The Psychology of the Climate Crisis

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<th>Module Coordinator(s)</th>
<th>Dr Clare Kelly, School of Psychology, Dr Charlotte Wilson, School of Psychology</th>
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| What will you learn from this Elective? | Climate change is the biggest challenge facing our planet and its inhabitants. It has been directly caused by us. Yet, it is a challenge that humans are struggling to address in any meaningful way. This module leverages multidisciplinary perspectives on human psychology to answer three big-picture questions about the Climate Crisis:

  - *How did we get here?* What is it about human thought and behaviour and the structures and systems we have created that has led to the current crisis?
  
  - *What are the effects?* How is the Climate Crisis affecting human health, behaviour, and well-being, and how will it affect us in the future? In what way are these effects unevenly distributed across the world and what are the implications of this inequity?
  
  - *What can we do?* How we can leverage our understanding of human thought and behaviour to address the crisis at multiple levels of our society, using both conventional and more radical approaches?

In doing so, the module will expose students to a spectrum of new domains of knowledge, methods of enquiry, and epistemologies.

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<th>Student Workload</th>
<th>125 hours in total.</th>
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<td>8 face to face lectures (1hr): 8 hrs + 12hrs reading</td>
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<td>4 flipped classrooms (1hr pre-recorded lecture; 1hr face to face facilitated discussion seminar): 8hrs + 12hrs reading</td>
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<td>Workshops: 2 x 2hr face-to-face workshops on (1) climate-related public health communication and (2) climate mourning and hope + 9hrs related reading, research, and discussion</td>
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<td>Group project (social media communication): topic research, group meetings, reading, and group-based and individual assignment completion: 22hrs</td>
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<td>Individual assignment (Policy Brief): topic research, reading, and assignment completion: 30hrs</td>
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### Assessment Components

**Continuous Assessment/Coursework: 100%**

**1. Group Project:** Tailoring and disseminating psychologically informed climate communications to the public via social media *(40% of final mark)*

Students will work in groups of 3-4 (assigned) to compose two *Tweet threads* OR *Instagram posts* aimed at changing public understanding of and action on climate change *(50% of assignment mark)*. Each thread/post will be supported by a 250-word individually prepared, fully referenced summary of the evidence base for the message *(50% of assignment mark)*.

**2. Policy Brief** *(60% of final mark).* Working alone, students will produce a policy brief (<1500 words) that aims to provide an identified decision maker(s) (e.g., political group, business, public body, etc.) with a brief, neutral overview of the evidence on a specific climate-related issue and to outline solutions in the form of actionable recommendations for policy change.

### Indicative Reading List

Readings and links to other media (e.g. recorded talks, podcasts, etc.) for each session will be made available through blackboard. Example readings are:


### Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this module should be able to:

1. Evaluate how human thought and behaviour, and our *inventions* - the structures and systems we have created - have led to the current crises;
2. Explain how the climate crisis and biodiversity loss affect human health, behaviour, and well-being, and explain the need for climate justice and a just transition;
3. Explain how human thought, emotion, and behaviour can be manipulated for better and for worse;
4. Apply and communicate knowledge of human psychology to motivate and provoke action on the climate and biodiversity crises.