Course Syllabus

Emergency Management Theory and Practice
EMDS 5010.001
Fall 2019

Thursday, 6:00-8:50 p.m., ENV 190

Instructor: Dr. Gary Webb
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Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Overview and Objectives

Emergency management has undergone dramatic changes in the United States over the past several decades. Arising from the Cold War and focused initially on issues related to civil defense, emergency management is now a recognized, well-established profession that plays a highly visible and vital role in contemporary society. Paralleling the growth of the profession has been the vast expansion of what is now commonly referred to as disaster science—that is, the multidisciplinary study of the human dimensions of hazards and disasters. This specialized and ever-expanding body of scientific knowledge provides the theoretical and empirical foundations that underlie and inform the practice of emergency management.

The primary objective of this course is to enhance students’ understanding of the link between theory and practice in the context of hazards, disasters, and emergency management. To facilitate that understanding, the course is organized into four sections: (1) background and context, which includes: (a) the relevance of theory and research to practice; (b) differing definitions of disaster; and (c) core principles of emergency management; (2) intellectual origins of disaster science, which include: (a) the disaster tradition, (b) the hazards tradition, (c) the risk perspective, and (d) the crisis approach; (3) alternative and emerging perspectives in disaster science, which include: (a) the vulnerability paradigm, (b) the resilience framework, and (c) the disaster risk reduction and governance approach; and (4) bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Required Readings

All assigned readings can be accessed via Canvas. Students will also need to acquire a scholarly book on hazards, disasters, and emergency management.

Course Format and Requirements

This course will be conducted in a seminar style. Each week the instructor will provide a brief lecture as a basis for in-depth discussions of that week’s readings. Each student is responsible for keeping up with all of the assigned readings and participating in class discussions. However,
the discussion of each reading will be led by a designated student who will summarize the major points of the article and pose at least two critical questions for the group to consider.

Student grades in this course will be based on three factors: (1) presentation of assigned readings (including a written 1-2 page report that summarizes the article, thoughtfully criticizes it, and poses at least two questions for discussion) and general participation in class discussions (evaluated by the instructor in terms of both quantity and quality of comments); (2) a written exam that summarizes and critiques material discussed in class; and (3) a book review (8-10 double-spaced pages) of a scholarly book related to hazards, disasters, and emergency management that provides a detailed summary of its major findings, an insightful critique, and a thoughtful reflection on how the book’s findings advance both theory and practice. Each student will deliver a presentation on their book review at the end of the semester. Items submitted late will be subject to a 10% penalty and will not be accepted beyond one week of the original due date.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentations and class participation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
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- A 180-200
- B 160-179
- C 140-159
- D 120-139
- F 0-119

**Some Important Dates**
- **October 3** Scholarly Book Selection Due.
- **November 14** Exam
- **November 28** Thanksgiving Break, No Class
- **December 5** Book Reviews Due and Student Presentations
- **December 12** Student Presentations
Tentative Course Outline and Readings  
(Changes will be announced in class)

I. Background and Context

Week 1 (8/29)  
Introductions  
Course Overview and Objectives  

Readings:  
None.

Week 2 (9/5)  
Advancing the Profession through Science: The Importance of Theory and Research  

Readings:  


Ian Burton. 2018. “A World of Disasters: Knowing More and Losing More.” Published as part of the Research Counts Series by the Natural Hazards Center (hazards.colorado.edu).


Week 3 (9/12)  
Defining and Debating Disasters: What’s in a Name?  

Readings:  


Week 4 (9/19)
Core Principles of Emergency Management

Readings:


II. Intellectual Origins of Disaster Science

Week 5 (9/26)
The Disaster Tradition

Readings:


**Week 6 (10/3)*** Scholarly Book Selection Due***
The Hazards Tradition

*Readings:*


**Week 7 (10/10)**
The Risk Perspective

*Readings:*


**Week 8 (10/17)**
The Crisis Approach


III. Alternative and Emerging Perspectives in Disaster Science

**Week 9 (10/24)**
The Social Vulnerability Paradigm
*Readings:*


**Week 10 (10/31)**
The Resilience Framework
*Readings:*


**Week 11 (11/7)**
The Disaster Risk Reduction and Governance Approach
*Readings:*


**Week 12** (11/14) ***Exam***

**Week 13** (11/21)
Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice

*Readings:*


**Week 14** (11/28) ***Thanksgiving Break, No Class***

**Week 15** (12/5) ***Book Reviews Due***
Student Presentations

**Week 16** (12/12)
Student Presentations
RELEVANT POLICIES TO THIS COURSE

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 http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 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 www.deanofstudents.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, he or she will first be asked to refrain from such use, and, if the problem persists, will be asked to leave the classroom.
FALL 2019
IMPORTANT CLASS DATES

AUG 26, MONDAY
First class day.

SEPT 2, MONDAY
Labor Day-No classes. University Closed.

SEPT 9, MONDAY
Census date.

SEPT 10, TUESDAY
Beginning this date a student may drop a course with a grade of W by completing the Request to Drop a Course form and submitting it to the Registrar's Office.

OCT 18, FRIDAY
Mid-Semester

NOV 4, MONDAY
Last day for a student to drop a course.

NOV 11, MONDAY
Beginning this date a student who qualifies may request a grade of “I,” incomplete, a non-punitive grade given only if a student (1) is passing, (2) has justifiable reason why the work cannot be completed on schedule; and (3) arranges with the instructor to complete the work.

NOV 28-DEC 1, THURSDAY-SUNDAY
Thanksgiving Break

DEC 4-5, WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY
Pre-Finals Days

DEC 5, THURSDAY
Last Regular Class Meeting

DEC 6, FRIDAY
Reading Day. No classes.

DEC 7-13 SATURDAY- FRIDAY
Final examinations

DEC 13, FRIDAY
End of Term

Pre-Final Days, Reading Day, and Final Exams: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-031