

Natural Hazards and Society (3)

This course offers an introduction to social science principles and methodologies to address critical questions relating to managing the risks of natural hazards.

COURSE LOGISTICS AND MEETING TIMES

214 EP (Engineering Physics)
T/TH 11:00AM – 12:15PM
08/24/2009-12/16/2009

PROFESSOR

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Office Hours: 2-4 Tuesdays or by Appointment

TEXTBOOK

The required textbook for Geography 404 is: *Natural Hazards: Earth's Processes as Hazards, Disaster, and Catastrophes 2nd Edition* / Edward A. Keller and Robert H. Blodgett. The text is on reserve in the Library. There will be additional texts posted on Blackboard that you are also responsible for reading.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Natural hazards are not simply a force of nature. Their impacts depend on the vulnerability of people, communities, and the economy. Social science also plays an important role in evaluating alternative mitigation and adaptation strategies. In some cases, this means lessening the physical stimulus through such measures as flood control projects, while in others it means guarding life and property through self-protection or insurance. Natural hazards raise important issues for individuals, private businesses, public utilities, government agencies, NGOs, and communities.

This course will provide students with a general overview of the geophysical processes of various natural hazards and an introduction to social science principles and methodologies to address critical questions relating to managing the risks of these natural hazards. Although the focus will be on economics, planning, and geography, this is a multidisciplinary topic, and so readings and lectures will also incorporate some critical aspects of natural and other social sciences.

Many poignant concerns have been brought out by recent catastrophes such as Hurricane Katrina. A major portion of the course will be devoted to analyzing the catastrophic character of recent events and

how they differed from ordinary hazards. Attention will be devoted to the many causes of each event, how it could have been prevented, its many impacts, and the individual and government response.

The course sessions will consist of lectures by the instructor, presentations by guest speakers, and various multi-media and classroom exercises designed to illustrate and reinforce content covered in this course.

PARTICIPATION

This course will be highly participatory and as such your attendance is critical not only to your individual performance but to the overall quality of everyone’s learning experience. There will be many opportunities for you to participate in classroom discussion and to express your opinion on various topics as such it is important for everyone to be respectful of our colleague’s opinions especially if they are different from our own. In any class there are bound to be individuals with different viewpoints about issues. It is up to the discretion of the professor as to what constitutes civil classroom behavior during discussion. Please feel free to express any opinion you may have but bullying of classmates in any manner during this course will not be tolerated.

The lecture topics and readings are found in the *Course Calendar*. To get the most out of this course, you should read the assigned material before coming to class.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND GRADES

Students are responsible for the following work (with percentages of their grades listed below):

Exam 1	(20%)
Exam 2	(20%)
Exam 3	(20%)
Disaster paper	(30%)
Participation	(10%)

GRADES

All grades in Geography 404 are based on the following percentages:

GRADE SCALE

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>% Range</i>
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
The Flag	Below 60

EXAMS

There will be three exams for GEOG 404. Students may have the entire class period to take each exam. The exams are **NOT** cumulative (covering the entire course). All exams will include material covered in the lecture including guest lectures, various multi-media and classroom exercises, and all course readings. **Caution:** There may be questions on the exams concerning material from the readings that was not covered in class. The exam schedule is:

- **Tuesday, October 5th Exam 1**
- **Thursday, November 11th Exam 2**
- **Wednesday, December 15th Final Exam**

Make-up exams. No make-up exams will be given in Geography 404 unless (1) *prearranged with the Instructor* 24 hours prior to the exam or (2) *resulting from a documented emergency* (such as an illness). **Documentation is necessary in any and every case.** For example, for a death in the family, a copy of the obituary with the student's name or of the death certificate is required (sorry but Disasters will already kill way too many good people this semester so I have to do my part to help keep some of them alive...don't kill grandma to get out of a test). *The exam will be a zero unless these conditions are met.* Any other excuses, such as oversleeping, getting the exam or quiz date wrong, having other tests or papers on the same day, or choosing to be out of town, are not valid. Extra assignments to compensate for poor exam grades are not available (Translation there will be NO extra credit offered in this course). **Make up exams, when offered, will be administered in full essay format.**

Accommodating Disabilities. The University of Idaho encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. Contact the instructor promptly at the outset of the course if you need any type of accommodation.

ASSIGNMENTS

Policy for Late Assignments. Late assignments will be penalized, so get in the habit of turning them in on time! Assignments turned in after the due date will be accepted for grading with a **10%** per day penalty (weekends count as one day). No assignment will be accepted if it is more than 2 weeks late. If the exercise is not handed in by this time, you will receive a grade of zero. It is your responsibility to ensure your assignments reach the instructor.

DISASTER PAPERS

Each person will prepare a ten-page paper on a natural disaster of their choosing. Students may *not*, however, choose Hurricane Katrina or the 2004 Asian Tsunami for this assignment.

The paper has three mandatory elements. One element is the physical and socioeconomic context of the natural disaster. If Hurricane Katrina were fair game, then the paper would include a description of the physical context and of the socioeconomic context of New Orleans before the storm. What were the physical and socioeconomic reasons that New Orleans was poised for disaster if exposed to a big storm? The second element is a description of the hazard event and disaster itself. In the case of Katrina, this element would entail a description of the storm, its landfall, the storm surge, the levee

failure, the evacuation (or lack of evacuation), the damages (including deaths, injuries, dollar amounts, etc.), and the aftermath of the storm. The third element is a description of the human dimensions of the disaster. Who was vulnerable and why? With Katrina, the poorest people were most vulnerable for many reasons—they lacked the resources to evacuate, they did not want to leave their possessions because they feared looting, they did not believe that they were vulnerable, and more. Each of these three elements should make up roughly one third of the paper, but the human dimensions of the disaster should receive more emphasis than the physical dimensions.

“Ten-page paper” means ten pages of text with 12-point font and one-inch margins. Papers must not be less than ten pages, but not more than 12 pages of text. Cover page, references list, figures, and tables are not part of the page count.

The disaster papers for this course involve a process. The steps involve:

- (1) Determining the natural disaster and doing a preliminary investigation to make sure that there is sufficient written material on the event
- (2) Meeting with the Instructor to discuss and obtain approval for the proposed disaster topic
- (3) Doing the research, and writing the paper

COURSE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Copying someone else's work verbatim without citation is plagiarism and will not be tolerated.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic 'F' for the assignment and/or the course grade, as well as a possible disciplinary action by the University. This consists of cheating on exams or plagiarism on papers, or misconduct on any other assignments. Plagiarism includes using another author's work as your own or fabricating information or citations in your paper.

The Professor will levy penalties for academic dishonesty in accordance with published university policies. Please read <http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/fsh/2300.html#ARTICLE%20II> for more information about what constitutes academic dishonesty.

BLACKBOARD

Course material such as, lectures and additional assigned readings will be available on blackboard each week. This material can be accessed at: <http://www.blackboard.uidaho.edu> (Login: UI Account & Password) (same as Novell). The user forum on blackboard is available for students to answer each other's questions regarding course content. Please note: This is not the appropriate place to ask questions regarding grades. Placing PowerPoint lectures and other course information on Blackboard is not done so with the intent to facilitate missing class. PLEASE do not attempt to use this material as a substitute for attending class.