SOCY 5037: Hazards, Disasters, and Society
Department of Sociology
University of Colorado
Spring 2017
Mondays – 3:00-5:30 p.m.
Ketchum 1B24

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Office: Ketchum 286
Office Hours: Mondays – Noon-1:30 p.m.

Course Overview:
Disasters may be triggered by forces of nature, such as floods, wildfires, hurricanes, and earthquakes; technological accidents, such as plane crashes, oil spills, and chemical releases; or terrorism and other willful acts of violence. Disasters may be slow-moving in their onset or sudden and unexpected. What these events share in common is their potential to cause widespread community disruption, displacement, economic loss, property damage, death and injury, and profound emotional suffering. What is also clear is that disaster risk is on the rise in the United States and around the world.

The objective of this graduate seminar is to introduce students to the sociological examination of hazards and disasters. This course begins with the premise that disasters are fundamentally social events that reflect the personal, collective, and policy choices that pattern communities and societies. Students who participate fully will gain an advanced understanding of: 1) the emergence and evolution of the social scientific field of disaster research; 2) key definitions, concepts, and data sources; 3) methods and ethics of disaster research; 4) widely used theoretical perspectives and transformational empirical studies; and 5) frameworks for moving from knowledge to action in the process of disaster risk reduction.

Course Materials:
- Additional required readings are available electronically via the Desire2Learn online platform.

Course Requirements:
Attendance and Participation: This course will be run in a seminar format with the intent of promoting an active learning environment. I expect that you will be on time and attend every class session in its entirety. Your attendance is required because your participation is vital to the success of this course. With that in mind, you should read the assigned materials prior to class and come prepared to actively contribute to the discussion.

Weekly Reading Provocations: This course is organized around a set of required readings that will be used to guide class discussions and inform your final project. (The further reading sections in the course outline are for your reference only, and are not required.) Prior to each seminar meeting, you will submit a set of questions or critical comments on the required readings—with a minimum of two questions/comments per chapter or article. Reading provocations should be uploaded to Desire2Learn by no later than 3:00 p.m. on the Sunday before seminar meetings. This will allow the discussion leader to help us focus on common critiques, concerns, and questions during our Monday seminar.
**Discussion Leader:** Each student will serve as a discussion leader once during the semester. The discussion leader will be responsible for preparing a brief presentation that summarizes key aspects of the week’s readings and captures key themes in the weekly questions and provocations. Discussion leaders are welcome to use PowerPoint, handouts, and/or other creative teaching aids to facilitate class involvement.

**Book Review:** Each student will identify one book to review for scholarly publication and for presentation in the seminar. You should select the book you plan to review, and the outlet where you intend to submit the review, by no later than Monday, March 6. The book review will be turned in to me on Monday, April 3; students will present on the book that they reviewed during the seminar on that same day.

**Final Project:** Students will complete a final project for this course. The project should be aligned with your own scholarly agenda while also integrating knowledge attained over the semester. Potential final projects could include, for example: 1) a paper written for submission to a scholarly journal; 2) a research report; 3) an annotated bibliography; 4) a database of publically available datasets on disaster; 5) a compilation of research summaries for public distribution; 6) a series of infographics or other visual media; or 7) a research proposal. You will submit a 1-page summary of your proposed final project idea on Monday, February 13. Written updates on your final project will be shared in class on Monday, March 13 and Monday, April 17. The final project is due to my Sociology mailbox by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9.

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Provocations</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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**Total Points Possible** 515

**Statement on Class Attendance and Late Work:**
This graduate seminar meets only one time per week, and we will cover much material in each class session. Therefore, I expect that you will arrange your schedule so that you will attend every class in its entirety. Failure to attend a class session will result in a 10% reduction (one letter grade) of your final grade for the class. Exceptions to the aforementioned rule will only be granted in the case of a documented emergency or other legitimate professional reason. If you know that you are going to have to miss class, please contact me immediately so that we can make arrangements for you to complete an alternate assignment.

Assignments are considered late if they are not submitted by the time and date outlined in the syllabus. I will subtract 10% from your assignment grade for each day your assignment is late, starting with the time and day the assignment was due.

**Statement on Electronic Devices:**
I care deeply about this class, and as such, I want all of my students to be fully engaged in every minute of each seminar. You should turn off cell phones and other electronic devices at the beginning of class. I also ask that no laptops or tablets be used in the seminar room.

**Academic Integrity:**
Academic integrity is essential to the intellectual vitality of the university and the ideals of education. I expect students to be honest and to conduct themselves with integrity in all aspects of the course. Dishonest conduct—which includes cheating, plagiarizing, or lying for the purpose of influencing a grade or for other academic gain—undermines the educational experience and is simply not acceptable. Any student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to academic penalty and/or university disciplinary action.

**Accommodations:**
If you are a student who will need accommodations in this class, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. Any accommodation—related to disability, religious observance, extracurricular involvement, or otherwise—must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation.
## Course Outline:

### Week 1  
**January 23**  
**Introduction and Course Overview**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Welcome and self-introductions.
- Review syllabus. Discuss readings, assignments, expectations, objectives, and outcomes.
- Review course calendar and discuss graduation timelines.

**Required Reading:**
- Course Syllabus

### Week 2  
**January 30**  
**Definitions, Concepts, and Data Sources**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Sign up for weekly discussion leader role.

**Required Reading:**

**Further Reading:**

### Week 3  
**February 6**  
**The Emergence and Evolution of Disaster Research**

**In-Class Activities:**
- Share ideas for final project and discuss expectations.

**Required Reading:**
Further Reading:

Week 4  February 13  The Social, Cultural, and Organizational Production of Risk

Assignment Due:
- 1-page description of proposed final project.

Required Reading:

Further Reading:

Week 5  February 20  Resilience in Relation to Risk and Disaster Readiness

Guest Lecture:
- Kathleen Tierney, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Required Reading:

Week 6  February 27  Methods and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Disaster Research

In-Class Activities:
- Discuss book review assignment and review assignment guidelines.

Required Reading:
Further Reading:

Week 7 March 6 Ethics, Positionality, and Teamwork in Disaster Research
Assignment Due:
- Submit book title for review and outlet for eventual submission.

Required Reading:

Week 8 March 13 Community, Social Capital, and Civil Society in Disaster
Assignment Due:
- 2-page update on final project.

Required Reading:

Week 9 March 20 Social Vulnerability, Social Inequality, and Unequal Impacts
Required Reading:
Further Reading:


**Week 10**

March 27

**Spring Recess**

**Week 11**

April 3

**Book Reviews and Book Presentations**

**Assignment Due:**

- Book review.

**In-Class Activities:**

- Book review roundtable presentations.

**Week 12**

April 10

**Vulnerable Populations, Interventions, and Disaster Justice**

**Required Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


**Week 13**

April 17

**Disasters by Design**

**Assignment Due:**

- 3-page update on final project.

**Required Reading:**


**Week 14**

April 24

**Knowledge to Action Frameworks in Disaster Risk Reduction**

**Required Reading:**


Further Reading:

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<th>Week 15</th>
<th>May 1</th>
<th>Suffering and Social Change</th>
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<td><strong>Required Reading:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Finals Week</th>
<th>May 9</th>
<th>Final Research Projects Due</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment Due:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Please submit a hard copy of your final research project to my Sociology Department mailbox by no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9.</td>
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Additional Resources:

Natural Hazards Center Library: One of the nation’s largest hazards and disaster libraries is located at the Natural Hazards Center in the Institute of Behavioral Science at the University of Colorado. The non-lending library is open during regular university hours on weekdays. For individual appointments, please contact the library manager, Wanda Headley, at 303-492-5787 or by email at Wanda.Headley@colorado.edu.

HazLib: HazLib is the Natural Hazards Center’s online library catalog. It provides bibliographic access to the collection, and direct access to hundreds of titles. Anyone can access HazLib at: http://hazlib.colorado.edu/.

Journals: A number of hazards, disaster, and emergency management journals are available for your review and consultation. Some key titles include:

- Australian Journal of Emergency Management
- Disasters: The Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy and Management
- International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters
- Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management
- International Journal of Disaster Medicine
- International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction
- International Journal of Disaster Risk Science
- International Journal of Emergency Management
- Journal of Emergency Management
- Natural Hazards
- Natural Hazards Review
- Prehospital and Disaster Medicine
- Risk Analysis: An International Journal
- Risk Management: An International Journal