Psychology and/of Climate Change
ENVI/PSYC 273 // Fall 2024

Tuesday & Thursday 3:00 – 4:30 pm // OLRI 243

Prof. Christie Manning
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Office hours in OLRI 158A: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30; Thursdays 3:15-4:00, or by
appointment (calendar link)

Course preceptor: Maddie Salunga
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Office hours: By appointment

Course description

Why are we (individually and collectively) continuing to accept "business as usual" fossil fuels use, despite the accelerating, global threat it poses to human well-being? Climate change is here and now, and quickly getting worse. Yet, though more than half of people polled across 10 countries are "alarmed" about global warming, few are taking significant personal action in response, and only a small minority are involved in civic or collective action to address the issue.

This course will explore psychological theories and studies that help explain why people respond to the climate crisis in the ways they do, and what psychological research tells us about how to shift that response.

Course content goals

This class will survey current psychological research relevant to the issue of global climate change. Goals include:
- Encounter psychological perspectives on climate change
- Examine original research through journal articles and book chapters
- Connect psychological research to the real world through in-class activities, conversations with visitors, and a small group project
- Enhance analytical skills through critical reading and discussion

Goals of the First Year Course Experience

As a First Year Course (FYC), this course also aims to:
- Introduce you to critical inquiry at the intersection of Environmental Studies and Psychology
- Familiarize you to library research skills
- Hone your writing skills through writing instruction, feedback from me, our preceptor, and your peers, and opportunities to revise your work
- Introduce you to Macalester's academic expectations
- Provide you with an advisor who can support you through your first year and beyond
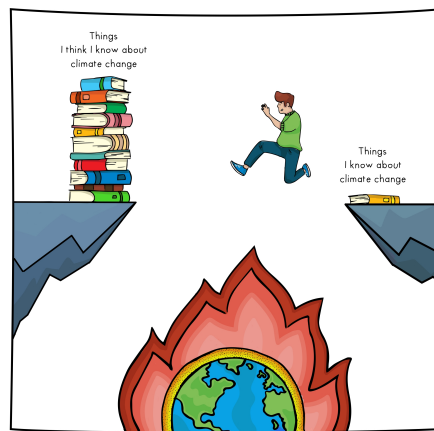
Meet your Professor: Dr. Christie Manning

I have a PhD in cognitive and biological psychology and I have been teaching in the Environmental Studies Department since 2008. My research focuses on how people respond to climate change and climate injustice, and I am particularly interested in the psychological circumstances that motivate collective action. In my personal life, I am the parent to two young adults, Maeve and Clara (ages 19 and 24), and partner to Frank, who grew up in Germany. I speak decent/not great German. When not working, I love walking with Frank and our dog (Biene), listening to books on the Libby app, taking long-distance bike rides, puttering in the garden, and exploring Minnesota state parks.

Note: **Please call me Christie! (she/her)**

Meet our Preceptor: Maddie Salunga

Maddie is a rising sophomore who took Psych and/of Climate Change last fall (2023). She is from Washington, DC, and at Macalester, she is involved with Sunrise, a member of the Women's Gender-Inclusive Ultimate Frisbee team (the Pursesnatchers), a board member for Filipinos at Mac, a student worker at the Digital Resource Center in the library, and a media team member for Xertion (K-pop dance group). Maddie is a Psychology and Media and Cultural Studies double major and is considering a possible minor in Environmental Studies.

Overconfidence in lay climate change knowledge – Annechien Dirkje Hoeben – www.Klimapsychologie.com – CC-BY-NC-ND.

My hopes/expectations of you

- Attend every class.
- Be present and engaged. Listen. Ask questions. Offer your perspective.
- Leave your technology in your backpack.
- Help me create a community in this classroom.
- Appreciate the diversity of perspectives available from your peers in this class.
- Come to my office hours.
- Communicate with me. Early. Often. Especially if you are struggling with any aspect of the course
- Work with Maddie, our class preceptor.

Course Details

Grading philosophy and specifications grading

In most learning situations in life outside of school, you are not assigned a grade. In academic settings, they are the norm. Yet conventional grading structures are often counterproductive. They may lead students to think more about their grades than about their writing or learning, or to focus on impressing (or fooling) a teacher rather than engaging wholeheartedly with the material, or to fear failure and thus be reluctant to take risks with writing or ideas. Many decades of psychological research in education suggests that grades, in the way they are traditionally given/used, can actually harm learning.

Thus, I have chosen to use an alternative system called "Specifications Grading" ("specs" for short) to determine final grades for this class. I have chosen specs because I believe it will encourage engaged learning, reward good effort, and acknowledge excellent work, while also being flexible and responsive to the ups and downs of normal life in college.

How it works:
1. You have the flexibility to opt out of a certain number of assignments, depending on the final grade you would like to earn in the class.
2. Everything that normally receives a grade (class participation, reading responses, project reports, presentations, the final portfolio) will be evaluated on a credit/no credit basis. "Credit" is given for work that fulfills all of the specifications for an assignment according to a clear rubric (available on Moodle). The specifications for all assignments are set at B+ quality work. If you do B+ quality work or higher, you will get credit. You will not receive credit for work that does not earn at least a B+.
3. Every time you earn credit for a graded course component by meeting its specifications, you will earn a point in the appropriate category. Your final grade will be determined by how many points you earn across each of the five categories of the course. (See the table on the next page.)
4. I will give you feedback on the final versions of your formal written assignments (reflection papers) and if they are not B+ quality work, you may turn in a revision one week after you receive my feedback.

Flexibility tokens

Because lots of life happens during the semester, it isn't always possible to complete everything we intend to do, or to complete things on the schedule we hoped to follow. Tokens are designed to recognize this reality and give you some additional flexibility to meet the goals you set for yourself for this class. Everyone in the class will begin the semester with five tokens. You can use these in whatever combination you'd like at the following 'rates of exchange'.

■ 1 token = 1 extra revision on a formal writing assignment; OR a 48-hour extension on a reading response

■ 2 tokens = 1 participation point; OR 1 week extension on a formal writing assignment; OR a missed draft; OR an EnviroThursday presentation

■ 4 tokens = not being part of a group presentation; OR an extension on the in-class issue presentation; OR a missed reading response

Please note: If you fall behind and don't feel like you can catch up, even with the help of tokens, PLEASE talk to me. I will work with you to earn extra tokens and get back on track.

Assignments

Full assignment descriptions will be posted on Moodle.
- Attendance and participation in class (26 possible points)
- Reading responses (12 possible points)
- Reflection papers (4 possible points)
- In-class presentation (3 possible points)
- Climate action plan (4 possible points: draft, final, presentation, brief reflection)
- Final paper (1 possible point)
- Attendance at 3 EnviroThursdays (3 possible points)

Specs

Attendance & Participation	Reading Responses	Reflection papers	In-class presentation	Climate action plan	Final paper	EnviroThurs-days	Course grade
24	11	4	3 (written notes, presentation, reflection)	4 (draft, final, presentation, reflection)	1	3	A
23	10	4	3	4	0	3	A-
22	9	4	3	3	0	2	B+
21	9	3	2	3	0	2	B
20	8	3	2	2	0	1	B-
19	8	3	1	2	0	0	C+
18	7	3	1	2	0	0	C/C-
18	7	2	1	1	0	0	D

Attribution: Clay Bennett

Well-Being and Other Policies

Health and well-being

First and foremost, this class is a community of human beings. Let us be kind to ourselves and one another as we learn together and navigate this era of (post?)pandemic adjustment, national and global political uncertainty, violence in many parts of the world, growing climate change impacts, and many other issues outside of this class that may on your mind. I strongly encourage you to make your well-being a priority. Reach out to me if you are struggling.

We are fortunate to have on our campus the Laurie Hamre Center for Health and Wellness, where you can access many health and wellness services. I highly recommend visiting their website or visiting them in person (in the Leonard Center) to learn more about their resources.

Accommodations

I am committed to supporting all students in my class. If course design ever poses barriers to your ability to access or to demonstrate understanding of course content, please let me know. I will make reasonable academic accommodations in such cases. If you have a known disability and think that you may need formal accommodations, email disabilityresources@macalester.edu, call the office at 651-696-6275, or use their online scheduler. Given these post(?) pandemic times, you may find yourself needing things that you normally would not. In those cases, please let me know what is going on. I may be able to make reasonable accommodations that will help.

Recommended academic resource

Many wonderful resources exist that will help you with this class. To book an online appointment with a writing counselor at the MAX Center, visit WCOnline. You can find the center's guide to working remotely with a writing tutor here. Our research and instruction librarians are also a great resource for many writing-related questions. You may book an online appointment with one of them here.

Title IX

Macalester is committed to providing a safe and open learning and living environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) has experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone, and that help and support are available.

Please be aware that as a faculty member, I am a ***non-confidential resource.*** This means that if I become aware of incidents or allegations of sexual misconduct, I am **required** to report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinators. This College policy is intended to ensure that you receive the resources and support you may need. For more information, please see the Title IX page of the Macalester website.

If you would like to speak with a ***confidential resource*** (someone who is not required to share what they are told with the Title IX Coordinator), the following people and organizations are available to you on or off campus:
- Macalester College Center for Religious and Spiritual Life All of the chaplains in the CRSL are confidential resources.
- Macalester College Hamre Center for Health & Wellness counselors, physicians, registered nurses, or nurse practitioners, 651-696-6275.
- SOS Sexual Violence Services of Ramsey County Trained advocates offer information, referrals, legal advocacy, support groups, one-on-one counseling off-campus, and a 24-hour confidential hotline at 651-266-1000.

Academic integrity

Academic dishonesty erodes the basic foundations of higher education: exchange, debate, and the thoughtful consideration of what we know, how we know it, and why it matters. It has no place at Macalester or in this course. Find Macalester's academic integrity policy here. For help avoiding plagiarism, visit the Library's Academic Integrity materials here.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

AI tools (such as Bard or ChatGPT) are now prevalent, and we need reasonable guidelines for their use in our classroom. In this course, I am willing to allow *some* use of AI *as long as you are transparent and acknowledge your use*. My main concern with use of AI is that the assignments in this class are meant to challenge you and encourage your creativity, critical-thinking, and innovative problem-solving. Using AI tools can circumvent all of these goals.

At the same time, I recognize that AI tools can be helpful to start the idea generation process, or to overcome the paralysis of the blank page. If you use AI in this class (or in any other context!), you should be aware that the material generated may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Plus, overuse of AI is likely to stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

If you choose to use AI tools for this class, here are some guidelines that we will navigate together:

- Provide an acknowledgement that you have used AI: Include a statement at the end of any assignment (including reading responses) for which you used AI, and state how you used it (e.g., to help you get started, to rephrase an idea, to generate full sentences, to generate full paragraphs, etc.) I will provide a template for this.

- Don't trust anything AI says. If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is wrong unless you either know the answer or can check in with another source. AI works best for topics you understand.

- If you provide minimum effort prompts, you will get low quality results. You will need to refine your prompts in order to get good outcomes. This will take work.

- Be thoughtful about when this tool is useful. Don't use it if it isn't appropriate for the case or circumstance, or if it will detract from your learning.

- Remember that the best learning often comes through the (unfortunately) painful process of mentally grappling with ideas and trying to wrestle them into coherent sentences. You lose the development of mental sharpness when you abdicate mental work to AI.

Religious Observance

Students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this semester. If you have a religious observance or practice that conflicts with your participation in the course, please contact me ASAP to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Schedule

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Due on this day	Notes
O	O	27-Aug	Welcome		
1	1T	3-Sep	Course Introduction		
	2R	5-Sep	Psychological Framework and Stage 1: Noticing	RR#1	Paper 1 assigned
2	3T	10-Sep	Library visit	RR#2	
	4R	12-Sep	What is climate change?	RR#3	
3	5T	17-Sep	Health & Wellness visit		
	6R	19-Sep	Writing workshop	Paper 1 draft	
4	7T	24-Sep	Climate justice	RR#4	
	8R	26-Sep	Stage 2: Interpreting	RR#5	Paper 1 feedback
5	9T	1-Oct	Social influence	Paper 1 final	Paper 2 assigned
	10R	3-Oct	Politicization and skepticism	RR#6	
6	11T	8-Oct	Misinformation		
	12R	10-Oct	Stage 3: Feeling responsible	RR #7	
7	13T	15-Oct	Climate justice, part 2	Paper 2 draft	In-class Paper 2 peer review
	-		Fall Break		
8	14T	22-Oct	Christie's practice talk		
	15R	24-Oct	Storytelling workshop I	Paper 2 final	Paper 3 assigned
9	16T	29-Oct	Climate justice, part 3		
	17R	31-Oct	Storytelling workshop II	Paper 3 draft	Storytelling slam
10	18T	5-Nov	TBD	Paper 3 final	Paper 4 assigned
	19R	7-Nov	Stage 4: Knowing what to do		
11	20T	12-Nov	Efficacy	RR #8	In-class advising
	21R	14-Nov	Guest speaker	Paper 4 final	Group action project assigned
12	22T	19-Nov	Stage 5: Choosing to act	RR #9	
13	23T	21-Nov	Collective action	RR #10	
	24R	26-Nov	Cultivating wisdom	RR #11	
	-		T-Day Break		
14	25T	3-Dec	TBD		
	26R	5-Dec	Closing discussion	RR #12	
15	27T	10-Dec	Climate action round-up		
	W	18-Dec	Final paper and group project revisions due at 10:30 a.m.		