

Course Manual

International Psychology & Climate Change

PSY3391

Academic Year: 2022-2023

Course Period: 03

Planning group

This elective was created by students with the supervision of Herco Fonteijn.

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Welcome!

The climate crisis is an intersectional major challenge of contemporary society. In order to tackle it and mitigate its effects, transdisciplinary insights are required. In essence, the heating of the earth needs to be limited to prevent our ecosystems from collapsing. At the same time, the already devastating consequences on (mental) health need to be recognized and dealt with. As human behavior is at the root of these challenges, Psychology, the science of behavior, gives important approaches.

To get an insight on how psychology and climate change are interrelated, this elective seeks first, to provide a basic understanding of climate change. At the same time, the two-way human-nature relationship gets explored. Thus, students will learn why humans cannot be seen independent of the environment and how cultural perspectives on nature differ.

Next, the focus lies on the role of psychology. Part of that are the consequences and anticipatory effects of climate change on mental health (e.g climate anxiety, trauma). Additionally, students will investigate findings about how both individual and social processes result in (un-)sustainable decisions and behaviors. And how these factors can be used to promote sustainable behavior.

After having built this knowledge base, students will examine examples of climate-protecting approaches. An important part of this is to consider different cultural perspectives.

Lastly, an essential goal of the elective is to apply the newly gained knowledge. Throughout the whole course of four weeks, students will develop a project in collaboration with other students. The project will deal with creating a strategy about a self-chosen aspect of climate change. Furthermore, self-reflection tasks will enhance the learning process throughout the course.

Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- understand the role of psychology in tackling climate change.
- understand how psychological theories of behavior change can be applied to promote environmentally friendly behavior.
- evaluate and analyze effects of climate change on mental health and critically examine the relation to global climate injustice.
- critically evaluate and analyze existing approaches of sustainability and psychology, and become familiar with public policy.
- apply the knowledge learned in the elective in creating a project to improve sustainability, locally and globally
- develop an awareness of their own responsibility and behavior regarding theories, issues and prevention strategies discussed during the course

Working formats

- Tutorials
- Lectures
- Projects

Regulations & Attendance Requirements

The *Education Office* is responsible for the organization and coordination of all the education related activities within the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience (FPN), for example the schedules. www.askpsy.nl is the website for FPN faculty information, FAQs, and contact options.

Each study programme offered at FPN has its own Examination and Education Regulation (EER), which is updated every academic year. The EER of the year in which you started your studies applies to your entire study programme and contains information on for example attendance at tutorial group meetings, determination and publishing results, 7 and exam inspection. The 'rules and regulations' apply to all students of a study programme equally, and are valid for one academic year only. The rules and regulations are part of the Examination and Education Regulation (EER).

The Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience hosts a large number of students, both Dutch and international. FPN regards behaviour in compliance with its core values as being of great importance. A Code of Conduct has been developed to ensure a good and productive study environment and to avoid undesirable and unwanted situations. A link to all these regulations can be found at www.askpsy.nl/regulations. The tutor registers your presence. By signing the attendance list during the last meeting of the module/course, you can check whether your presence was registered correctly. Be aware that, if you arrive more than 10 minutes after the official starting time of the meeting or if you leave more than 10 minutes before the actual ending time of the meeting, you are considered to be absent.

There is an attendance obligation of 100% with respect to the tutorial group meetings. However, students can miss a certain number of meetings when they report their absence personally to the tutor at the latest on the day of the tutorial meeting: **For courses/modules of 7 or more tutorial meetings, two meetings can be missed;**

Please see art. 5.8 EER and Art 4 and 5 Rules and Regulations Bachelor in Psychology for the complete attendance rules (www.askpsy.nl/regulations). If you miss more than the allowed number of meetings to obtain your attendance obligation, you will have to take the course again next year. Note: it is possible to join a meeting in another tutorial group. However, this is only allowed if the tutor of the group you would like to join agrees that you will join the tutorial group you are officially not registered for. Joining a meeting in another tutorial group will however not be registered as part of your attendance obligation. You need to pass all attendance requirements in your own tutorial group.

Learning resources

There is no fixed literature during this course. Each task provides a list of relevant articles that students may find interesting and useful for answering the learning goals. The mandatory and optional resources are going to be published on Canvas. However, students are strongly encouraged to do their own literature search.

Overview of Tasks:

Task 1: Climate Change and Psychology

Task 2: Human-Nature Relationships

Task 3: Barriers to Action

Task 4: The Mental Health Impacts of Climate Change

Task 5: Intersectional Perspectives

Task 6: Communication & Promotion of sustainable behaviour

Task 7: How to Sustain Sustainable Behaviour?

Task 8: Critical Evaluation of Example Approaches

Course Schedule

Week 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30-10.30			Plenary Session: Project stakeholders		
11.00-13.00					Lecture: Climate Change (<i>Maud Huynen</i>)
13.30-15.30	Tutorial 1 Introduction round Task 1 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 2 Task 1 (post-discussion) Task 2 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 3 Task 2 (post-discussion) Task 3 (pre-discussion)
16.00-18.00	Tutorial 1 Introduction round Task 1 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 2 Task 1 (post-discussion) Task 2 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 3 Task 2 (post-discussion) Task 3 (pre-discussion)

Week 2	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
13.30-15.30	Tutorial 4 Task 3 (post-discussion) Task 4 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 5 Task 4 (post-discussion) Task 5 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 6 Task 5 (post-discussion) Task 6 (pre-discussion)
16.00-18.00	Tutorial 4 Task 3 (post-discussion) Task 4 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 5 Task 4 (post-discussion) Task 5 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 6 Task 5 (post-discussion) Task 6 (pre-discussion)

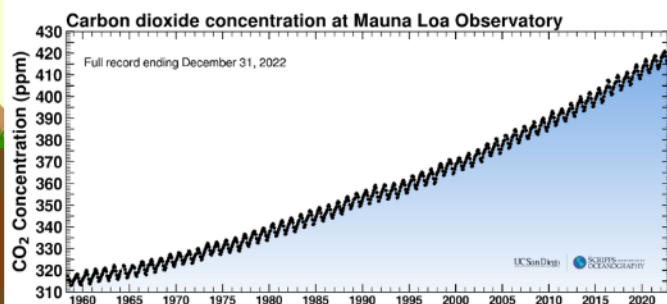
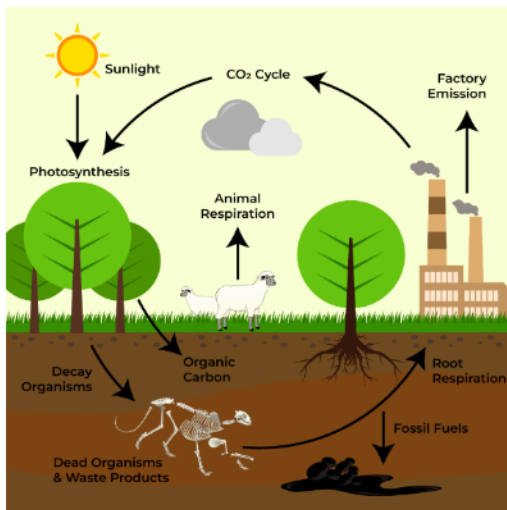
Week 3	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30-10.30			Lecture: Behaviour Change (<i>Gill ten Hoor</i>)		
13.30-15.30	Workshop: Mental Health & Climate Change (by <i>Sanae Okamoto</i>)		Tutorial 7 Task 6 (post-discussion) Task 7 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 8 Time for working on project & assignment questions
16.00-18.00			Tutorial 7 Task 6 (post-discussion) Task 7 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 8 Time for working on project & assignment questions

Week 4	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
13.30-15.30	Tutorial 9 Task 7 (post-discussion) Task 8 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 10 Task 8 (post-discussion) Task 9 (pre-discussion)		
16.00-18.00	Tutorial 9 Task 7 (post-discussion) Task 8 (pre-discussion)		Tutorial 10 Task 8 (post-discussion) Task 9 (pre-discussion)		Final group presentations

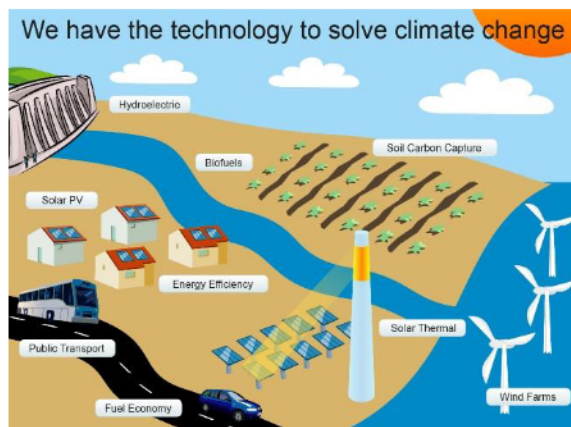
You are either in the tutorial group from 13.30h to 15.30h or from 16.00h to 18.00h. **Attending the *Plenary Session* is mandatory, and crucial for being able to participate in the group assignment** (see for more: *Assignment*).

Task 1 - Climate Change and Psychology

A) We are aware that the climate of our planet is not as stable as we previously thought. Over millennia, gradual temperature shifts may occur naturally from one extreme to the other. However, these changes are further inflated by contemporary human activities...



B) As human-induced climate change is threatening our very existence, tackling climate change is one of the biggest challenges of modern society. Many of our best scientists are trying to figure out how to tackle **climate change** and its **consequences** with the help of technology, but others believe that it's also crucial to look at it from the perspective of the science of human behaviour...



PROTECTING OUR PLANET STARTS WITH YOU

- BIKE MORE DRIVE LESS**: Reduce emissions by using bicycles.
- reduce REUSE recycle**: Cut down on what you throw away. Follow the three 'R's' to conserve natural resources and landfill space.
- choose sustainable seafood**: Learn how to make smart seafood choices at www.FishWatch.gov.
- PLANT A TREE**: Trees provide food and oxygen. They help save energy, clean the air, and help combat climate change.
- EDUCATE**: When you further your own education, you can help others understand the importance and value of our natural resources.
- Volunteer!**: Volunteer for cleanups in your community. You can get involved in protecting your watershed too!
- CONSERVE WATER**: The less water you use, the less runoff and wastewater that eventually end up in the ocean.
- SHOP- WISELY**: Buy less plastic and bring a reusable shopping bag.
- Don't send chemicals into our waterways**: Choose nontoxic chemicals in the home and office.
- BRIGHT IDEA**: Long-lasting light bulbs - ARE A - BRIGHT IDEA. Energy efficient light bulbs reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also flip the light switch off when you leave the room!

oceanservice.noaa.gov

Task 2 - Human - Nature Relationships

A)

Throughout history, different individuals and cultures had different relationships with nature. One important determining factor of this is physical contact with nature. What kind of a relationship do you, and your culture, have with nature? Do you think this has an impact on your well-being, or how you treat the natural environment?

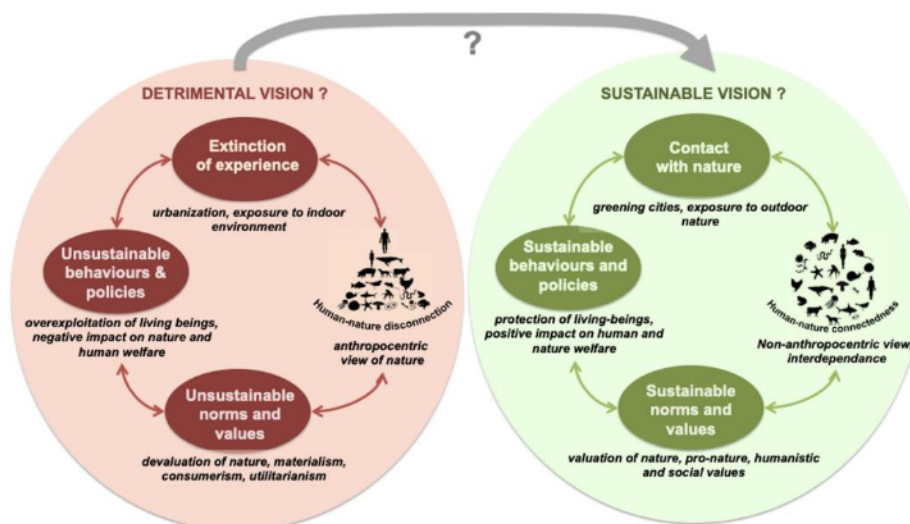


"Only the experience of connectedness will save the earth - and us with it" - **Do you agree?**

(From Shultz, 2002 - see core literature for this task)

B)

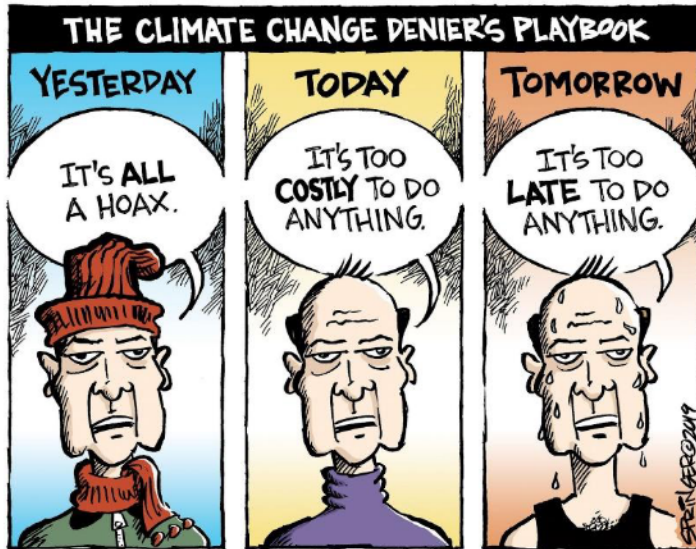
"Nature is not our enemy, to be raped and conquered. Nature is ourselves, to be cherished and explored." -- Terence McKenna



Task 3 - Barriers to Action

A)

Despite the scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change and its effects on nature and human society, a significant number of people still don't believe in its existence, or that it's a problem.

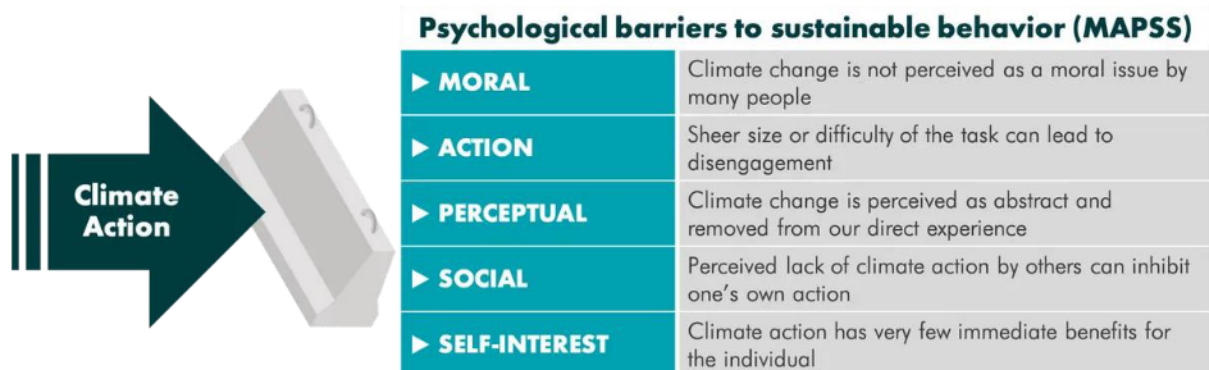


CartoonStock.com



B)

But even if people do acknowledge the problem, they might still end up not doing anything about it.



(From: [GOOD MOVES](#), by Behaven)

Task 4 - The Mental Health Impacts of Climate Change

Three good friends, Sophie, Arjun and Bogi are walking down the corridor connecting the UNS50 and UNS40 buildings. Sophie seemed to be glowing with excitement, and soon shared her reason for it:



- *You guys! Have you heard there will be a climate march in Maastricht in 2 weeks? We should go together!* (Sophie)
- *I don't know, do you think just walking around would change anything?* (Bogi responded with a bitter smile)
- *I mean it's better than doing nothing! At least we show those apathetic people in power how many of us are concerned by this whole thing. I hate how they don't take this seriously.* (Sophie)
- *Yeah, but you just said it: they are apathetic, they only care about making money, not about the apocalypse if it comes when they are already dead.* (Bogi)
- *But maybe they will see how big the consumer base is getting for sustainable options!* (Sophie countered without a hint of declining enthusiasm)
- *Oh come on. Even if they do, we are already past the tipping point. I come from a family of farmers in Hungary, I see it with my own eyes that droughts are getting worse each year! Eating a little bit less meat, or having less plastic packaging won't change this any time soon. And by that time, we will be starving to death.* (Bogi)
- *So you would just sit back with arms folded and watch?! Come on Arjun, tell her! Why are you so silent?* (Sophie)
- *Sorry, I don't think I'll go either...* (Arjun said, pain showing on his face)
- *What do you mean?!* (Sophie)

- I just... I don't want to think about these things too much. Brings up bad memories. But you wouldn't understand it, Sophie. Nothing even comparable could happen to you, living in places like Berlin or Maastricht. (Arjun)

- But I can still care about it! Maybe it cannot happen to me now, but my future could hold many terrible things if humanity continues on this path. So try me! (Sophie)

- Alright then. So Bogi was complaining about too little water? Well I've seen what too much water can do. The village of my grandparents in India was completely flooded. Everything they built up throughout a whole lifetime - destroyed in a moment. And the water did not spare the people either... My grandpa... But you should go, Sophie! We need more passionate people like you. I just can't... (Arjun broke off)

The good friends continued their walk in silence.

Can you relate to how any of these characters feel about climate change? You may be able to diagnose them with the help of the keywords in the picture.

Task 5 - Intersectional perspectives

A.

Matsuda (1991) describes intersectionality as:

"When I see something that looks racist, I ask, 'Where is the patriarchy in this?'

When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, 'Where is the heterosexism in this?'

When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, 'Where are the class interests in this?'"

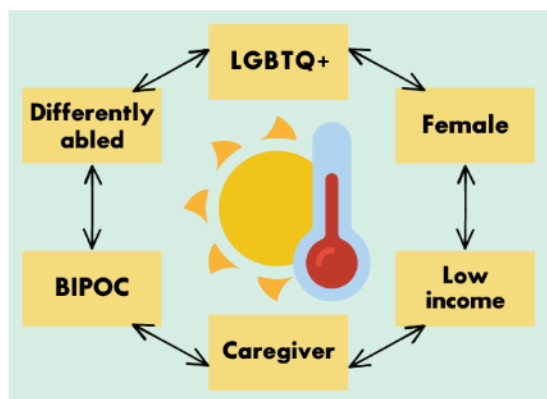
Emma De Graffenreid is an African American woman. A working wife. A Judge had dismissed Emma's claim for race and gender discrimination against a car manufacturing plant. Emma sought employment. She wanted to create a better life for her family and others. She applied for a job and she was not hired. Emma believed she was not hired because she was a black woman. The Judge dismissed Emma's suit. The argument was that the employer did hire African American and the employer hired women.

The Judge was not acknowledging what Emma was trying to say. The African American who were hired for industrial jobs and maintenance jobs were all men. The women hired for usually secretarial work, front office work were all white.

In *U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri v. [Emma Degraffenreid] (1976)*, the court ruled that: Taking Racial and Gender discrimination into account would give Emma too much benefit.

B.

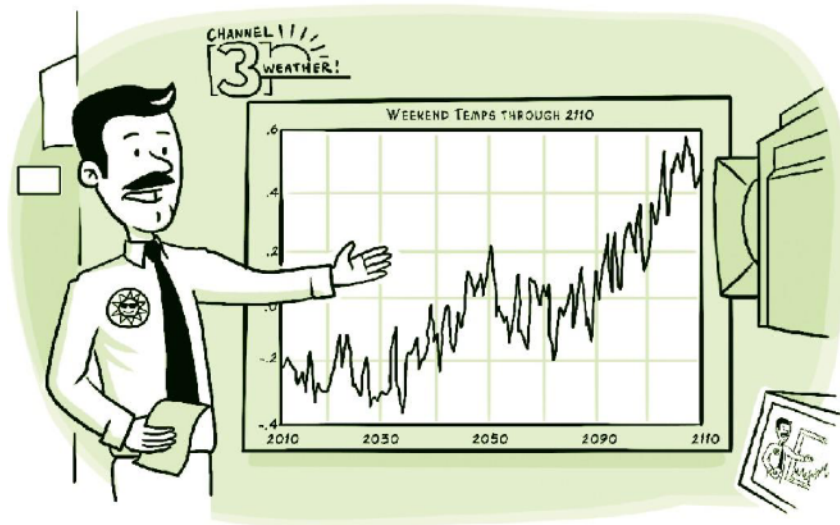
Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005. Marginalised people were less likely to be able to evacuate and to afford to live somewhere else, and had poorer prospects if displaced. Katrina made visible to the western world how climate change impacts may interact with social structures.



Alex is 32 years old. They are living in a poor neighbourhood that is situated next to a big river. They would rather like to live in another neighbourhood because they know that the river floods sometimes during the rainy season. In the past years the rain storms got heavier, and through climate change they are projected to be even more extreme. They could've afforded to live further away but no landlord seemed interested in letting a transgender person living in their house. Alex knows their

living place becomes increasingly unsafe but they are impaired to change they're situation.

Task 6 - Communication & promotion of sustainable behavior



"So yes, Dan and Kathy, as you can see it looks like it'll be up and down until 2109, but you're certainly going to want to think about abandoning the planet after that....!"

You as a psychologist interested in sustainability got approached by Rachel Carson, a climate scientist. She got approached by the city council to speak at one of their meetings about the importance of investing into renewable energy.

As she prepared for the meeting, Carson knew that she would be facing an uphill battle. The council was made up of politicians who were more interested in economic growth and are rather sceptic that climate change has a big impact in the future. Convincing them to invest in renewable energy would be no easy task.



She knows you and is asking for your help. She thinks you might know more about how to communicate to such an audience to convince them taking climate change seriously and align their actions. You tell her that there are definitely things to keep in mind and you would come back to her in two days when you gathered more knowledge. Before you start your literature search, you write down the concepts you came across during your studies on a napkin and give it to Carson. You have in mind e.g.: Mental models, identity and framing of messages.

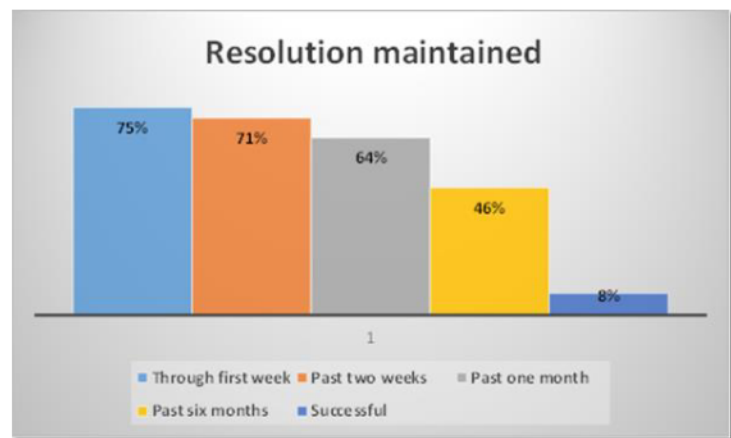
How do you think these concepts (can you think of even more?) might be important when suggesting tips for Carson's speech?

Keep in mind the previous knowledge and existing perceptions about climate change of her audience.

Food for thought: What would change in how you talk about climate change if you would talk to your parents, to friends or to citizens you give a workshop to?

Task 7 - How to Sustain Sustainable Behaviour?

A. Do you have some strategies for keeping your new year's resolutions?



B)

José recently decided to become vegetarian to reduce his environmental impact. His housemate, Lea is very proud of him and herself as well; she's been trying to convince him for months, and she finally succeeded. She was always annoyed by how little José cared about the environment, and she's sure that this is the first step for him towards making more and more sustainable changes in his life. After all, this is how it all started for her.

But as Lea is taking down the garbage on Monday morning, she is shocked to find a huge pile of plastic packages in the general waste. She immediately knows it was José; it's the packaging of all the tofu and falafel he's been eating all week. Lea is furious; José was never very keen on recycling, but this is even worse than before! She calls him out immediately:

- José! I thought you care about being sustainable now!

- Huh? But I do...

- Then why did you throw all this perfectly recyclable plastic into the general waste? It would be so simple to just throw it in the recycling bins we have!

- Oh yeah, that! Our recycling bins are full. I would have had to take them to the recycling station first...

- That's right around the corner you lazy...!

- Please, I think I deserve a break. I already gave up eating meat. You can't expect me to do everything!

Task 8 - Critical Evaluation of Example Approaches

During this problem, you are going to search for example approaches. With the already acquired knowledge you will try to critically evaluate these from a psychological perspective.

We will provide you with one example on Canvas and further resources.

Assessment

The assessment for the present course will consist of two assignments:

- Individual assignment (50%)
- Group project (50%)

Individual Assignment: Final Paper - write a 3-page essay (50% of grade)

During the course, you will learn about several topics related to international psychology and climate change. In this final paper, we want you to envision how you as an aspiring psychologist might be able to apply this newly acquired knowledge in a possible career path.

The essay should give answers to the following questions:

- Why is this topic personally meaningful to you?
- How did four tasks of your choice change your perspective of climate change as a psychologist?
 - Refer to the literature, but also discussions from the tutorials that might have had an impact on you
- What are the main problems psychologists can help tackling regarding climate change?
- What goals would you like to set for yourself to tackle these problems?

You will see more details about the assignment on the Canvas

Group project: Addressing the needs of a chosen stakeholder (50% of grade)

In groups of 2-3, students will have to address the needs of a chosen stakeholder. The exact format of this assignment will depend on your chosen project, but generally possible are:

- writing a proposal/ essay
- creating a presentation
- creating promotional materials
- organising a small event

The stakeholders will present themselves and their problems at the scheduled ***Plenary Session***. **Therefore, attending this meeting is mandatory, and crucial for being able to participate in the group assignment.** Independent of the format, the outcome of this project should address the needs of your chosen stakeholder.

Literature

See canvas