

**Sociology 3560.001 Sociology of Disaster
Syllabus – Fall 2010**

Prof. Nicole Dash

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

e-mail address: dash@unt.edu.

Office: Chilton Hall 209G

Phone: 565-2230

Course page: WebCT

Class Time: M 6:00 - 8:50 pm

Classroom: ESSC 255

Format of Course:

This course is a blended course with part of the work being done online and part in face-to-face sessions. After the first few classes where all of you will attend, the bulk of the knowledge transfer will be online through 10 learning modules. The information you learn online will then be used when you meet once every three weeks to do a hands on experiential learning exercise. The materials you will need for these exercises will be posted to the course website. It is your responsibility to come to class prepared for these activities. During the first two weeks of the semester, you will randomly be assigned to a group. The group you are assigned will determine which days you attend class. None of the in class activities can be made up if you miss the session. A detailed outline of the class is at the end of this syllabus, but below you will find a short summary of the class meeting schedule.

Class Meeting Schedule:

ALL: 8/30; 9/13

NONE: 9/20; 10/18; 11/15, 12/13

Group A: 8/30; 9/13; 9/27; 10/25; 11/22

Group B: 8/30; 9/13; 10/4; 11/1; 11/29

Group C: 8/30; 9/13; 10/11; 11/8; 12/6

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. 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.

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 to the online course management system. The readings will be a combination of articles and book chapters. There will be 2 readings posted associated with the first few classes where all of us will meet. All other readings will be linked into each course module. You are responsible for all reading assignments, and all materials presented in the learning modules included embedded video, photos and/or links. . In addition, each module/lesson, and sub-lesson, will have links for you to explore for further information. Modules will open on the first day of the time period that they are assigned. Each module has a short quiz associated with it. Credit for those assignments will be given only if they are completed by the last day of the time period for that module. In other words, do not attempt to wait until the day before an exam to catch up with the learning modules.

You must have a reliable computer and internet connection. Exams will be given online and will be open for the same time period as our class on the dates designated. You will have one minute per question to answer each question. If your computer dies or your internet connection goes down, there is nothing I can do. If this concerns you, UNT has a variety of computer labs across campus where you can take the exam.

Make up exams will be given only if you have a university approved excuse with documentation. These exams can only be taken on campus and will be 100% short answer and essay.

Course Requirements:

| Overall assessment plan: | | number | pts each | total points |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| EXAMS | Description Multiple Choice and essay exams: 45 multiple choice questions worth 90 points and one essay worth 10 points. | 3 | 100 | 300 |
| Online Discussion | Online Discussion to debate what is the best approach to studying disasters | 1 | 40 | 40 |
| Active Learning Activities | Active Learning Projects that will require preparation outside of class for inside class activity | 3 | 50 | 150 |
| Case Study Wiki Creation | Students will select a disaster case study to work on with a group of other students. The students will create a wiki for the case study that will include information such as social conditions before the disaster, impact, photos, videos, published reports and news links. Students will collect this information on the wiki page, and then use the information to collaboratively and critically assess the connections between disasters and social structure/culture. | | | 100 |
| Case Study Wiki Assessment | Students will evaluate all other case study wikis applying a predetermined rubric. Their evaluation of other student generated Wikis will impact the overall points awarded to other students and themselves. | | | 50 |
| End of Unit Quizzes/activities | Short quizzes or activities at the end of each unit to help students process information. | 10 | 10 | 100 |
| Total available Points: | | | | 740 |

Grade Distribution:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| 665 Points and Above = | A |
| 592 – 664 Points = | B |
| 518 – 591 Points = | C |
| 444 – 517 Points = | D |
| 443 or Below Points = | F |

Final Grades: If you are only a few points away from the next higher grade, do not anticipate me curing 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:

- EXAMS:** You will be given three exams in this class. Each exam is worth 100 points. Exam questions will be based on assigned readings, lectures, learning modules, and in class activities. Exams will be primarily multiple choice, and true/false with some short answer or essay questions. Multiple choice questions will be given approximately one minute per question for answer period, while essays will be given more. 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.
Missed Exams: You will be allowed to make up a missed exam only if you have a documented university excused absence. Make up exams will be 100% short answer and essay, and may only be taken on campus with instructor permission. **The FINAL EXAM MUST BE TAKEN AT THE DESIGNATED TIME. NO MAKE-UPS WILL BE GIVEN.**
- Online Discussion:** To help you process and make sense of different approaches to understanding disasters, you will have an online discussion assignment. Details will be posted online, but overall the discussion will be open for a two week period. You are expected to participate in the discussion, and you will be assessed based on a developed rubric that will be made available to you online.
- Active Learning Activities:** One of the priorities of this class is to help you make the connection between the facts you learn, and how things work in the real world. To do this, we will be doing three active learning activities. Smaller groups of students will come together and use class time to work on a project, and then, present their findings to the class or write a short response paper. Each one is worth 50 points. Before each active learning activity begins you will be given an explanation of the activity and how your participation will be evaluated. In the case of some, you will be evaluated by me, your other group members and even the whole class. These assignments require you to be in class on your designated day. **They cannot be made up under any circumstances since they require group participation.**
- Case Study Wiki Project:** As we know there have been many disasters worldwide. However, in this class we don't have the time to discuss many of them in depth. To help you make connections between disasters and the social world, each of you will join a group of fellow students to develop a disaster case study Wiki. A Wiki is a way to work collaboratively with others, but all the work is done online. As part of the Wiki, you will seek information on your disaster, and post it to your Wiki page. Your goal will be to find photos, videos, popular culture, impact data, social data for the impact area, and other important facts. But ultimately, your group will be using all of this information to collaboratively make an argument for why this disaster was a social event and not simply an "act of god" or physical event. You will be randomly assigned to your disaster wiki group in Blackboard during the first few weeks of classes, and you will work on your Wiki online at a website called PBWorks. Your Wiki will be assessed in two ways. First they will be assessed by me using a grading rubric, and second, they will be assessed by some of your fellow students. Your grade will be half based on the group wiki presentation, and half on your contribution to the project. The Wiki software tracks everything you do. I will know exactly how much you participate. If you do not participate in the Wiki you will get a zero for the assignment.

5. **Wiki Assessments:** You will be assigned five other Wikis to review and assess. You will be given a scoring sheet, and an explanation of what to look for and how to assess. Your assessments will contribute to the final grade for each Wiki. You will be evaluated based upon how serious you take the endeavor. Before your assessments begin, you will be given an explanation of how you will be scored/assessed.
6. **Lessons/Module Mastery Assessments:** At the end of each lesson/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 each. You may take the quiz as many times with an hour between each attempt. 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.
7. **Extra Credit:** *The only extra credit available in this class will be points that you will receive for taking a variety of online surveys. You will not be graded on your answers. If you complete the survey you will receive 5 extra credit points that will go towards your final point total. The links to the surveys will be posted on Blackboard. Once the survey is open, you will have one week to go online and complete it. Some of these surveys may be given before you have any grades in this class. I highly recommend that you take these opportunities when they are available. Because of the point system used for your grade, these points will help you should you miss a quiz, do poorly on a quiz or do poorly on an exam. If you do well on everything, these points will give you a cushion as you go into the final. Should you not take the opportunity to earn these bonus points when they are available, you will not be given any other chance.*

Additional Policies and Procedures

Attendance: You are expected to be in class prepared for that day's activities. You will not be successful on the in-class activities if you have not done the learning modules that are open prior to those activities. You will not only negatively impact your grade by not doing so, but you will also let down your entire team. If you are not prepared, and consequently of little use to your group on the given project, your grade for that assignment will be severely impacted.

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. THESE ARE CLOSED NOTES EXAMS.

Lap Tops/Cell Phones: Cell Phones must be turned off and put away before class starts. I do not want to see them on your desk or in your hand. No exceptions. Laptops will not be allowed at all in this class. You have only two days of "lecture" and you will not be allowed to use them during active learning assignments.

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.

BLACKBOARD

This class will utilize UNT's online class management system: Blackboard. It can be accessed using the following webpage: <http://ecampus.unt.edu/>.

SOCI 3560, Sociology of Disasters : Fall 2010 outline

| | Who | In Class Activity | Online Lessons | Assignments | Wiki Project | Notes: |
|--------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 30-Aug | All | Introduction to course | reading assignments available | | | |
| 6-Sep | None-Holiday | none | Lesson 1: How sociology sees disasters | | | |
| 13-Sep | All | Theories of Disaster | | Online discussion/debate: what is a disaster | Project explained: Disaster Assigned | |
| 20-Sep | none | none | Lesson 2: Phases of Disaster | | Work in groups online on Wiki Project | |
| 27-Sep | A | Warning Exercise | Lesson 3: Individuals and Disaster and Lesson 4: Social Vulnerability | | | |
| 4-Oct | B | | | | | |
| 11-Oct | C | | | | | |
| 18-Oct | none | none | Lesson 5: Popular Culture | Exam 1: All in class material to date and lessons 1-3 | | |
| 25-Oct | A | Stratified Monopoly | Lesson 6: Buffalo Creek and Lesson 7: Organizations in Disaster | | | Group A's reaction due by Oct. 31 |
| 1-Nov | B | | | | | Group B's paper due by Nov 7 |
| 8-Nov | C | | | | | Group C's paper due by Nov 14 |
| 15-Nov | none | none | Work on Wiki | Exam 2: Lessons 4, 5, 6 | | |
| 22-Nov | A | City Commission Project | Lesson 8: Chicago Heat Wave and Lesson 9: Hurricane Andrew | | Wiki project must be complete by Nov 22 | |
| 29-Nov | B | | | | Review and Assess assigned 5 Wikis | |
| 6-Dec | C | | | | | |
| 13-Dec | None | | Final Exam | Final Exam: Lessons 7-9 | | |