

Course Syllabus
Disaster Response and Recovery
Spring 2026
EADP 3045.001
Wednesday 2:00-4:50 p.m.
CH 240

Instructor: Dr. Gary Webb
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Office Hours: Monday 3:00-4:30pm or by appointment (in-person or via Zoom)
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Course Overview

Disasters are a pervasive aspect of modern living. In recent years, disasters seem to be increasing in number; worsening in terms of financial, physical, and social impacts; and growing in complexity. Despite their best efforts to mitigate against or try to prevent disasters from happening, human societies must always maintain and constantly improve their capacities to respond to and recover from large-scale events.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are to improve students' knowledge of the response and recovery phases of disaster, familiarize them with the typical problems and challenges that arise during these phases, and suggest strategies for more effectively responding to and recovering from future disasters. Course material will facilitate the development of those skills by:

1. Identifying the diverse and complex range of hazards confronting human societies today and in the future.
2. Discussing the challenges involved in warning populations of impending threats, promoting appropriate protective actions, mobilizing necessary resources, and coordinating overall response operations.
3. Defining the recovery process, identifying factors that promote or impede community recovery from disaster, and examining the issue of social vulnerability and its impact on recovery outcomes.
4. Exposing students to principles of effective emergency management derived from both empirical research and lessons learned from previous disasters.

Course Readings

Required Text:

McEntire, David A. 2021. *Disaster Response and Recovery: Strategies and Tactics for Resilience, 3rd Edition*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Course Requirements

Student grades for this course will be based on each student's two highest exam scores and one in-class presentation.

Exams

There will be three 90 minute exams in this course, the first two of which are required of all students and the third of which is optional for those students seeking to potentially replace a lower score on one of the first two exams with a higher score. Those students who do not seek to replace one of their first two exam scores may therefore opt out of taking the final exam.

Each exam will test students' knowledge of material covered in the relevant section. For example, the first exam (tentatively scheduled for *Wednesday, February 11*) will consist of all material from class discussions and required readings up to that point; the second exam (tentatively scheduled for *Wednesday, March 18*) will consist of material from class discussions and required readings covered after the first exam; and the third exam (scheduled for *Wednesday, May 6*) will consist of all material from class discussions and required readings that are covered after the second exam (i.e., the final exam is not "comprehensive" in nature).

Each exam will contain 35 multiple choice questions, 1 short list question, and 1 essay question. The relative weight of each type of question for each exam is as follows:

35 multiple choice	70 points
1 short list question	5 points
<u>1 essay question</u>	<u>25 points</u>
Total	100 points

In-Class Presentation

Each student is required to prepare and deliver a 10 minute PowerPoint presentation in class on *April 29* that briefly describes a recent disaster and either (a) identifies the top 3 challenges encountered during the response and/or recovery phase(s) or (b) identifies the top 3 lessons learned (or unlearned) from the event. Student presentations are valued at 50 points and will be evaluated in terms of organization, clarity of presentation, and insightfulness and originality.

Course Grades

To summarize, course requirements and their relative weight for grading purposes are as follows:

Highest exam score	100 points
Second highest exam score	100 points
<u>In-Class Presentation</u>	<u>50 points</u>
Total	250 points

Student grades will be calculated on the following scale:

<u>Points earned</u>	<u>Grade</u>
225-250	A
200-224	B
175-199	C
150-174	D
0-149	F

Late Assignments

In-class presentations will not be accepted after the due date.

Missed Exams

Only in extenuating circumstances, such as family crisis, illness or injury sufficient to require medical care (***which can be documented***), participation in a university sponsored event which requires the student's absence from campus on the day of the exam, and similar reasons beyond the student's control, will make-up provisions apply. Advise the instructor in advance of absences due to such matters. If a make-up examination is allowed, an alternative exam (both in terms of substance and format) will be administered on the last day of finals week, **Friday, May 8 at 8:00 a.m.** No student can make up more than one exam. In the event that a student misses more than one exam, a grade of zero will be assigned for the second missed exam. If a student is granted a make-up exam and misses the scheduled make-up exam, a grade of zero will be assigned for the missed exam.

Tentative Course Outline*

Week 1 January 14

Topics

Introductions and Course Overview

Readings: None

Week 2 January 21

Topics

Guiding Assumptions

The Science of Disasters

Types of Disasters and Their Impacts

Some Global Disaster Trends

Readings: McEntire Chapter 1

Week 3 January 28

Topics

Human Response to Disaster

Disaster Myths: Their Sources and Consequences

Readings: McEntire Chapter 3

Week 4 February 4

Topics

Disaster Warnings

The Warning Process

Characteristics of Effective Warnings

Readings: McEntire Chapter 5

Week 5 February 11

*****Exam 1*****

Week 6 February 18

Topics

Response Demands, Activities, and Roles and Responsibilities

EOC Design and Function

Readings: McEntire Chapters 2, 6, and 7

Week 7 February 25

Topics

Contrasting Models of Emergency Management

Disaster Response Frameworks: National Response Framework, National Incident Management System, and Incident Command System

Readings: McEntire Chapter 4

Week 8 March 4

Topics

The Importance of Flexibility in Emergency Management

Readings: McEntire Chapters 11 and 13

Week 9 March 11

*****Spring Break No Class*****

Week 10 March 18

*****Exam 2*****

Week 11 March 25

Topics

Disaster Recovery
Dimensions and Stages of Recovery
Factors Affecting Recovery

Readings: McEntire Chapter 8

Week 12 April 1

Topics

Social Vulnerability to Disaster and Its Sources

Readings: McEntire Chapter 9

Week 13 April 8

Topics

National Disaster Recovery Framework
Holistic Disaster Recovery
Recovery Plans
Mitigation Challenges and Opportunities

Readings: McEntire Chapter 10

Week 14 April 15

Topics

Lessons Learned and Unlearned
Impediments to organizational learning from disasters

Readings: McEntire Chapter 12.

Week 15 April 22

Topics

Disaster Response and Recovery: A Glimpse into the Future
Conclusions and Course Wrap-up

Readings: McEntire Chapter 12.

Week 16 April 29

*****In-Class Presentations*****

Week 17 May 6

*****Exam 3 12:30-2:30pm*****

* It is important to note that this course outline is tentative and may be changed by the instructor. In the event changes to the outline are made, students will be notified in class. It is important, therefore, that students attend class to learn about important changes.

RELEVANT POLICIES TO THIS COURSE

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. Because we only meet once a week, every class meeting is essential to your success. *You should attend every class unless you have a university excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function as stated in the [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039>).* If you have an emergency or run into challenges that require you to miss a class, please inform the instructor beforehand, if possible. While an occasional absence is understandable and likely will not adversely impact a student's overall performance in the class, multiple absences are likely to negatively impact student performance.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. UNT Policy [06.003](#) defines cheating as “the use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise” and plagiarism as the “use of another’s thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student’s intent.” Cases of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with UNT Policy 06.003 Student Standards of Academic Integrity and in accordance with the process outlined by the Office of Academic Integrity (<http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>).

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/index.html>. You may also contact them by phone at [940.565.4323](tel:940.565.4323).

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [Student Conduct and Community Standards | Division of Student Affairs \(unt.edu\)](#).

PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM

When used appropriately, certain technologies, such as laptop computers, tablets, and smartphones, can enhance the university classroom experience. They also increasingly play a role in promoting campus safety by allowing students to receive severe weather alerts and other important risk information. However, when used inappropriately those same technologies can become a distraction to the individual user, other students, and the

instructor. Thus, while students may use portable electronic devices for taking class notes, searching the web for class-related content and resources, and receiving risk warnings and alerts, they may not be used for conducting personal communications (e.g., texting and e-mailing), accessing social media, or any other non-academic purposes. In the event that a student's use of portable electronic devices causes a distraction, they will first be asked to refrain from such use, and, if the problem persists, will be asked to leave the classroom.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Prohibited Use: In this course, the use of GenAI tools is not permissible. No matter the approach, any attempt to represent GenAI output as a student's own work will be considered fabrication, cheating, and/or academic dishonesty as determined on a case-by-case basis.

UNT Spring 2026 Semester Calendar

KEY SEMESTER DATES	Full Semester Jan. 12-May 8	3 week I Winter Session Dec. 15-Jan. 9	8 week I Session Jan 12-Mar. 6	8 week II Session Mar. 16-May 8
Schedule of Classes Available on myUNT	Sept. 22	Sept. 22	Sept. 22	Sept. 22
Registration Opens For specifics by student group/class: https://registrar.unt.edu/when-can-i-register	Oct. 6	Oct. 6	Oct. 6	Oct. 6
Prerequisite Drop Students not meeting course prerequisites will be dropped from their courses.	Dec. 16	Dec. 15	Dec. 16	Mar. 16
Regular Registration Ends	Jan. 8	Dec. 11	Jan. 8	Mar. 12
Late Registration Period—For Students not Registered for the Term	Jan. 9-16	Dec. 12-15	Jan. 9-16	Mar. 13-20
Last Day to Withdrawal from Entire Term on myUNT Courses do not appear on the transcript. After this date see Dean of Students to withdrawal from the entire term.	Jan. 11	Dec. 14	Jan. 11	Mar. 15
Classes Begin	Jan. 12	Dec. 15	Jan. 12	Mar. 16
Last Day to Add a Class or Swap Sections A swap is switching sections of the same course in the same session.	Jan. 16	Dec. 15	Jan. 16	Mar. 20
Last Day to Drop a Class Section Without a W (Census) Courses dropped before this date will not appear on official transcript. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)	Jan. 24	Dec. 16	Jan. 17	Mar. 21
Drop with a Grade of W Begins Courses appear on the transcript with a grade of W and tuition and fees remain. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)	Jan. 25	Dec. 17	Jan. 18	Mar. 22
Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option (undergrads)	Feb. 20	Dec. 19	Jan. 30	April 3
Midpoint of the Semester	Mar. 6	Dec. 24	Feb. 6	April 10
Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W.	April 10	Jan. 6	Feb. 20	April 24
First day to request a grade of Incomplete	April 11	Jan. 7	Feb. 21	April 25
Pre-Finals Days	April 29-30	N/A	N/A	N/A
Last Regular Class Meeting	April 30	Jan. 8	Mar. 5	May 7
Reading Day—No Classes	May 1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Final Exams	May 4-8	Jan. 9	Mar. 6	May 8
Last Day of Session	May 8	Jan. 9	Mar. 6	May 8
University Grade Submission Deadline 4 pm	May 11	Jan. 12	Mar. 9	May 11
Grades/Academic Standing posted on the Official Transcript 6pm	May 13	May 13	May 13	May 13
Winter Break (no classes; university closed)	December 24-26, December 29-January 2			
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	Jan. 19, 2026			
Spring Break	March 9-15, 2026			
University Commencement	May 7-11, 2026			