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Chapter 1 : Social Psychology Experiments - Explaining Human Nature

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The following is a list of courses taught in Environmental Psychology: Interdisciplinary Perspectives This course is designed to provide a survey of the range of disciplines that comprise the field of Environmental Social Science. Ecological and Contextual Concepts in Psychology This course examines the strands of ecological thought in psychology ranging from self-proclaimed ecological theorist such as J. More recent work is drawn from artificial intelligence, environmental and developmental psychology, and discourse analysis. The goal of the course is to help students develop a theoretical basis for understanding psychological processes as embedded in the physical, social, and cultural world. Social and Cultural Theories This seminar is part of a three course sequence that introduces first and second year graduate students to the multidisciplinary theoretical bases of the environmental social science field. The readings are divided into four parts: The final part reviews 4 critical theories: Specific techniques covered include observation, interviews, questionnaires, participatory methods, graphics, community studies and social impact assessment. The research problems selected by students in the first semester are pursued, with the design and application of appropriate data collection techniques. The laboratory meeting enables discussion of research questions specific to the ongoing studies. The class terminates with a presentation of the research and a final paper. Qualitative Methods This course focuses on rationale and method in human development and action research. We review, discuss, and practice qualitative research methods including ethnography, free spaces, interviewing, and discourse analysis. We take a critical perspective on research design, considering theory, purpose, and issues such as multiple methods, ethical issues in studying others, and issues of diversity. Students apply the course work to their own research, in particular second year research projects. The goal of this seminar is to develop individual research projects including problem formulation, literature review, research design, definition of methods, implementation and analysis. The first semester focus is on problem formulation, literature review and design of research including methods. Ethical concerns are addressed throughout the year. The goal of this seminar is to continue work on individual research projects. The second semester focus is on the conduct of the research including data collection and analysis and writing up the final paper, preferably one that is publishable. Statistics I and II are required by the Ph. Current topics in psychology of special relevance to environmental psychology form the remainder of the course. Hermeneutics, the theory and method of interpretation, will be explored from multiple perspectives, including: The goal of this seminar is to develop individual research projects including problem formation, literature review, research design, definition of methods, implementation and analysis. Students at any stage in the development and completion of the Second Year Paper register for this course. The seminar will begin with a series of discussions on the anthropological theories that have been used to define culture, and on the methodological and practical applications of these different theoretical perspectives. The following sessions will then focus on the analysis of ethnographies addressing environment-behavior issues such as urban safety, Third World community planning, post-disaster resettlement, squatter and self-built housing, urban redevelopment, zoning and suburban development, gender and spatial arrangements, and environmental cognition. The seminar will include fieldwork experience in the local community on culture and environment related problems, and a fieldwork lab will be available for student training and questions. The readings and discussions will emphasize a critical reappraisal of the development of the Western idea of nature within various sociopolitical and cultural contexts and will include examples of how nature is interpreted in literature, landscape painting and landscape design. The ideological importance of nature as a vehicle for naturalizing social conditions and for understanding ourselves, will then be compared to contemporary uses of the concept of ecology and discussed with reference to environmental ethics, the politics of ecology and scientific ecological thought. The seminar will include sessions organized

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by individual students who are working on special topics--such as artists interpretation and relationship to nature and urban wilderness--within this disciplinary area. Such approaches have variously been called "ecological," "dynamic interactionism," "organismic," "holistic," "socio-ecological," "field theoretical," etc. The seminar will review closely the perspectives of the gestalt psychologists Heinz Werner and his inheritants at Clark University, Brunswik, Lewin and the Ecological Psychologists, Bronfenbrenner and Valsiner. Students will be required to prepare a paper which articulates how any one of these models might be employed in their developing research. The class will review, analyze and critique previous efforts at assessing the social impacts of development projects, public policy and particular practices. Students will have the opportunity to work individually and collectively on case studies representative of the Social Impact Assessment process in urban, national, and international settings addressing such issues as urban land use, toxic exposure and natural resource development. Taken into account is the analysis of contemporary spaces, their purported roles and actual functions. A central part of the course is site visits to public places and analysis of cases. Readings for each time period examined cover the social, political and economic context, views from social scientists, designers and planners about the period and their work, research papers, reflections and critiques of the work and its outcomes. A variety of selected topics are considered including gender and the built environment, urban design, suburban and rural issues, open space, the symbolic meaning of gender in the environment and issues concerning gender and economic development. Readings include feminist perspectives on various environmental design disciplines. Attention is given to dialectical relationships between government policy and community participation. Case studies in community planning and design, health movement, education, participatory action research, etc. Students will be asked to apply the learning to their own particular research area by designing an ethnographic study. Classes are devoted to the preparation, execution, critical reflection and systematic comparison of each method as used with children at the chosen site. The methods to be used include: Students will be responsible for understanding one contemporary research perspective and using it to observe play in a field setting to be arranged by the instructor. Three specific programs will be investigated in field trips and interviews. Selected sociological and urban planning studies of housing and social relations, as well as work on housing choice and satisfaction are also examined. The syllabus also includes representative pre-and post-occupancy evaluation studies of specific housing developments. Recent and current housing policies at the federal level and selected state and local policies are reviewed and considered from the point of view of their relationship to individual development, social relationships and community development. Particular attention is paid to the housing needs and problems of elderly, children, single-parent and working parents. Readings about nature and the impact of racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, heterosexism, classism on individuals and on social science research, theory and practice are discussed. The instructors have extensive years of research in these settings and they will include evaluations and descriptions of their own experiences.

Chapter 2 : Contemporary research in social psychology (edition) | Open Library

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