

DRAFT: Assignment Days/Times will be Edited Before Semester Opens

PSYCHOLOGY OF SUSTAINABILITY

PSY3626-16067

SPRING 2026

T | Period 5 - 6
(11:45 AM - 1:40 PM)

LIT 0113

R | Period 6
(12:50 PM - 1:40 PM)

LIT 0113

“We look backward to our parents and forward to our children and through their children to a future we will never see, but about which we must care.” Carl Jung

Instructor

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Dr. Chandlers Office Hours & Zoom Locations

TBA

Teaching Team

TBA

Groups and Group Leaders

TBA

Important: Teaching assistants are not required to hold office hours for this class due to the amount of few-on-one, and one-on-one time provided during class especially during group work meetings (Tuesdays). That said, and if you have questions about a topic or assignment, email your group leader (TA) first. If it requires a meeting, they can set up a time to meet with you via Zoom.

Tenets of the Psychology of Sustainability

- Any solution to a sustainability problem that does not first address factors negatively affecting human dignity will ultimately not be sustainable.
- Every sustainability problem is first a social problem and therefore a psychological problem.
- Thinking creates emotion; emotion creates behavior.
- The future is nothing more or less than a decision today.
- The effective agent for sustainability is first her or his own fear master.
- At the heart of all human behavior (the worst, the best, and all points between) is the unconscious or conscious experience of personal mortality.
- Any service to the common good attends to the comprehensive problem and is a portal to our greatest opportunity.

Course Description

The Psychology of Sustainability course is designed to provide the experience of employing psychology toward developing an understanding of how we think and feel about ourselves affects how we think and feel about others, therefore how we understand or not our role in society as a prosocial actor and sustainability agent.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

There are no prerequisites for this course and no prior knowledge in psychology, sustainability, or environmental science is required. This course is designed for anyone no matter what your degree emphasis or status (undergraduate or graduate).

Purpose of Course

In this course “sustainability” is approached holistically, meaning that every aspect of the human experience—cultural, emotional, biophysical, ecological, economic, and geographical—is considered to be inextricably linked, and affect the individual and societal experience of dignity, therefore are simultaneously of equal importance. Any effort to create a sustainable society must begin by understanding that the thinking and emotions that effect behavior at the individual and societal level are driven by two of the deepest of human needs: an authentic experience of dignity and an honest and effective approach to negotiating the reality of mortality.

Important: For purposes of our discussions, the working definition of human dignity is the individual composite experience of efficacy, esteem, agency, a sense of safety, freedom to be, and social capital.

Working from the premise that every sustainability problem is first and foremost a social problem, therefore a psychological problem, the psychology of sustainability course emphasizes the necessity of psychological science leading any effort to create a sustainable society. This is accomplished by “translating” psychological theories into layman’s terms and employing these theories in real-world, practical situations first at the individual level, and then at the group, university community, and societal level.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will have encountered and explored a number of psychological concepts and principals, and attained the ability to:

- More fully employ critical thinking.
- Better understand your thought processes, emotional experiences, and intentions for action in the context of sustainability.
- Recognize the benefit of a holistic application of psychological science for the improvement of your personal dignity as well as develop effective ways to help others improve their experience of dignity.
- Assess a situation from a psychological perspective and frame this situation in sociocultural and socioecological context.
- More clearly recognize personal meaning and values as well as those of others.
- Develop holistic solutions to social-ecological problems.
- Appreciate more fully the importance of interests and disciplines other than your own.

Course Readings

There is one textbook required for this course: The Psychology of Sustainability: Understanding the Relationship Between Self and Earth. 2nd Edition (Chandler, 2023)

The textbook for this course—the first-ever textbook on the psychology of sustainability—must be ordered through the publisher’s web portal linked below. Obtaining this textbook through the UF Libraries is difficult at best. Please, each of you, let me know when you have obtained your book and if you have any problems with the process.

To purchase the PSY 3626 textbook, please follow this link:

<https://store.cognella.com/82666-1b-ni-005>

GOOD NEWS: 100% of all proceeds from book sales go to saving Asian elephants and the indigenous people sharing their habitat through the efforts of Conservation Initiative for the Asian Elephant.

Students will be required to read and analyze theory papers and peer-reviewed articles from popular press, textbooks, and journals. Reading citations, links, and electronic versions of articles specific to topics for each week will be placed within assignment descriptions in the course CANVAS Assignments page. Each week the textbook chapter, featured article(s), and recommended readings (in CANVAS assignments page) provide the material necessary for a full conversation of topics for that week and for success with each week’s assignments.

Instructional Approach

Learning is cultivated through the Coteacher/Colearner Teaching Team (CCTT) approach which provides a variety of ways for students to engage theories and concepts, while learning independently and from each other in groups, as well as from your teaching assistants and instructor. Benefits to the CCTT approach are numerous and include but are not limited to, development of knowledge in a reduced-stress environment, greater understanding and retention of material, and provision of practical skill in the application of psychological theories and concepts in real life. In addition, students can develop a close connection with a knowledgeable peer educator (teaching assistant/group leader), receive personal scaffolding (one-on-one help with developing knowledge and understanding), faster turnaround regarding answers to questions, expert guidance with larger assignments, and faster access to your professor. While you are always free to contact me, it is important that you keep the benefits of CCTT in mind before deciding to contact me, especially if your question or concern is time sensitive or for example a general one about assignments. If necessary, your group leader/TA will bring me in on a question or conversation, and I will visit with each group during our group meeting sessions.

The class will be divided into groups of approximately equal size. For example, a class of 70 students will have 10-12 groups comprised of 6-7 students each led by one teaching assistant.

Role of Teaching Assistants in the Teaching Team Structure

A Teaching Assistant (TA) will be assigned to each group. Your TA/group leader will be your first point of contact regarding questions about assignments, course material, course policy, and about grades for individual and group work, and guidance for writing your midterm paper and developing your group's lecture. Your group leader will also facilitate your participation in lectures and discussions: see "Class Technology Requirements and Use" for more on this valuable role.

Important: Your individual and group responsibilities are described in the syllabus. Read the syllabus carefully before asking questions about these responsibilities

Class Technology Requirements and Use

Each student will need a device that functions well with Zoom, can connect with the Internet (UF and off campus) for web and library research, using Google Docs, and with which you can write documents in MS Word (no other format will be accepted).

Assignments

Your total grade is comprised of a number of components (described below). All components are important and interconnected. Please see Course Schedule below to learn when assignments are due. Also, be sure to refer to the CANVAS course page for documents presenting detailed instructions for the midterm and final projects.

Attendance: 130 Total Points

Attendance in class is mandatory as it is not only a significant part of your overall grade but also essential to your group's success. It is very important that students attend the lecture sessions on Thursdays. Attendance on Tuesdays is crucial in that you will not receive credit for your ISU or AIC, unless the absence is excused. Attendance is worth 5 points for each day of class, for a total of 130 points.

Important: If you are 5 minutes late, half of attendance points will be deducted. If you are 10 minutes late, no attendance credit will be given.

Individual Work: Individual Statement of Understanding (ISU) 60 Points (5 points each)

In most weeks you will be responsible for writing a one page, single-spaced paper written Times New Roman font in which you will address prompts if any that are specific to the conversation for that week as well as (unless otherwise instructed) you will always provide an explanation as to how you would employ what you learned from the lecture/discussion on Thursday, as well as from the textbook, feature articles, journal articles and theory papers in the context of human dignity and its relationship to holistic sustainability.

For purposes of this assignment “holistically sustainable society” is an allocentric society, one that attends to betterment of the individual as well as the collective whole, does so within natural limits (referred to as ecological continuity) and “pays forward” for improvement of human and nonhuman dignity. For purposes of this project “dignity” is the individual composite experience of efficacy, esteem, agency, a sense of safety, freedom to be, and social capital.

Important: You must complete and submit in Canvas your ISU paper prior to your group meeting Tuesday at 11:45 am. You must also post it to your group’s Google Docs page.

Group Work: Application in Context (AiC) 110 Points (10 points each)

If you do not already have one, you will need to establish a Google Docs account. To receive full credit for the group work and AiC, each group member must contribute equally to the document. In addition, each group member’s ISU must be appended at the bottom of the group’s AiC document.

At the beginning of each group meeting and while the other members read along and taking notes, each group member will read aloud her/his ISU. Once everyone has read/heard all members’ ISUs the group will employ “collective cognition” and create a two-page, single-spaced paper (the AiC) written in [only] Times New Roman, 12-point font. The group’s AiC is a synthesis, not a cut-and-paste collage of ISUs, that as comprehensively and intelligibly as possible represents how the group would address prompts that are specific to the conversation for that week as well as how you would employ what you learned from the lecture/discussion on Thursday and other resources to improve human dignity and effect a holistically sustainable society.

For purposes of this assignment “holistically sustainable society” is an allocentric society, one that attends to betterment of the individual as well as the collective whole, does so within natural limits, and “pays forward” for improvement of the human as well as nonhuman condition. For purposes of this project “dignity” is the individual composite experience of efficacy, esteem, agency, a sense of safety, freedom to be, and social capital.

Midterm Project: “Thoughts on Four Questions” 100 Total Points

For your midterm project “Thoughts on Four Questions” you will explore and respond in narrative form to each of the four research questions provided in the CANVAS Assignments page. By “explore and respond” I mean do not simply answer these questions but share and analyze what thoughts came to mind about experiences that were recalled when you read each question. This begins your research and the development of your narrative which will become the first edition of your autobiography.

The first two questions are obviously about the past, so it is likely not too difficult to see how to approach these reflexively (considering past events and decisions made towards understanding cause and effect). Working with the second two questions might not be intuitively obvious as questions three and four must also be considered reflexively as well as prospectively. Recall that writing an honest, representative, comprehensive, and authentic self-history narrative (autobiography) is profoundly important for

understanding who we are—why we are thinking, feeling, and acting as we are—in the present, and the relationship of who we are now to who we want to be in the future.

Detailed instructions regarding coding procedures and developing your paper will be discussed in class and are presented in the Canvas Assignments page. You will also gain experience with coding and narrative analysis by coding your ISUs beginning early in the semester.

Important: Begin reflecting on and journaling about what is elicited from each of the four questions now! You will learn to analyze (code and synthesize) along the way, but you can start now getting your thoughts, feelings, insights down on paper in advance of analysis. If you start early, this project will be meaningful and a lot of fun, but if you procrastinate it will be stressful and not likely represent the that best that you can do for yourself and about yourself.

Final Project: “You as a Sustainability Psychologist” 100 Points

This is your chance to practice Sustainability Psychology, that is to use the psychology of sustainability to resolve an aspect of the Comprehensive Problem and to educate the class about how to employ what you have learned toward creating New Normal: a sustainable human ecology. Recall from our discussions and your work with Five Facets of Sustainability, that Human Dignity is the central facet, and that any action taken to create a sustainable human ecology that does not also work to improve individual and societal experience of dignity ultimately will not be sustainable.

For your final project your group will develop a presentation that explains how you would apply psychological theories, concepts, and examples (e.g., stories) that you have read and heard towards creating and maintaining a sustainable human ecology (recall from the definition that New Normal is ever-evolving), and why your application of those theories and concepts would be effective.

To prevent overlap and redundancy, I will assign each group one or two theories or concepts from what we have covered thus far in the semester. However, you are free to select the setting and situation to which you will apply those theories and concepts. Be creative and select a real-world problem that you are passionate about.

Important: I do not want you to select a global scale problem, for example Climate Change or war, but some part of a global scale problem. Use the Fresnel Lens Effect as a guide, think about the comprehensive problem, and all the problems (lenses) that comprise it. Ask yourself and the group, “Through what lens do I/we want to enter the comprehensive problem?”

General example: Do you remember the story of why I changed Conservation Initiative for the Asian Elephant’s approach from a Western conservation model to a human-centered conservation model? That change resulted in a dramatic increase in our effectiveness at saving elephants. Why? We began first with addressing the needs of the people sharing habitat with the elephants, and in so doing so improved their situation

(dignity), and consequently received their cooperation and commitment to help us save the elephants.

Important: Begin sharing ideas for your final project with your group now! If you start early, this project will be meaningful and a lot of fun, but if you procrastinate it will be stressful and not likely successful. We will draw numbers to determine group presentation order a few weeks before you present.

Your presentation will be evaluated equally (20 pts ea.) in the following areas:

- Contribution of all group members (via peer evaluations).
- Application of theories and concepts.
- Explanation as to why your approach could work.
- Staying with the time limit of 15 - 20 min.
- Quality of presentation.

Course Schedule

Enter Correct Days/Dates

Days & Dates	Class Activities	Readings & Assignments
	Orientation, purpose and benefits of course and overview of the coteacher/colearner approach.	Peruse the syllabus. Select one chapter/topic that seems the interesting or intriguing. In one paragraph explain why. Send your paragraph to your group leader/TA via CANVAS messaging.
	Introduction to the Psychology of Sustainability –Combined Lecture/Discussion and Group Work	Chapter 1 including feature article.
	Lecture/Discussion In the Beginning	Chapter 2 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Group Work: In the Beginning	Chapter 2 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.

	Lecture/Discussion Lifespan Development - Who We are and Who We Can Be	Chapter 3 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Group Work: Lifespan Development - Who We are and Who We Can Be	Chapter 3 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Lecture/Discussion Human Ecology	Chapter 4 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Group Work: Human Ecology	Chapter 4 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Lecture/Discussion Ecology of Understanding	Chapter 5 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Group Work: Ecology of Understanding	Chapter 5 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Lecture/Discussion Developing a Reflexive Experience & Initial Coding for Midterm Project	Refer to CANVAS for instructions and required readings.
	Group Work: Developing a Reflexive Experience & Midterm Q&A	Refer to CANVAS for instructions and required readings.
	Lecture/Discussion Green Fear & Green Courage	Chapter 6 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Group Work: Green Fear & Green Courage	Chapter 6 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Lecture/Discussion I am the Paradigm Shift Theory	Chapter 7 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.

	Group Work: I am the Paradigm Shift Theory	Chapter 7 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Lecture/Discussion An Act of Kindness	Chapter 8 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	Group Work: Lecture/Discussion An Act of Kindness	Chapter 8 including feature article. Also see CANVAS for additional readings.
	No Class: Finalize your Midterm Project	
	Midterm Project Papers “Thoughts on Four Questions” is due today before midnight. All Students.	
	Introduction to and Initial Group Work on Final Project: Problem selection and divvying up responsibilities among group members.	See CANVAS for instructions.
	Lecture/Discussion Participatory Action Research	Chapter 9 including feature article. Refer to CANVAS for required readings and instructions.
	Group Work: Participatory Action Research	Chapter 9 including feature article. Refer to CANVAS for required readings and instructions.
	Lecture/Discussion Analyzing 5-Facets of Sustainability in Context of Human Dignity	Chapter 10 including two feature articles. See CANVAS for specific instructions and additional readings.
	Group Work: Analyzing 5-Facets of Sustainability in Context of Human Dignity	Chapter 10 including two feature articles. See CANVAS for specific instructions and additional readings.

	Lecture/Discussion Special Problem 5 Facets v. 6 Facets as the Model for Holistic Sustainability	See CANVAS for specific instructions and additional readings.
	No Class	
	Thanksgiving Break	
	Group Work: Discuss & Defend 5 Facets v. 6 Facets Choice	See CANVAS for specific instructions and additional readings.
	Final Project Group Work	In classroom
	Final Presentations Due by Midnight	
	No Class	

Grades and Grading

Evaluation of Grades

Assignment	Total Points
Class Participation and Attendance	130
Individual Statement of Understanding	60
Group Reports (AIC: Application on Context)	110
Thoughts on Four Questions Narrative	100

Human Dignity & Sustainability Group Presentation	100
Grade Total =	500

Calculating Your Grade

Percent	Grade
94-100	A
90-93.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
84-86.9	B
80-83.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
74-76.9	C
70-73.9	C-
67-69.9	D+
64-66.9	D
60-63.9	D-
0-59.9	E

Important: Use total points presented in the CANVAS Grades page to calculate your letter grade based on percentages above. Total point values presented in the syllabus are estimates that must be made at the first of each semester but do not account for addition and deletion of assignments or extra credit points.

There are five general components of your total grade: Attendance, quality of your individual work, quality of your group report, midterm project, and final project. Refer to Evaluation of Grades table on the previous page for exact points per component. A detailed rubric will be provided in your course CANVAS page, however following are general grading method guidelines.

Attendance and Participation: For full credit you are expected not only be present in class but contribute to conversation with thoughtful comments and questions.

Group Report: Your group report will be assessed equally in three areas: 1. Quality of ISUs, 2. Quality of synthesis of members' individual perspectives, and 3. Overall quality of paper especially intelligibility and length (>1<3pages).

Midterm Project: Your midterm will be assessed in the following areas.

Grading: Total of 100 possible points.

- Cover Page = 2 points.
- Introduction = 3 points.
- Meaning Narrative = 55 points.
- Conclusion = 5 points.

- Appendix (Exploration Narrative) = 35 points.

Late submissions will be deducted 2 points for every hour after the deadline.

These areas are described in detail in your course CANVAS page. Your instructor will also review these areas with you in class, and you will have one class period dedicated to a midterm project workshop.

Final Project: Your presentation will be evaluated equally (20 pts ea.) in the following areas.

Grading: Total of 100 possible points

- Contribution of all group members (via peer evaluations).
- Application of theories and concepts.
- Explanation as to why your approach could work.
- Staying within the time limit of 15 - 20 min.
- Quality of presentation.

Late submissions will be deducted 2 points for every hour after the deadline.

These areas are described in detail in your course CANVAS page. Your instructor will also review these areas with you in class,

Research Requirement

Option 1: Participate in Research Experiments

Taking part in the Department of Psychology Participant Pool allows students to directly experience ongoing psychological research. For this option, you will complete 15 points (7.5 hours) of participation in psychological research studies.

When you complete the research experience, you will receive 5 points that are added into your final grade. If you do not complete the full number of credits by the deadline, you will receive points at a rate of .25 points per credit completed.

You must be at least 18 years old to complete Option 1. If you are not 18 years old, you must complete Option 2. Students who will turn 18 during the semester may choose to complete Option 1 after their birthday but are strongly encouraged to complete Option 2 to ensure they complete the research requirement.

Option 2 for PSY3626: Critical Analysis Papers

For this option, you will take two of your individual papers (ISU) and drawing from at least four scientific references (peer-reviewed articles, textbooks (includes the textbook for our class, or university webpages presenting scientific information), and in 1 page to 1 and ½ additional pages, explore one or more of the theories and concepts about which you wrote your individual paper.

In other words, on two occasions (two ISUs), you will submit a 2-page to 2 and ½ one page enhanced ISU to satisfy this requirement. Your enhanced ISUs will be worth 10 points each, graded S/U, for a total of 20 points. You can declare this option any time up to November 4th.

Dr. Chandler will take time in one of the first class meetings to discuss both options with you and your group leaders (TAs) can also help if you have questions.

Class Attendance and Make-Up Policy

Students are required to attend all classes unless absence is excused. Excused absences include illness, family emergency, or personal/family tragedy. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a reduction of one letter grade on your final grade. It is important to remember that not only can an absence negatively affect your grade it can also impact your group's grade. In the case of an excused absence a student may submit their individual paper as well as midterm project late for grade consideration. There will be no make-up permitted for the final project.

In-Class Recording Rule

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Important: By design, the structure of assignments in this class provides 3X-4X more time than typical assignment structures in other classes. The CCTT approach and the structure of assignments have been shared with UF's Disabilities Resource Center and they agree that virtually all accommodation requests met are by the design in my courses and assignments; this is especially the case regarding online attendance. There are few exceptions pertaining to in person attendance however given COVID-19 precautions that are in place for Spring 2021: see following.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is not tolerated in this class, in the Department of Psychology, or at the University of Florida. Sexual harassment includes: the inappropriate introduction of sexual activities or comments in a situation where sex would otherwise be irrelevant. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and a violation of state and federal laws as well as of the policies and regulations of the university. All UF employees and students must adhere to UF's sexual harassment policy which can be found here: <https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>. Please review this policy and contact a university official if you have any questions about the policy. As mandatory reporters, university employees (e.g., administrators, managers, supervisors, faculty, teaching assistants, staff) are required to report knowledge of sexual harassment to UF's Title IX coordinator. For more information about UF's Title IX office visit their webpage at <https://titleix.ufl.edu/>. You can also complete a Sexual Harassment Report online (Title IX) at: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/title-ix-reporting-form/>.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

Materials and Supplies Fees

There are no materials or supply fees for this course.

University Honesty Policy and Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with Dr. Chandler or your team leader.

You are expected to be familiar with the University policy on academic dishonesty, as this policy applies to our class as well as to others. Failure to comply with academic integrity policies may result in failing the course and progression through standard university procedures.