Course Syllabus
Challenges of Disaster Response
EMDS 5620.001
Spring 2020

Wednesday, 6:00-8:50 p.m., CH 242

Instructor: Dr. Gary Webb
Office Hours: By appointment
Room 302C Chilton Hall
Telephone: (940) 369-5815
E-mail: gary.webb@unt.edu

Course Overview and Objectives

Disasters are a pervasive (and seemingly more frequent) aspect of social life, and they are the logical outcomes of human settlement patterns, short-sighted land use decisions, and increased use of risky technologies. While measures can be taken to reduce the impacts of major disasters, it is not likely that societies will ever be entirely "disaster resistant." Indeed, disaster reduction efforts taken by one society or community often increase the risk and vulnerability of other segments of the population. This dispersion and reallocation of risk across societies and across the globe ultimately means that disasters of the future will likely be more widespread and damaging, more difficult to manage, and increasingly discriminatory in their effects.

The primary objective of this course is to enhance students’ understanding of the primary challenges that commonly arise during the response phase of disaster and various research-based strategies for addressing them and thereby improving our ability to cope with catastrophic events. To facilitate that understanding, the course is organized into four sections: (1) the myths of disaster response, including panic, looting, and role abandonment; (2) the realities of disaster response, including emergence, convergence, and improvisation; (3) the policy context and competing models of disaster response; and (4) future response challenges, including the emergence of new hazards, organizational failures and the production of disasters, and the unequal distribution of disaster impacts on a global scale.

Required Readings

All of the assigned readings in the course outline are accessible via the course site on Canvas.

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 briefing that includes a written report and presentation on an existing or emerging disaster response challenge not discussed in class. Written briefs (and the presentations based on them) are required to have the following sections: (1) statement of the problem, (2) evidence of the extent and nature of the problem, (3) review of research literature related to the problem, and (4) recommendations for the emergency management community on how best to address the problem through policy, training, best practices, etc. Briefs will be evaluated by the instructor in terms of clarity, organization, style, originality, and insight. Additional details of these requirements will be given in class. 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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentations and class participation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written brief and presentation</td>
<td>100</td>
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<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

March 4:  Topic of Briefing Due
March 11: Spring Break, No Class
April 1:  Exam
April 22: International disaster articles presentations
April 29: Written Briefs Due in class/Student Presentations
May 6:  Student Presentations
Tentative Course Outline and Readings
(Changes will be announced in class)

Week 1 (1/15)
Introductions
Course Overview and Objectives

Readings:
None

Week 2 (1/22)
The Myths of Disaster Response I

Readings:


Week 3 (1/29)
The Myths of Disaster Response II

Readings:


Week 4 (2/5)
The Myths of Disaster Response III

Readings:


Week 5 (2/12)
Topic TBD

Readings:

TBD

Week 6 (2/19)
The Realities of Disaster Response I: Convergence

Readings:


Week 7 (2/26)
The Realities of Disaster Response II: Emergence

Readings:


Week 8 (3/4)
***Briefing Topic Due***
The Realities of Disaster Response III: Improvisation

Readings:


Week 9 (3/11)
***Spring Break—No Class***
Week 10 (3/18)
Two Models of Disaster Response in the U.S.

Readings:


Week 11 (3/25)
The Policy Context of Disaster Response in the U.S.

Readings:


Week 12 (4/1)
***Exam***
Week 13 (4/8)
Challenges of Responding to Organizationally Produced Disasters

Readings:


Week 14 (4/15)
Future Disasters and Response Challenges

Readings:


Quarantelli, E.L. 2006. “Catastrophes Are Different from Disasters: Some Implications for Crisis Planning and Managing Drawn from Katrina.” Published by the Social Science Research Council, Understanding Katrina: Perspectives from the Social Sciences.


Week 15 (4/22)
International Disasters and Response Challenges
Readings to be selected and presented by students.

Week 16 (4/29)
***Written Briefs Due***
Student Presentations

Week 17 (5/6)
Student Presentations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 10–17, 2020</td>
<td>Student-requested schedule changes may be made during add/drop.</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 13, 2020</td>
<td>First class day</td>
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<td>January 17, 2020</td>
<td>Last day for change of schedule other than a drop. (Last day to add a class.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 20, 2020</td>
<td>MLK Day (university closed)</td>
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<td>January 28 – March 30, 2020</td>
<td>Student may drop a course with a grade of W by completing the Request to Drop Class form and submitting it to the Registrar’s Office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 21, 2020</td>
<td>Last day for change in pass/no pass status.</td>
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<td>March 9, 2020</td>
<td>Staff spring break (university closed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9-13, 2020</td>
<td>Spring break (no classes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30, 2020</td>
<td>Last day to drop a course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 6, 2020</td>
<td>Beginning this date a student who qualifies may request a grade of I, incomplete.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17, 2020</td>
<td>Last day to withdraw from the semester. Process must be completed by 5 p.m. in the Dean of Students Office. Grades of W are assigned.</td>
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<td>April 29-30, 2020</td>
<td>Pre-finals days</td>
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<td>April 30, 2020</td>
<td>Last class day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1, 2020</td>
<td>Reading day (no classes)</td>
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<td>May 2-8, 2020</td>
<td>Final examinations</td>
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<td>May 7-10, 2020</td>
<td>Graduation ceremonies</td>
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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.