



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON CURRICULAR AFFAIRS**  
**COURSE SUBMISSION AND CONSULTATION FORM**

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*Principal Faculty Member(s) Proposing Course*

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Name	User ID	College	Department
Jacob Arthur Benfield	jab908	Abington College (AB)	Not Available

**Academic Home:** Abington College (AB)

**Type of Proposal:**  Add  Change  Drop

Message for Reviewers:

**Course Designation**

(PSYCH 144Z) Climate Change: Individual Behaviors and Group Attitudes

**Course Information**

**Cross-Listed Courses:**

**Prerequisites:**

**Corequisites:**

**Concurrents:**

**Recommended Preparations:**

**Abbreviated Title:** Climate Change: Psychology  
**Discipline:** General Education  
**Course Listing:** Linked

**Special categories for Undergraduate (001-499) courses**

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**Foundations**

- Writing/Speaking (GWS)
- Quantification (GQ)

**Knowledge Domains**

- Health & Wellness (GHW)
- Natural Sciences (GN)
- Arts (GA)
- Humanities (GH)
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS)

**Additional Designations**

- Bachelor of Arts
- International Cultures (IL)
- United States Cultures (US)
- Honors Course
- Common course number - x94, x95, x96, x97, x99
- Writing Across the Curriculum

**First-Year Engagement Program**

- First-Year Seminar

## Miscellaneous

Common Course

## GE Learning Objectives

GenEd Learning Objective: Effective Communication

GenEd Learning Objective: Creative Thinking

GenEd Learning Objective: Crit & Analytical Think

GenEd Learning Objective: Global Learning

GenEd Learning Objective: Integrative Thinking

GenEd Learning Objective: Key Literacies

GenEd Learning Objective: Soc Resp & Ethic Reason

## Bulletin Listing

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**Minimum Credits:** 3  
**Maximum Credits:** 3  
**Repeatable:** NO  
**Department with Curricular Responsibility:** Abington Administration (ABAB\_ABADM)  
**Effective Semester:** Upon Approval  
**Travel Component:** NO

## Course Outline

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### A brief outline or overview of the course content:

This course introduces students to the basic mechanisms of climate change and the individual and collective attitudes and behaviors that contribute to both causing and mitigating the problem of global anthropogenic climate change. Examples of topics that will be discussed include individual personality and demographic factors; environmental attitudes and values; persuasion and normative influence; social traps and resource dilemmas; and models for motivating individual and collective action. The course will also be explicitly linked to ART 144Z through the use of art as a stimulus to further investigate the science of attitude change and social influence. It will similarly be linked to BIOL 144Z through discussion of the psychological factors that influence peoples' interpretation of science regarding climate change; successful completion of any two of these courses fulfills 6 credits of Integrative Studies.

### A listing of the major topics to be covered with an approximate length of time allotted for their discussion:

Below is a list of major topics to be covered in the course; a more detailed description can be found in the attached syllabus.

Basics of climate and climate change: ~300 minutes (2 weeks)  
Conservation Psychology and Social Ecology: ~300 minutes (2 weeks)  
Individual factors that impact response to and belief in climate change: ~600 minutes (4 weeks)  
Collective or group factors that impact response and belief in climate change: ~450 minutes (3 weeks)  
Social science research on individual and collective attitude and behavior change: ~450 minutes (3 weeks)  
Psychological impacts of climate change on individuals and society: ~150 minutes (1 week)

### Course Description:

PSYCH144Z: Climate Change - Individual Behaviors and Group Attitudes is intended to be an introduction to environmental attitudes and behavior research within the social sciences, especially the fields of social and environmental psychology. This course allows students to understand the varied psychological processes, including individual attitudes, societal values, and personality traits, that shape a person's interactions with and feelings toward the physical environment within the context of global climate change. Drawing on methodology and theory in the areas of attitude change, social cognition, environmental perception, pro-social behavior, and emotions, this course will provide students with insight into how individual and group actions and mental processes can impact beliefs and actions toward global climate change while also providing a foundation for ways to alter those behaviors in meaningful ways. By linking with other courses on climate change in the arts (GA) and natural sciences (GN), this course represents one piece of a larger discussion in which global problems such as climate change are studied and prevented from multiple perspectives and disciplines. PSYCH 144Z fulfills 3 credits of the GS Domain General Education requirements. PSYCH 144Z may also be used in combination with either ART 144Z or BIOL 144Z as linked courses to fulfill 6-credits of Integrative Studies.

### The name(s) of the faculty member(s) responsible for the development of the course:

1 Name: Jacob Arthur Benfield (jab908)

Title:

Phone:

Address:

Campus: AB

City:

Fax:

## Course Justification

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### Instructional, Educational, and Course Objectives:

**This section should define what the student is expected to learn and what skills the student will develop.**

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. An understanding of how individual biases shape our response to scientific conclusions surrounding climate change.
2. The ability to think critically and scientifically about how psychological and other social science principles and theory could be used to alter peoples' belief in and actions toward climate change
3. An understanding of how group biases shape our collective response to scientific conclusions surrounding climate change.
4. The ability to recognize ways to integrate psychological and social science theory with artistic and natural science efforts around climate change

### Evaluation Methods:

**Include a statement that explains how the achievement of the educational objective identified above will be assessed.**

**The procedures for determining students' grades should be specifically identified.**

Achievement of objectives will be assessed through quizzes, exams, writing assignments, and/or graded discussions. Objectives 1-4 above are best addressed through a combination of quizzes, exams, and writing assignments that assess students' ability to apply scientific and psychological principles to issues associated with climate change attitudes and behaviors. These assessments will specifically stress application of material learned over remembering or understanding by asking students to apply social science principles to novel scenarios not explicitly discussed in class. As social scientific and psychological information comprise the majority of the information to be covered in the course approximately 80% of student evaluation will be based on these quizzes, exams, and writing assignments.

The remaining 20% of student evaluation will be based on development of integrative thinking skills over the course of the semester as assessment through a series of writing prompts and/or presentations spread throughout the semester. These assessments would be used to judge students ability to integrate information from art, biology, and psychology at the beginning of the semester, mid-semester, and end of the semester and students would be evaluated based on development of integrative thinking over the course of the semester using prior assignments as a base-line comparison.

Integration of art and psychology would be assessed by asking students to interpret and critique a piece of art that aims to convey some aspect of climate change to an individual or collective audience with the expectation that students' abilities to integrate social science into their interpretation and explanation of art will improve throughout the course.

Integrative thinking connecting biology and psychology will be assessed through writing prompts, exam questions, and presentations that ask students to predict how scientific results relating to climate change and biology would be viewed by people with different psychological perspectives with the expectation that students' predictions will become more based on psychological theory rather than personal conjecture and experiences

### Relationship/Linkage of Course to Other Courses:

**This statement should relate the course to existing or proposed new courses. It should provide a rationale for the level of instruction, for any prerequisites that may be specified, or for the course's role as a prerequisite for other courses.**

PSYCH 144Z includes explicit curricular links with ART 144Z: Climate Change: Arts, Agency and Activism and BIOL 144Z: Climate Change: Biological Impacts.

### Relationship of Course to Major, Option, Minor, or General Education:

**This statement should explain how the course will contribute to the major, option, or minor and indicate how it may function as a service course for other departments.**

PSYCH 144Z Climate Change: Individual Behaviors and Group Attitudes (3) is proposed as an approved course for General Education (GS). The course will satisfy 3 GS credits toward the General Education requirement, and can satisfy 3 credits towards the 6 credit integrative studies component of the general education requirement, provided students also take either ART 144Z: Climate Change: Arts, Agency and Activism or BIOL 144Z: Climate Change: Biological Impacts to complete the integrative studies requirement.

### A description of any special facilities:

N/A

### Frequency of Offering and Enrollment:

No restrictions on the frequency of offerings.

Enrollment is flexible, but enrollments that allow for class discussions would be best. 24-36 students is recommended.

## Alignment with General Education Objectives

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**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION** – the ability to exchange information and ideas in oral, written, and visual form in ways that allow for informed and persuasive discourse that builds trust and respect among those engaged in that exchange, and helps create environments where creative ideas and problem-solving flourish.

**KEY LITERACIES** – the ability to identify, interpret, create, communicate and compute using materials in a variety of media and contexts. Literacy acquired in multiple areas, such as textual, quantitative, information/technology, health, intercultural, historical, aesthetic, linguistic (world languages), and scientific, enables individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, to lead healthy and productive lives, and to participate fully in their

community and wider society.

**CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL THINKING** – the habit of mind characterized by comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating a conclusion. It is the intellectually disciplined process of conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

**INTEGRATIVE THINKING** – the ability to synthesize knowledge across multiple domains, modes of inquiry, historical periods, and perspectives, as well as the ability to identify linkages between existing knowledge and new information. Individuals who engage in integrative thinking are able to transfer knowledge within and beyond their current contexts.

**CREATIVE THINKING** – the capacity to synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of performing, making, thinking, or acting in an imaginative way that may be characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and intellectual risk taking.

**GLOBAL LEARNING** – the intellectually disciplined abilities to analyze similarities and differences among cultures; evaluate natural, physical, social, cultural, historical, and economic legacies and hierarchies; and engage as community members and leaders who will continue to deal with the intricacies of an ever-changing world. Individuals should acquire the ability to analyze power; identify and critique interdependent global, regional, and local cultures and systems; and evaluate the implications for people's lives.

**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ETHICAL REASONING** – the ability to assess one's own values within the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, describe how different perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Individuals should acquire the self-knowledge and leadership skills needed to play a role in creating and maintaining healthy, civil, safe, and thriving communities.

**What component(s) of the course will help students achieve the General Education Learning Objectives covered in the course? Provide evidence that students in the course have adequate opportunities to achieve the identified learning objectives.**

Key Literacies: Students will develop the ability to interpret and communicate results of social science studies in order to develop knowledge through study of psychological principles and research on individual and collective beliefs in and reactions to climate change. In addition, students will develop skills to evaluate scientific information to make better-informed decisions as a member of their community and wider society.

Critical and Analytical Thinking: This course will develop students' abilities to analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and apply scientific information before accepting or formulating a conclusion. Students will develop skills to closely examine information to identify the essential elements in order to make information useable. Students will also increase their ability to synthesize information from multiple sources in order to evaluate scientific information as a guide to belief and action.

Integrative Thinking: Integrative thinking skills will be strengthened in this course through the explicit linkage of the social science ideas presented with the biological and artistic viewpoints emphasized throughout the course. Students will synthesize the psychological understanding of how people process new information based on individual behaviors and societal attitudes. Students also will transfer psychological knowledge to develop a deeper understanding of the interaction of scientific information and art. Students will further develop integrative thought if they choose to take one of the courses linked with this course (ART 144Z, BIOL 144Z) that will explicitly incorporate psychological approaches to understanding of climate change within the respective domain (GA, GN).

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**How will students be assessed to determine their attainment of the Learning Objective(s) of General Education covered in this course? This assessment must be included as a portion of the student's overall performance in this course.**

Evaluation of this course will focus on achievement of the objectives of this course to develop key literacies, critical and analytic thinking, and integrative thinking. Several instruments will be used to assess student attainment of the General Education Learning Objectives.

Scientific literacy and critical and analytic thinking will be assessed through a combination of quizzes, exams, writings, and/or projects that requires students to clearly demonstrate understanding and application of the psychological and social science principles discussed in the course (e.g., intergroup processes, attitude change, social traps, environmental risk perception).

Critical and analytic thinking will be specifically assessed through activities that prompt students to apply scientific principles and synthesis of information to analyze the psychological and social science mechanisms driving attitudes and behaviors toward climate change before formulating a conclusion or intervention strategy. For example, students might be asked to write a paper describing the potential impacts of normative and informational social influence on adolescent understanding of climate change impacts or pro-environmental behavior.

Integrative thinking will be assessed through exam questions, writings, and/or projects that prompt students to evaluating their scientific conclusions within the context of biology and art. Assessments of integration of the natural and social sciences would ask students to communicate or explain how scientific conclusions may be interpreted differently based on the psychology of individual behavior and societal attitudes. Assessments of integration between art and social sciences will take the form of prompts that ask students to utilize art as a tool for individual or collective attitude or behavior change leading students to formulate and research artistic depictions of climate change and integrate it with existing research on persuasion or social influence. Assessment will employ a series of assignments throughout the semester that will be used to evaluate growth of integrative thinking over the duration of the course.

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## General Education Domain Criteria

**General Education Designation:** Linked

Linked Courses

- | BIOL 144Z
- | ART 144Z

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## GS Criteria

- Explain the various methods of inquiry used in the social and behavioral sciences and describe how the contributions of these fields complement inquiry in other areas
- Identify and explain major foundational theories and bodies of work in a particular area of social and behavioral sciences
- Describe the ways in which many different factors may interact to influence behaviors and/or institutions in historical or contemporary settings
- Explain how social and behavioral science researchers use concepts, theoretical models and data to better understand and address world problems
- Recognize social, cultural, political and/or ethical implications of work in the social and behavioral sciences

**What components of the course will help students achieve the domain criteria selected above?**

This course will help students to increase their abilities to meet of the GS domain criteria described. Throughout the course, students will learn about methods of inquiry in the social and behavioral sciences used to understand climate change and the varied psychological and societal impacts of climate change, and describe how those methods and conclusions complement other areas of inquiry. Students increase their ability to demonstrate understanding of social scientific and psychology-specific foundational theories through the investigation of individual and collective responses to and beliefs in climate change. Emphasis on how social and behavioral science and concepts can help us better understand the multiple factors and institutions that create both problems and solutions to the worldwide problem of climate change.

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**Integrative Studies**

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**Explain how the intellectual frameworks And methodologies of each course's Knowledge Domain will be explicitly addressed in the course and practiced by the students.**

PSYCH144Z is intended to be an introduction to environmental attitudes and behavior research within the social sciences (GS), especially the fields of social and environmental psychology. This course allows students to understand the varied psychological processes, including individual attitudes, societal values, and personality traits, that shape a person's interactions with and feelings toward the physical environment within the context of global climate change. Drawing on methodology and theory in the areas of attitude change, social cognition, environmental perception, pro-social behavior, and emotions, this course will provide students with insight into how individual and group actions and mental processes can impact beliefs and actions toward global climate change while also providing a foundation for ways to alter those behaviors in meaningful ways.

BIOL 144Z will help students to increase their abilities to meet of the GN domain criteria described. Throughout the course, students will learn about methods of inquiry in the natural sciences used to understand climate change and the biological impacts of climate change, and construct evidence-based explanations for climate change and the biological impacts of climate change. Students increase their ability to demonstrate understanding of scientific claims and their application through investigation of case studies of the impact of climate change on the biota from the individual to the ecosystem level. Emphasis on evaluation of scientific research by examining the quality of the data, methods, and inferences used to generate scientific knowledge will be key to the course for students to be able to form conclusions about the impacts of climate change and the societal implications of these discoveries.

The intellectual framework of ART 144Z is not new, it is the natural way artists see, learn, describe and communicate the world around them. Combining a research-based approach with a randomized system of juxtapositions with both imagery and words, will expose students to new ways of thinking and new possibilities in solving global problems, and here the most challenging problem of our time. Students will begin by communicating their basic competence in understanding climate change, they will be exposed to several ways of making art, and will then combine ideas and process. Throughout the semester students will build on their knowledge through interactive assignments, discussions reflections and art making. Thus, art making, research on artists, lectures about art and social change, discussions and critiques will deepen all aspects of the Art Knowledge Domain.

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**Explain how the courses in the Linkage will be linked with each other. It is anticipated that courses will usually be linked by subject matter, but they should additionally be linked by some purposeful component that provides opportunities for students to experience and practice integrative thinking across Knowledge Domains. The Linkage component between courses needs to be intentional and explicit to students. However, each course in a Linkage must be self-contained such that students can successfully complete just one course in the Linkage if they so choose.**

The theme of climate change inherent in PSYCH 144Z, BIOL 144Z, and ART 144Z creates a natural linkage for these courses. In addition, intentional and explicit components to strengthen the linkages between these courses have been embedded in each course with particular emphasis on opportunities for students to experience and practice integrative thinking across Knowledge Domains.

PSYCH144Z will be explicitly linked to BIOL144Z through activities and assignments that prompt students to integrate their knowledge of individual and collective human behavior and attitudes with research in biology and ecology. For example, after reading an article on psychological processes related to empathy and concern for wildlife, students will be asked to apply that research to a specific species being impacted by climate change. Similarly, after reading articles on central and peripheral processing of information, students may be asked to create two different infographics—one central and one peripheral—for a scientific finding on climate change in ecology to aid in swaying public understanding of the data.

BIOL 144Z will be explicitly linked with PSYCH 144Z through activities and assignments that prompt students to integrate scientific information with the psychological understanding of how people process new information based on individual behaviors and societal attitudes. For example, after a brief introduction to confirmation bias students will be asked to infer the response of people to scientific information when they previously had strong beliefs that agreed with or contradicted the scientific conclusion.

PSYCH144Z will be explicitly linked with ART144Z through activities and assignments that require students to utilize social science research on messaging and persuasion into a critique of artistic rendering and exhibitions on climate change. Students will read research on emotional and informational appeals and then be presented with several artistic works on climate change along with the artists' description of the works. They will write a critique of the work, through the lens of a social scientist, that highlights the more or less effective elements of the work and explain contexts in which the work would be more or less well-received by the audience.

ART 144Z will be explicitly linked with PSYCH 144Z through activities and assignments that prompt students to integrate psychological understanding of how people process new information based on individual behaviors and societal attitudes into a public art work. Students will read an article on crafting normative messages to protect the environment , and discuss, they will then create a piece of art that uses the psychology of persuasion for change. They will use words cut from previous articles and pair them with one of the images they made previously in the semester to create new meaning

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**Briefly explain the staffing plan. Given that each Linked course is approved for a single Knowledge Domain, it will be taught by an instructor (or instructional team) with appropriate expertise in that domain, who will also be expected to implement the Linkage's shared component as defined in this proposal**

PSYCH 144Z will be taught by an instructor with psychology expertise that possesses knowledge of individual and group biases, attitudes, and behavioral responses to climate change (i.e., social or environmental psychology). This instructor also will be responsible for the explicit linkages to ART 144Z and BIOL 144Z as described above with consultation with instructors of ART 144Z and BIOL 144Z.

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**Describe the assessments that will be used to determine students' ability to apply integrative thinking.**

Integrative thinking will be assessed through exam questions, writings, and/or projects that prompt students to evaluating their scientific conclusions within the context of biology and art. Assessments of integration of the natural and social sciences would ask students to communicate or explain how scientific conclusions maybe interpreted differently based on the psychology of individual behavior and societal attitudes. Assessments of integration between art and psychology will take the form of prompts that ask students to utilize their psychological knowledge of individual and group attitudes, biases, and behaviors into their interpretation and critique of climate change art. Assessment will employ a series of assignments throughout the semester that will be used to evaluate growth of integrative thinking over the duration of the course.

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### **Campuses That Have Offered ( ) Over The Past 4 Years**

semester	AB	AL	BK	BR	BW	CR	DS	ER	FE	GA	GV	HB	HN	HY	LV	MA	NK	PC	SH	SL	UP	WB	WC	WS	XC	XP	XS	YK
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### **Potential Impact**

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#### **Pre-Requisites**

is *listed as a pre-requisite or concurrent course* for the following courses:

Note: Not all courses may be listed here, due to lionpath requirement incomplection.

No pre-requisites or concurrent courses found

PSYCH144Z: Climate Change - Individual Behaviors and Group Attitudes (3 Credits)

Days and Time

Term and Year

Location

**Instructor:** Name  
Office:  
Phone:  
E-mail:  
Office Hours:

**Course Readings and Text:**

Various course readings distributed through CANVAS course homepage. Readings will be course specific but could possibly include common readings among the three linked courses such as:

Maslin, M. (2014). *Climate change: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.

**Course Description and Objectives:**

PSYCH144N: Climate Change - Individual Behaviors and Group Attitudes is intended to be an introduction to environmental attitudes and behavior research within the social sciences, especially the fields of social and environmental psychology. This course allows students to understand the varied psychological processes, including individual attitudes, societal values, and personality traits, that shape a person's interactions with and feelings toward the physical environment within the context of global climate change. Drawing on methodology and theory in the areas of attitude change, social cognition, environmental perception, pro-social behavior, and emotions, this course will provide students with insight into how individual and group actions and mental processes can impact beliefs and actions toward global climate change while also providing a foundation for ways to alter those behaviors in meaningful ways. By linking with other courses on climate change in the arts (GA) and natural sciences (GN), this course represents one piece of a larger discussion in which global problems such as climate change are studied and prevented from multiple perspectives and disciplines. PSYCH 144Z fulfills 3 credits of the GS Domain General Education requirements. PSYCH 144Z may also be used in combination with either ART 144Z or BIOL 144Z as linked courses to fulfill 6-credits of Integrative Studies.

Because this course satisfies a GS designation with the General Education curriculum, upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Explore the interrelationships of the many factors that shape behavior
- Develop comprehensive, integrated, reasoned, and theoretical views of their contemporary social world
- Understand how social, political, and economic influences affect individual, group, national, and global contexts.

Upon completing this course, students should be able to demonstrate the following:

- An understanding of how individual biases shape our response to scientific conclusions surrounding climate change.
- The ability to think critically and scientifically about how psychological and other social science principles and theory could be used to alter peoples' belief in and actions toward climate change
- An understanding of how group biases shape our collective response to scientific conclusions surrounding climate change.
- The ability to recognize ways to integrate psychological and social science theory with artistic and natural science efforts around climate change

Schedule of Topics\*\*

Section 1: Climate Science, Climate Change, and Conservation Psychology

**Week 1: Introduction to Climate and Scientific Thinking**

**Week 2: Climate Science and Human Caused Climate Change**

**Week 3: Introduction to Conservation Psychology**

Section 2: Individual Biases and Responses to Climate Change

**Week 4: Risk Perception and Cognitive Biases**

**Week 5: Personality and Attitude Biases (and Connection to Natural Science Research )**

**Week 6: Human Dimensions and Interactions with Nature**

**Week 7: Psychological Consequences of Climate Change**

**Week 8: Theories of Individual Behavior Change**

Section 3: Group Biases and Responses to Climate Change

**Week 9: Introduction to Social Ecology**

**Week 10: Intragroup Processes for Attitudes and Actions (and Connecting Social Science and the Arts )**

**Week 11: Intergroup Processes for Attitudes and Actions**

**Week 12: Cultural Transmission of Climate Change Facts and Beliefs**

**Week 13: Persuasive Messaging for Changing Societal Attitudes**

**Week 14: Persuasive Messaging for Changing Societal Behaviors**

**Week 15: Linked Final Assessment**

\*\*The instructor reserves the right to change this schedule as needed. Exam dates will never change. Students will be notified of major changes and be given a revised copy of this schedule.