Bb discussion board, there will be photos that can be published using a common [Instagram account](#). There is no pre-set number of posts that is required, the requirement is to be "active" during the semester. An active participant will have posted during the semester at least once on every topic or assignment that we cover.

Engagement & Class Participation (5%): This class is a 300-level class and therefore one of its goals is to model appropriate professional behaviors. In workplaces and in graduate school it is expected that you are an active participant in meetings and in the exchange of information. This means you cannot "just sit there". With this in mind, attendance and participation will be graded in our class. This will be a very subjective grade, by that, I mean that it depends on my observations of your participation. Please make sure you make a good impression.

If you are someone who does not like to talk in class, please make sure that you participate by "being present" in an alternative way. Students who demonstrate their engagement, even if not verbally, will be graded high in participation.

Sample Calendar

There will be changes based on the class' pace and needs. Any changes will be discussed during class time.

Instructors should have a general structure for the course but be open to changes or re-prioritizations

DATE	TOPIC/UNIT	ACTIVITIES	TO DO For Next Class
Week 1	Welcome, Syllabus, Class planning. Intro to Environmental Psychology	Introduction to class dynamic, conversation on participatory method and experiential assignments.	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wohlwill, J. F. (1973). The environment is not in the head. <i>Environmental design research</i>, 2(1), 166-181 • Hal Proshansky's Obituary

Week 2	First Unit: Introduction to Environmental Psychology	Conversations: 1. What is Enviro Psych? How is it different? Introduce the main journals. *Proposed* Assignment 1: Select a topic within EnviroPsych that you are curious about. Find a scientific article AND a popular press article (instructions and rubric provided separately)	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowding and personal space invasion on the train: Please don't make me sit in the middle • Freire, P. (2018). <i>Pedagogy of the oppressed</i>. Bloomsbury publishing USA. (Read Chapter 2) • Gifford, R. (2018). <i>Environmental Psychology, Enhancing our World</i>. EPBrochure@gmail.com
Week 3	First Unit: Introduction to Environmental Psychology	Presentation of final projects from previous PSY 324 classes (as preparation for our own class project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifford, R. (2003). Making a difference: Some ways environmental psychology has improved the world. <i>Handbook of environmental psychology</i>, 323.
Week 4	First Unit: Introduction to Environmental Psychology		Sample: Assignment 1: Think of an environmental psych topic that you are curious about. Find a journalistic article on this topic. Find a scientific article on this topic. Compare and contrast.
Week 5	Second Unit: Our Home & Our Neighborhood	Watch: Class Divide by HBO	Neighborhood mapping: My Street Do the Class guide for Class Divide (by HBO)
Week 6	Second Unit: Our Home & Our Neighborhood		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooper, C. (2014). <i>The house as the symbol of the self</i>. In Gieseeking, J., W. Mangold, C. Katz, S. Low, and S. Saegert. (Eds.. <i>The People, Place, and Space Reader</i>. New York, Routledge. <p>Sample: Assignment 2: 9 objects, places or pets that represent me.</p>
Week 7	Second Unit: Our Home & Our Neighborhood	Listen to the podcast: https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/segments/96043-its-alive (Cities)	Listen: This American Life: Three Miles (podcast) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milgram, S. & Jodelet, D. (2014). In Gieseeking, J., W. Mangold, C. Katz, S. Low, and S. Saegert. (Eds.. <i>The People, Place, and</i>

			<p><i>Space Reader</i>. New York, Routledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, N. (2014). Class struggle on Avenue B. In Gieseeking, J., W. Mangold, C. Katz, S. Low, and S. Saegert. (Eds.. <i>The People, Place, and Space Reader</i>. New York, Routledge.
Week 8	Third Unit: Designing, Understanding and Being in Places	Guest Speaker: A Woman Architect	Sample: Assignment 3: Analysis of a current space that you inhabit
Week 9	Third Unit: Designing, Understanding and Being in Places		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dovey, K. (2013). Informalising architecture: The challenge of informal settlements. <i>Architectural Design</i>, 83(6), 82-89. • Mars, R. (2010-Present), 99% Invisible. [Audio podcast]. National Public Radio. https://99percentinvisible.org/
Week 10	Third Unit: Designing, Understanding and Being in Places	Present individual Environmental Autobiographies	<p>Environmental Autobiography Due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview with NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver. Municipal Shares (1891 – Present). [Audio podcast]. (https://www.municipalworld.com/podcasts/nyc-parks-a-tale-of-two-cities-part-1-mitchell-silver/) • Durán-Narucki, V. (2011). Built in: Meaning and the reproduction of socio-historical characteristics in public school buildings in the US. <i>Educational and Child Psychology</i>, 28(1), 114.
Week 11	Fourth Unit: Our Planet is Our Shared Home	Guest Speaker: Expert in sustainability and conservation, working in the field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bott, S., Cantrill, J. G., & Myers Jr, O. E. (2003). Place and the promise of conservation psychology. <i>Human ecology review</i>, 100-112.

Week 12	Fourth Unit: Our Planet is Our Shared Home		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clayton, S. (2020). Conservation psychology and climate change. In <i>Standing up for a Sustainable World</i>. Edward Elgar Publishing.
Week 13	Fourth Unit: Our Planet is Our Shared Home		Sample: Assignment 4: One action to save the planet
Week 14	Fifth Unit: What Happens Next?	Last Day of Classes	Final Class Project Due

Be aware of the dates for withdrawal and refunds. Please check [your college academic calendar](#) to know important deadlines.

Important Resources

Listed below are the links and descriptions to resources for the College of Staten Island, substitute with your own college's resources as needed.

Technology Help Desk:

The HelpDesk serves as CSI's first line of defense for computer problems, questions and concerns. In addition to software support, we provide departmental training to faculty, staff, and students in various applications, including MS Office, email and CUNY Portal. We also schedule the computer laboratories for classes.

Contact by Email: helpdesk@csi.cuny.edu OR Report a Problem: [Online Form](#)

See our [technology online resource checklist](#) for additional help.

CSI Library

Librarians are available to guide you to appropriate resources for your research project, assist you to develop successful research strategies, and help you search print and electronic resources effectively. There are many ways to get in touch with a CSI librarian.

Center for Student Accessibility

In accordance with federal law the College offers a number of resources for accommodating individuals with disabilities. "Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the [Office for Disability Services]. Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, *the instructor must receive written verification* of student's eligibility from the office of Disability Services, which is located in 1P-101. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the Office for Disability Services Staff and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor. To learn more about the accommodations and services that are available, please contact the Center for Student Accessibility, 718-982-2510, CSA@csi.cuny.edu

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center provides individual and group counseling for students of the College of Staten Island. They offer personal and academic counseling services. Students are given the opportunity to explore issues that can help them achieve success. To make an appointment please call 718-982-2391. During the pandemic, the Counseling Center is offering telephone or video counseling. Email counseling@csi.cuny.edu if you need an appointment. We also have 24/7 telephone counseling support by dialing the main number which is 718-982-2391. That service is prepared to offer immediate support and coping strategies but is not intended for ongoing counseling.

Spring 2021 Support Groups:

- Autism Spectrum Skills Group
- BIPOC Mental Health Matters
- Grief Group Counseling
- Helping Professionals and First Responders Group
- International Student Support Group
- Macaulay Honor's College CSI Student Therapy Group
- Personal Growth Group

The Center for Academic Student Assistance (CASA)

Tutoring can be provided online by the CASA. Please check their website for an updated schedule for Spring 2021. Click on the [schedule for Humanities and Social Sciences](#) to get help with this class. I might ask you to reach out to them if I see that you could use help with your papers.

Class Specific Policies:

- In the event of any personal issue that might prevent you from attending class or doing well in class, please contact me as soon as possible. *Do not wait* until the end of the semester, do not wait until you are failing.
- I am available for appointments; feel free to e-mail me regarding class, or other academic-related matters. I have 3 office hours every week but make an appointment to make sure I can give you my undivided attention.
- Be kind and respectful to everyone, even when you do not share their opinion.
- All kinds of diversity are celebrated in our classroom, we are fortunate to be in a diverse part of the world where people (by law) can be themselves.
- Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned according to the University's Law (see student handbook). If you are in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me or read CSI's plagiarism policy at: <http://www.csi.cuny.edu/catalog/undergraduate/academic-policies.htm#o3518>

Use as needed

First Gen Support Statement: Some of you might be the first generation (first gen) in your family attending college. CUNY is proud to have students like you. Our mission is to find you where you are and help you move forward to the next step in your journey. In order to do that, we hope to encourage a sense of control and self-direction. First gen students often times don't grow up surrounded by the culture of college. If you are having a hard time with the routines and expectations of college, please ask for help. As an instructor, I can only help if I know that help is needed. It is also important to know that you have already paid for many services available to you in our college when you paid tuition (like writing help or counseling). I know about this because I was a first gen college student and I am now a professor. If you keep your focus and do the work, your possibilities are endless.