Evaluating and Advancing Climate Psychology at the Department of Psychology: Impact Assessment and Future Directions

Supervisors: Professor Beate Seibt & Thomas Schubert, Department of Psychology, UiO

Number of available projects: 2 students (collaborative project)

Preferred project period: April 1 – Oct 30, 2025 (parttime)

Preferred background: Psychology students (bachelor/master) with interest in climate psychology, mixed-methods research experience, strong communication skills, Norwegian language proficiency, academic English writing

UiO:Energy and Environment research area: People, society and climate – Cultural, sociocultural, educational and behavioral perspectives

Project Background and Strategic Alignment

This project addresses how educational initiatives can foster climate engagement among social science students, using the case of UiO's own psychology department. Aligned with UiO:Energy and Environment's research area *People, society and climate*, specifically the educational and behavioral perspectives dimension, the project examines how higher education can effectively integrate climate psychology into its curriculum in order to build capacity for addressing climate challenges through psychological science.

Over the past four years, the Psychology for Climate group at PSI has established multiple initiatives integrating climate and environmental perspectives into psychology education. These include a monthly seminar series, a green thread discussing climate change across courses, two new courses (Introduction to Climate, Eco- and Environmental Psychology; Green Mediation), sustainability initiatives, and co-organized events including forest bathing and collaboration with Bærekraftslaboratoriet.

As PSI's initiatives mature, systematic assessment is needed to understand their educational impact and behavioral outcomes. This project addresses: How can we build a thriving, student-centered climate psychology community that effectively prepares the next generation of psychologists to address climate and environmental challenges?

This project will draw on interdisciplinary expertise by consulting with the SUSTAINIT initiative (GLOBE Center for Sustainability), which has pioneered sustainability integration in health education, and with educational scientists from Link to strengthen program evaluation methodology. This positions the work within UiO's broader sustainability education ecosystem.

Project Aims

- Assess educational impact of Psychology for Climate initiatives on student learning, engagement, sense of community, collective efficacy, and climate-related knowledge and behaviors
- Learn from interdisciplinary sustainability education initiatives (SUSTAINIT) and educational science expertise to inform recommendations
- Identify student needs and interests regarding climate psychology education and community activities (e.g., book clubs, workshops, peer learning, social gathering) from cultural and behavioral perspectives
- Evaluate feasibility and cultural fit of proposed community-building activities
- Develop evidence-based, culturally appropriate recommendations for sustaining climate psychology education at PSI and beyond

Outline of Project Work

Some activities need to happen during semester, thus the longer project duration.

Phase 1 (April): Mapping and literature review. Compile overview of activities, review literature on climate education effectiveness in higher education, consult with SUSTAINIT on lessons learned from health education integration and with educational scientists (Link) on

program evaluation methodology, develop conceptual framework integrating educational and sociocultural perspectives, design mixed-methods protocol.

Phase 2 (May/June): Data collection. Online survey of PSI students covering awareness, participation, knowledge and behavioral changes, perceived cultural relevance, interest in future activities, and barriers. Survey can be run as part of PSY1100/PSYC1201 mandatory research participation exercise, ensuring broad participation. Semi-structured interviews with 10-15 students exploring educational experiences and behavioral impacts, focus groups with course participants examining sociocultural dimensions, interviews with 3-5 teaching staff.

Phase 3 (July/Aug): Analysis and synthesis. Quantitative analysis of survey data on engagement patterns and behavioral outcomes, thematic analysis of interviews examining educational and cultural factors, integration of findings through educational and behavioral lens, gap analysis comparing offerings with student needs.

Phase 4 (Oct): Recommendations and reporting. Develop concrete, evidence-based recommendations for viable community activities that support behavioral change, optimization of existing educational initiatives drawing on best practices from SUSTAINIT and educational science, new engagement approaches grounded in sociocultural understanding, and sustainability strategies. Prepare final deliverables and presentation.

Expected Outcomes and Deliverables

- Comprehensive impact report (15-20 pages) documenting educational reach and behavioral impact 2021-2025, student needs assessment from cultural and behavioral perspectives, evidence-based recommendations with implementation roadmap, resource requirements and sustainability considerations
- Summary brief (2-4 pages) for department leadership, UiO:Energy and Environment, and Consortium of Erasmus Mundus Design Measure Project *Green Mundus*
- Presentation to Psychology for Climate group, PSI leadership, and interested students
- Practical toolkit including reusable survey instrument, template for community activity planning that considers cultural and behavioral factors, suggested formats for book clubs/workshops
- Potential for publication/dissemination as practice report or case study on integrating climate psychology education with attention to cultural, sociocultural and behavioral dimensions; e.g. submission to Conference on Environmental Psychology at Universitetet i Innlandet November 2026

Learning Outcomes for Students

Participants will gain experience in applied research methodology (mixed-methods design, survey development, qualitative interviewing), climate psychology, program evaluation, understanding of sociocultural factors in climate engagement, exposure to interdisciplinary approaches to sustainability education, stakeholder engagement, policy-relevant research (translating findings into actionable recommendations), and project management within tight timeframes. Weekly supervision meetings with Professor Seibt or Schubert, access to Psychology for Climate network, connections to UiO's sustainability education community, workspace at PSI, and guidance on ethical considerations will be provided.

Significance

This project contributes to UiO:Energy and Environment's mission by advancing understanding of how educational initiatives can foster climate-engaged behaviors and practices among future psychologists. By examining cultural, sociocultural, and behavioral dimensions of climate psychology education while drawing on interdisciplinary insights, this work will inform not only PSI's program but also contribute to UiO's broader efforts in sustainability education. The findings will provide actionable insights for designing educational interventions that effectively bridge knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors—essential for preparing the next generation to address climate challenges through psychological science. By centering student voices, learning from parallel initiatives, and examining cultural fit, we ensure future initiatives are responsive, relevant, and sustainable.