Course Syllabus
Emergency Management Theory and Practice
EMDS 6800.002
Fall 2018

Thursday, 6:00-8:50 p.m., GAB 406

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. Based on a specialized and ever-expanding body of scientific knowledge, emergency management has both practical and theoretical foundations. In a practical sense, emergency managers seek to reduce their communities’ vulnerability to disasters through appropriate mitigation measures, educate the public about hazards and risks to encourage greater preparedness, efficiently and effectively respond to major events, and facilitate household and community recovery over both the short- and long-terms. From a theoretical perspective, researchers seek to better understand the causes, characteristics, and consequences of disasters; conduct systematic empirical studies to identify key lessons learned; and, ultimately, provide evidence-based recommendations to improve the practice of emergency management and enhance societal resilience to disasters.

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 five 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 paradigms in emergency management and disaster science, which include: (a) the vulnerability paradigm and (b) the risk reduction and disaster governance paradigm; (4) disasters and emergency management in an international context; and (5) bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Required Readings

All assigned readings can be accessed via Blackboard.

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 four 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), general participation in class discussions (evaluated by the instructor in terms of both quantity and quality of comments); (2) a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the history, structure, and status of emergency management in a country outside the U.S.; (3) a written exam that summarizes and critiques material discussed in class; and (4) a 15-20 page original term paper that either: (a) provides an expanded, in-depth, critical review of the research literature related to a topic covered in class; (b) presents a detailed research proposal on a disaster or emergency management topic chosen by the student; or (c) presents a completed, fully developed research project related to disasters and emergency management. All papers will be evaluated by the instructor in terms of clarity, organization, style, and insight; and each student will deliver a presentation to the class. 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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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations and class participation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>International presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</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_  
_October 18_  Submit short description of research paper topic.  
_November 8_  International presentation.  
_November 15_  Exam  
_November 22_  Thanksgiving Break, No Class  
_December 6_  Research Papers Due and Student Presentations  
_December 13_  Student Presentations
Tentative Course Outline and Readings
(Changes will be announced in class)

I. Background and Context

Week 1 (8/30)
Introductions
Course Overview and Objectives

Readings:
None.

Week 2 (9/6)
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 (9/13)
Defining and Debating Disasters: What’s in a Name?

Readings:


Week 4 (9/20)
Core Principles of Emergency Management

Readings:


II. Intellectual Origins of Disaster Science

Week 5 (9/27)
The Disaster Tradition

Readings:


**Week 6 (10/4)**
The Hazards Tradition

*Readings:*


**Week 7 (10/11)**
The Risk Perspective

*Readings:*


**Week 8 (10/18) ***Short Description of Research Paper Topic***
The Crisis Approach


III. Alternative Paradigms in Disaster Science

Week 9 (10/25)
The Social Vulnerability Paradigm

Readings:


Week 10 (11/1)
The Risk Reduction and Disaster Governance Paradigm

Readings:


Week 11 (11/8)
Disasters and Emergency Management in International Context

Readings:
TBD

Week 12 (11/15) ***Exam***

Week 13 (11/22) ***Thanksgiving Break, No Class***
**Week 14** (11/29)
Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice

*Readings:*


**Week 15** (12/6) ***Theoretical Case Studies Due***
Student Presentations

**Week 16** (12/13)
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 2018

IMPORTANT CLASS DATES

AUG 27, MONDAY
First class day.

SEPT 3, MONDAY
Labor Day-No classes. University Closed.

SEPT 10, MONDAY
Census date.

SEPT 11, TUESDAY
Beginning this date a student may drop a course with a grade of W by completing the Request to Drop a Course form.

OCT 19, FRIDAY
Mid-Semester

NOV 5, MONDAY
Last day for a student to drop a course.

NOV 12, 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 22-25, THURSDAY-SUNDAY
Thanksgiving Break

DEC 5-6, WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY
Pre-Finals Days

DEC 6, THURSDAY
Last Regular Class Meeting

DEC 7, FRIDAY
Reading Day. No classes.

DEC 8-14 SATURDAY- FRIDAY
Final examinations

DEC 14, FRIDAY
End of Term

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