

**Sociology 3560.900/950 Sociology of Disaster**  
**Syllabus – Fall 2016**

Prof. Nicole Dash

Office Hours: M 3:00 pm-5:00 pm, both online and in my office, or by appointment

I am also willing to do Skype meetings. We just need to set up a time.

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**Course Description:**

This course focuses on an introduction to the study of the sociology of disaster. As such, we will explore a variety of different types of information including disaster myths, social vulnerability and popular culture. Much of the focus, however, will be on how social, political and economic conditions influence how people and communities experience disaster, but to do this, we all must first understand the same language related to disasters. This language includes concepts such as mitigation and preparedness. Our unit of analysis will be both the individual and the organization. Case studies of major disasters are used to explore topics such as the impact of gender, class, ethnicity, and age on vulnerability, as well as, the long term effects of disasters on individuals and communities.

Our perspective will be that disasters are not inevitable and not the consequence of “acts of god.” Disasters are not equalizing events that impact all people the same. Rather, the same systems of stratification that impact our everyday lives, also play a role in our ability to respond to and plan for hazards and disasters.

Each person enrolled in this class can be successful by following some simple guidelines: *Show Up; Find Support; Take Control; Be Prepared; Get Advised; Get Involved; and Be Persistent.* See the last page of the syllabus to see what these mean for this class.

**Course Goal and Objectives:**

Goal: Students will be able to understand disasters as social events and how social structures and institutions affect disaster impact and recovery.

At the completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how Sociology uniquely views disasters
  - 1.1 Identify how sociology defines disaster
  - 1.2 Assess why sociologists study disaster
2. Compare different aspects of and approaches to disaster
  - 2.1 Define the terms “hazard” and “disaster”
  - 2.2 Differentiate between hazards and disasters
  - 2.3 Discriminate from among the different types of disasters such as man-made, “natural” and conflict based events
  - 2.4 Compare and contrast the different phases of disaster and the activities that occur in each phase
3. Debate the merits of different approaches to the definition of disaster
4. Investigate individual and organizational response to disaster
  - 4.1 Identify how disasters are social events
  - 4.2 Debunk myths about human behavior in disasters.
5. Appraise organizational response to disaster
  - 5.1 Identify the challenges involved in effective organizational response

- 5.2 Identify the different types of disaster organizations as illustrated by Dyne's typology
- 5.3 Suggest ways in which disaster organizations could respond more effectively to Disaster
- 6. Appraise how social structures influence disaster experience
  - 6.1 Recognize what aspects (structures) of society influences social vulnerability and social privilege
  - 6.2 Investigate how social structures (such as race, class, and gender) generates disaster vulnerability and privilege
  - 6.3 Theorize how changes in society could reduce social vulnerability
  - 6.4 Propose policy changes that could lead to vulnerability reduction
  - 6.5 Assess your own social position and resulting vulnerability and privilege
- 7. Evaluate how media and other forms of popular culture influence our perceptions of disaster
  - 7.1 Recognize how popular culture influences disaster meaning
  - 7.2 Distinguish between different types of popular culture activities
  - 7.3 Identify films considered disaster films
  - 7.4 Identify common myths apparent in disaster films
  - 7.5 Independently evaluate the presence or absence of disaster movie myths
- 8. Analyze disaster Case Studies for the social effects of disaster in community contexts
  - 8.1 Evaluate the role of communality in the Buffalo Creek Flood
  - 8.2 Identify the physical and social conditions that lead to the Buffalo Creek Flood
  - 8.3 Recognize the central themes that lead to individual and communal trauma in BCF
  - 8.4 Identify the social conditions that impacted Hurricane Andrew
  - 8.5 Recognize the connection between the social conditions pre-Andrew and the short term and longer term impact of the disaster on the impacted population
  - 8.6 Evaluate the impact and effect of the 1992 Chicago Heat Wave
- 9. Analyze the social conditions pre-disaster, the impacts of the disaster and recovery after disaster in both a domestic and international context
  - 9.1 Critically evaluate a community's social landscape to make connections between social conditions and disaster impact.
  - 9.2 Critically assess the social landscape and disaster impact to evaluate their connections to disaster recovery

### **Required Materials:**

**All reading materials** will be posted online in the learning modules. You have no books to buy. The readings will be a combination of articles and book chapters. You are responsible for all reading assignments, and all materials presented in the learning modules including embedded videos, photos and/or links. The format of the class is easy to follow. A new module opens on Mondays, and the quiz associated with that Module must be completed by the following Sunday. You will have new module material every Monday except during exam weeks.

You cannot pass this class by waiting until the night before an exam to catch up on the relevant modules. If you miss completing a quiz by the Sunday deadline, there will be no extensions given. Students who struggle in this class usually do so because they are not staying on top of the weekly modules. Think carefully before you stay in this course. While the course is online, it is not the type of course that allows you to do all the work towards the end. You must keep up on weekly modules and quizzes. There is a lot of information in the modules.

**You must have a reliable computer and internet connection.** While this might seem obvious, experience requires me to remind you that this is an internet based course with weekly assignments that will be due. If you do not have a reliable computer and internet connection available, you will fall behind in this class. There are numerous computer labs on campus that you may use for this course. If you need to rely on the campus computer labs, please plan ahead.

**Monopoly Game:** By **October 17**, you must have use of a standard Monopoly Game. **This must be a standard regular Monopoly game.** You will need to find 5 people to play my version of Monopoly sometime between **10/17 and 11/6**. You will need to play my version of Monopoly for at least two hours, so please plan accordingly. You may play with friends and family or you may arrange to play with fellow students in this class. *(I will set up a discussion board that will allow you to organize if you want to play on campus. I will also have game boards available for you to check out.)* I will release the rules for playing on **10/17**. This assignment involves playing Monopoly, preparing for a disaster and writing a reaction paper that is due **11/20**. You cannot write the paper without playing the monopoly game.as I have designated. You will have to turn in evidence of playing the game as part of your assignment. **If you feel this is going to be a problem to accomplish, please consider dropping this course as this assignment is almost the equivalent of a test grade and no alternative assignments will be offered.**

Course Requirements				
	Description:	#	Points Each	Total Points
Exams	Multiple choice and True/False	3	100	300
Monopoly Assignment	Game and Paper	1	60	60
Disaster Movie Assignment	1 page Paper	1	25	25
End of Unit Quizzes	Short quizzes at the end of each unit to help students process and learn material (includes syllabus quiz)	12	10	120
Total Points Available:				505

### Grade Distribution:

454 Points and Above =	A
404 – 453 Points =	B
353 – 403 Points =	C
303 – 352 Points =	D
302 or Below Points =	F

**Final Grades:** If you are only a few points away from the next higher grade, do not anticipate me curving you into that grade. I am very consistent in awarding final grades, and unless there is an error in calculation, you will be awarded the grade that you earned based upon the distribution above.

### Description of Requirements:

1. **EXAMS:** You will be given three exams in this class. Each exam is worth 100 points. Exam questions will be based on assigned readings, learning modules, and class activities. Exams may be multiple choice, true/false and essay. You will be given a set amount of time in which you must complete the exam. **You may only move forward in the exam. You will not be allowed to skip a question and go back to it at the end; once you see a question you must answer it.** Moving forward only in an exam frustrates many students. This is why I tell you about this policy from the beginning. **If you anticipate this or the limited time on the exam being an issue for you, please drop this class.** I want every student to do well, but I likewise put some clear integrity measures into the online exam system. The time you are given is the same time students in a M/W/F section would be given for an exam. You should have more than enough time to complete the exam. Please think carefully before remaining in this class if the moving forward only will cause you undo pressure or angst.

You will be given a two day window to take exams. The exam period will start at 12:01am on the first day of the exam period and end at 11:59 on the following day. In this class, exam periods will be Saturday and Sunday of the exam week. So, you must take the exam anytime between 12:01am Saturday morning (which is technically Friday night) to 11:59pm Sunday night. You are not allowed to go into online modules once you start the exam. The system will record if you do this. Please don't put either of us in a very awkward position.

**Missed Exams:** You will be allowed to make up a missed exam only if you have a documented university excused absence. I reserve the right to have you take any make up exam on campus and/or give you a different exam that is primarily short answer and essay questions. **The FINAL EXAM MUST BE TAKEN AT THE DESIGNATED TIME. NO MAKE-UPS WILL BE GIVEN.**

2. **Monopoly:** You will need to have access to a Monopoly Game by October 17. Then between October 17 and November 6, you will need to arrange to play with a group of 5 people. These can be friends and family or you can try to arrange games with your fellow students. You will need to play for at least two hours. Plan accordingly. On 10/17, I will post the instructions for the game. You will not be playing with usual Monopoly rules. When you are done with your game, you will fill out a small online form that will give me enough information to know if you played using my rules. If you do not play by 11/7 and submit this form, you will receive a zero as you cannot write the paper without this experience. The paper instructions will open once you turn in this small quiz.

Upon completion of the Monopoly game, you will be asked to write a short reaction paper based on your experiences. This assignment will be available to you after you submit your monopoly form showing that you played the game.

There is no alternate to this assignment. Please think about your ability to bring together 5 other people to play this game with you before you remain in this course. I will open an online forum to allow you to plan games with your fellow students as well.

3. **Disaster Movie Viewing:** One of the major ways people learn about disasters is by watching disaster movies. You can probably recall watching some. The key to a disaster movie is that the disaster is the main character. So, for example, The Wizard of Oz is not a disaster movie because the tornado is simply a small part of the movie. The movie itself isn't about the tornado. Pick a disaster movie to watch. You can find a list here, but keep in mind, not all of them meet our definition of a disaster movie. Just because it is on the list doesn't make it acceptable. The disaster also need to be something that could possibly happen. In other words, movies such as Sharknado are not acceptable. You need to consider whether it meets the definition I just posted. Is the disaster itself the main character. If you are not sure if your movie will count, please message me with the title before you begin! (No, Sharknado does not count. Your movie choice cannot involve spoofs of the genre)

In **NO** more than 1 page single spaced, first, explain why this is a disaster movie. Second, explain what a 17 year old who has never been in a disaster would learn from the movie, and whether this knowledge would be beneficial or not if they experienced a disaster themselves one day. You must draw upon what you are learning in this class for this assignment. Based on what you learn in the first few weeks, would the messages given in the film be considered beneficial or helpful to a teenager watching the film? Your answer should also include why you believe that. I will post the rubric that will be used to grade you during the first few weeks of the semester. **This paper is due 10/23 by midnight.**

4. **Lessons/Module Mastery Assessments:** At the end of each learning module, you will have an assessment that will consist of multiple choice and fill in the blank questions. These assessments are each worth 10 points with each question worth 1 point. You may take the quiz up to 4 times. After each attempt, you will be given the score that you have earned, but you will not know which questions you have missed. You will

get the highest grade you earn as your final grade as long as that grade is over 70% or 7 out of 10 questions correct. If you get less than 7 out of 10 correct you will receive a zero. These quizzes are to help you learn and master the material. For this method to work, you cannot wait until the last moment to work on modules. Paying attention to the course material and doing well on these quizzes will overall help your final grade in the class. Modules open every Monday and the quiz for that module will close at 11:59 the following Sunday.

## 5. Bonus Point Opportunity

You will have two opportunities to earn bonus points. The points will simply be added to your point total not to a specific grade. After the drop/add period is over, I will put each of you randomly in a group of 10 other students. You will be asked a question in that group about the class. You will get 10 points if you actively participate in the discussion. Active participation means that you have posted an answer to the question, and posted to at least 3 other messages on more than 1 day. If you are not an active participant, you will get no bonus points. So it's all or nothing. The course schedule below shows when those discussions close, and I will send announcements when they open.

## Additional Policies and Procedures

**Class Participation:** While this is an online class, the expectation is that you are engaged in the material every week. If you are taking this class because you want an easy online class that does not require you to be engaged in the material, then you are taking the wrong class. This class requires the same time investment as any face to face course. However, you have the flexibility to engage with the material during the week in a time flexible way. But you will need to be in the class every week doing work.

**Class Announcements:** I use the class announcement feature of Blackboard Learn often. Your default email is your UNT eaglemail email address. Please make sure you check that regularly or follow the directions to forward your email to an address you more consistently use. Each time you log onto Blackboard, you should check for Announcements.

**Cheating:** Cheating will not be tolerated. You are expected to do your own assignments and take your own tests. I highly recommend that you DO NOT copy another person's work as it is very possible that they know even less than you do.

**EMAIL/Messaging:** I get a lot of email to my UNT email address. The best method to contact me is through the Blackboard messaging system. I check in on the class multiple times a day on everyday but Saturday (unless it is a test weekend). If you message me, you can expect a response within 24 hours. In most cases, you will have a response even sooner.

## Disabilities Accommodation:

The University of North Texas complies with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The University of North Texas provides academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to individuals with disabilities, as defined under the law. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please see the instructor and/or contact the Office of Disability Accommodation at 940-565-4323 during the first week of class. If you need accommodation in this class, please let me know as soon as possible.

## **SOCI 3560: Sociology of Disasters : Fall 2016 Schedule**

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments (other than module quiz)
1	8/29-9/4	Start Here Module	Start Here Quiz with score of 8/10 opens Module 1;
2	9/5-9/11	Module 1: Introduction to Sociology of Disasters	
3	9/12-9/18	Module 2: Theories of Disasters	
4	9/19-9/25	Module 3: Phases of Disasters	
5	9/26-10/2	Module 4: Individuals and Disaster	

6	10/3-10/9	<b>EXAM 1: Modules 1-4 (10/8-10/9)</b>	<b>Extra Credit 1 Discussion due 10/9, 11:59pm</b>
7	10/10-10/16	Module 5: Popular Culture	
8	10/17-10/23	Module 6: Social Vulnerability	<b>Movie Paper Due: 10/23 by 11:59pm</b>
9	10/24-10/30	Module 7: Race, Class and Disability	
10	10/31-11/6	Module 8: Earthquakes	
11	11/7-11/13	<b>EXAM 2: Modules 5-8 (11/12-11/13)</b>	
12	11/14-11/20	Module 9: Floods and Heat Waves	<b>Monopoly Paper due: 11/20, 11:59pm</b>
13	11/21-11/27	Module 10: Hurricanes	
14	11/28-12/4	Module 11: Organizations and Future Directions	
15	12/5-12/11	<b>Final Exam: Modules 9-11 (12/10-12/11)</b>	<b>Extra Credit Discussion 2 Due: 12/11 11:59pm</b>

### *Succeed at UNT!*

*Each and every one of you can succeed in this class. Below are some pointers that should help you do well!!*

- **Show Up:**

- While this is an online class, it is important for you to show up consistently throughout out the semester, and at least weekly. You have an assignment due every week during the semester after the first week. Every Monday, I will send the class an announcement outlining important information you need for the week.
- You need to log into the class at the start of each week (Monday) and again later in the week to make sure you have completed your assignments.
- The more you are engaged with the class, the better you will do in the class! Waiting until the last minute will negatively impact your grade! So, log in early each week and again as the week continues!

- **Find Support**

- You can get help in this class in a variety of ways. First, you can message me in the Blackboard System. I check my Blackboard email multiple times a day M-F, and at least once or twice on weekends. If you are having a hard time understanding the material, you can ask me questions or set up an appointment to come in and get some help.
- A second way to get support is through the main message boards in the class. I check message boards at least daily during the week and at least once or twice during the weekend. If you log into the class, and click on the message boards, you will see a variety of places you can communicate with me and the entire class. If you have a topic that you think the whole class would be interested in, post here!
- Blackboard Learn has a chat system that can be used as well. I will be available for chats on Mondays for 3 to 5, and we can set up other times by appointment.

- **Take Control**

- Find tools to help you succeed in this class. Do you forget when assignments are due? Plug the due dates into your cell phone calendar. Do you need reminders to check announcements and log into the class? Your phone can be used for this as well!
- Do you need a study buddy? Find one using the class messaging system. You can succeed! Use the tools you have to set yourself up for success!

- **Be Prepared**

- If you do some of the other things mentioned above, you will be more prepared for this class. Work through the modules early in the week and take the quiz. If you don't do as well as you would like, wait a

day or so and work through the module again and take the quiz again. You have 4 attempts. Use them all to get the most points possible and learn the material.

- Study for exams as you would study for any face to face class. Take notes of important ideas and concepts as you work through the online modules. Mark what you don't understand and ask for clarity.

- ***Get Involved***

- Talk to your fellow students through the class discussion boards and during bonus discussions.
- Does something particularly pique your interest? Get involved outside the classroom. Let me know what interests you, and I can help find opportunities for you to get involved beyond the classroom.

- ***Be Persistent***

- Don't give up! If you don't do well on one thing, work harder on the next assignment.
- You have 510 points available in this class. One missed quiz or lower grade than you wanted doesn't need to completely side track you.
- Work hard, enjoy learning and achieve success!

*For more success resources, visit <http://succeed.unt.edu>*