

## Sociology 4037

### Hazards, Disasters, and Society: Selected Topics in the Sociology of Disaster Spring 2016

HLMS 141—Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:45

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Office Hours:  
Thursdays 2-3:15 in Ketchum 286  
and by appointment

**Course Description:** This is a course for advanced undergraduate sociology majors, but students from other fields are more than welcome to enroll. The course has five main objectives: (1) to familiarize students with theories, concepts, and methods related to the sociological study of hazards, disasters, and risk; (2) to illustrate how broader concepts in the field of sociology, such as social inequality, manifest themselves in disasters in the US and around the world; (3) to understand and critique original research on the social dimensions of disasters; and (4) to provide students with the intellectual resources needed to critically assess research, media accounts, popular culture, and political rhetoric related to disasters. This is not an introductory course on disasters. The course does not deal with every aspect of social science research on disasters, but rather is organized around a series of special topics that should engage and challenge advanced undergraduates.

This class is classified as a “seminar,” and everyone is expected to participate in class discussions. Simply coming to class and taking notes does not meet course requirements. Advanced sociology courses are not lecture courses. Your thoughtful participation is essential for the success of the course!

**Course Materials:** There are no textbooks required for this course. Course readings will be available through the Desire2Learn (D2L) web site. The books that you will be reviewing can be purchased on line or obtained from the library Please make sure that you are up to date on your weekly readings! You should read all assigned material for the week before coming to class on Tuesday.

**Book Reviews:** Each student will write **reviews** of two of the books listed below. In addition to the written review, students will also make **presentations** on the books toward the end of the semester.

Adams, Vincanne. Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith: New Orleans in the Wake of Katrina.

Browne, Katherine. Standing in the Need: Culture, Comfort, and Coming Home after Katrina.

Bullard, Robert and Beverly Wright. The Wrong Complexion for Protection: How the Government's Response to Disaster Endangers African American Communities.

Fink, Sherri. Five Days at Memorial.

Fothergill, Alice. Heads Above Water: Gender, Class, and Family in the Grand Forks Flood.

Fothergill, Alice and Lori Peek. Children of Katrina.

Erikson, Kai. Everything in its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood.

### **Important Information Sources for the Course:**

**Unique Resources Available at CU Boulder:** This campus is the best place in the country to study disasters. Boulder is home to the Natural Hazards Center, which since 1976 has collected and disseminated information on research on hazards and disasters, strategies for disaster loss reduction, and emergency management policy and practice. The Natural Hazards Center is located in the beautiful new Institute of Behavioral Science building at 15<sup>th</sup> and Grandview. The first floor of the building houses the Hazards Center library, one of the two largest resource collections in the world devoted to the social aspects of disasters. The library provides access to over 32,000 items, including books, journals, government reports, Natural Hazards Center documents and records, DVDs, and other media. The Center employs a full-time library manager, Wanda Headley, who can help you with your class work. The library phone number is 303-492-5787. Wanda's e-mail address is [wanda.headley@colorado.edu](mailto:wanda.headley@colorado.edu). The Center's web site <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards> is one of the world's most comprehensive web sites in the field of social science disaster research, policy, and practice. The web site contains a large amount of relevant information, such as annotated bibliographies and research reports, along with numerous links to other information sources. For examples, see the "Natural Hazards Observer," the "Disaster Research" newsletter, and "Quick Response Reports"—all available on the web.

### **Other Relevant Centers and Information Sources**

- Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware
- Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center, Texas A&M University
- Center for Public Health and Disasters, UCLA
- Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorist Events (CREATE), University of Southern California
- National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), University of Maryland
- Wharton Risk Management and Decision Processes Center, University of Pennsylvania
- Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute, University of South Carolina
- Center for Biosecurity, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- National Center for Disaster Preparedness, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
- Center for the Study of Natural Hazards and Disasters, University of North Carolina
- The Earth Institute, Columbia University
- National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder
- National Integrated Drought Information Service, NOAA, Boulder
- "America's Climate Choices" Study web site, National Research Council & National Academy of Sciences
- Social Science Research Council Hurricane Katrina archive and research projects
- Community and Regional Resilience Institute, Oak Ridge National Laboratory

## Specialty Journals

*International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters; Disasters: Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy, and Management; Natural Hazards Review; Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management; Disaster Prevention and Management; Population and Environment; Global Environmental Change; Prehospital and Disaster Medicine; Environmental Hazards; Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management; Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences; Global Environmental Change, Part B: Environmental Hazards; Organization and Environment*

## Sociology Journals

Articles on disasters and their impacts also appear in key sociology journals such as *Social Problems*, *Social Forces*, *Sociological Inquiry*, *Sociological Spectrum*, *Sociological Forum*, and occasionally in the *American Sociological Review*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, and *American Journal of Sociology*

## University Policies:

- **Anti-Discrimination Policy.** The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). 1 CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes, or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual, orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination-and-harassment-policy-and-procedures>
- **Classroom Learning Environment Policy.** Students and faculty each have a responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals on topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior>
- **Religious Observances:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please inform me in writing by the **end of the second week of class** if you will be unable to attend class or turn in assignments on time because of religious obligations and observances or athletic engagements so that we can work out a revised schedule with you to meet course requirements. [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac\\_religh.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_religh.html)

- **Students with Disabilities:** Please inform me in person by the **end of the second week of class** if you qualify for accommodations because of a disability. Please bring along a letter from Disability Services by then so that I can work with you to enable you to do your best in this course. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>). If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see guidelines at <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html>

- **CU Honor Code:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council and those students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member involved and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion) <http://honorcode.colorado.edu/>

Cheating and plagiarizing will result in a failing grade for the assignment, the course, or both. The student(s) will also be reported to the Honor Code Council (even for a first offense). To be clear, plagiarism refers to using the work, ideas, or knowledge of other people as your own. It includes all forms of exam or quiz cheating, using other people's work, copying all or sections of papers from the web, and "borrowing" (without citing) from published sources. If you are unclear about the rules regarding plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, please consult me immediately. Whether through office hours, e-mail, or a scheduled appointment, I am available if you need an assignment explained, writing suggestions, etc. Frequent violations include "overlooking" necessary citations, cheating on an exam, and completing a quiz for someone else.

- Sexual harassment is not tolerated. For more information on maintaining a fair and safe environment and sexual harassment policies and reporting see [www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment](http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment) or call the Office of Sexual harassment at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.
- The Writing Center: Meet one-to-one with a writing consultant for sound advice at ANY stage of your writing process. Consultants teach you strategies to formulate and organize strong thesis statements, use and cite evidence appropriately, master style and grammar, and overcome writing anxiety. Services are free to all CU students. Please visit <http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html> The Writing Center is located in Norlin Library, Room E-156. For more information on the Writing Center please email [wrtghelp@colorado.edu](mailto:wrtghelp@colorado.edu) or call (303)735-6906. When you leave the University and begin your career, you will find that it's a tremendous advantage to be able to write well. Take advantage of the resources of the Writing Center now, while you can!

- **CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

1. This is a 4000-level course, so you should expect to be challenged in this class both in the reading assignments and the level of engagement expected from you. Class will consist of varying combinations of lectures, discussions, and films. Some classes will be spent going over readings, sometimes in detail, while others will focus on other material. **You are expected to have done the reading for each week before the Tuesday class.**
2. All phones and devices must be switched off before class begins. Text messaging during class

time is unacceptable. Laptop use is permitted in this class. However, your use of a laptop should NOT to be a distraction to your peers.

3. You are expected to come on time and to stay until the end of the allotted period unless you have excused yourself ahead of time. You do not need to raise your hand to use the restroom.
4. If you experience technical problems with D2L, please call ITS at 303-735-4357.
5. You are responsible for keeping track of all announcements and syllabus changes made in class whether you are there or not.
6. You are responsible for turning in assignments on time. Please turn in hard copies of your assignments during class, rather than e-mailing them to me.
7. I expect you to attend every class. Please let me know in advance if you know you are missing a class ahead of time due to an athletic engagement, religious observance, court appearance, or family death on a date that we have an assignment due, have a guest speaker, etc. We will discuss an alternate due date. I will require the following documentation:

**Athletic engagement:** Letter from coach on letter head paper (letter with missed date(s) required by the end of the second week of class).

**Religious observance:** Letter from student noting religious affiliation, the date and name of the observance (letter with missed date(s) required as student is aware of event).

**Court appearance:** Letter of jury duty or court appointment letter with specific dates that you will be absent from class. However, it is none of my business *why* you have a court appearance, so please delete information of that nature.

**Incapacitating illness:** Doctor's note on letter head paper with specific dates that student will be/was absent from class and will be unable to complete/turn in the assignment.

**Family Death:** Letter from family member with specific dates that student is absent and will be unable to complete/turn in the assignment as well as funeral information.

Excused late assignments or class absences for the last 2 emergency situations require:

An email sent to me within one week of the event occurrence

Documentation of the absence (with specific dates) attached to the assignment

## **GRADES:**

### **Basis for Grades:**

- 1) Attendance and quality of class participation, including leading discussions
- 2) Quality of the three reaction papers you will write during the semester
- 3) Quality of class presentations on the books you have read
- 4) Quality of the two book reviews you will write during the semester

**Due dates for reaction papers and book reviews are specified in the syllabus.**

Please contact me right away if you become concerned about your grade. I'm here to help!

**Course Outline:**

**Week of January 11:**

Introduction. Course overview and discussion of requirements. Basic concepts: What is a disaster? Disaster characteristics and typologies. Phases of the disaster cycle. What do disaster scholars study?

**Week of January 18**

History of the field of social science disaster research. Why do disasters happen? Evolution of theories and concepts: systems theory; social vulnerability and vulnerability science; political economy/political ecology. Disasters and broader social and environmental processes.

Tierney, "From the Margins to the Mainstream: Disaster Research at the Crossroads"; Cutter, Boruff, Bryan, and Lynn, "Social Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards" (Tuesday); Pelling, "Cities as Sites of Disaster"; Tierney, "Communities and Societies at Risk" (Thursday)

**Week of January 25:**

When disaster strikes: Myths and realities of public disaster response

Readings: Clarke, "Panic: Myth or Reality?"; Clarke and Chess, "Elites and Panic" (Tuesday and Thursday)

**First reaction paper due in class, Thursday, January 28**

**Week of February 1:**

Public and organizational responses to disaster: Improvisation and creativity

Readings: "Occupy Sandy: A Movement Moves to Relief"; Wachtendorf and Kendra: "Improvising Disaster in the City of Jazz," available at

[http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Wachtendorf\\_Kendra/index.html](http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Wachtendorf_Kendra/index.html) not on D2L (Tuesday)

Film: *9/12: From Chaos to Community*

**Week of February 8:**

Social inequality and disasters. Disparities in disaster vulnerability and impacts: gender

Tierney, "Social Inequality, Hazards, and Disasters" Enarson, "Identifying and Addressing Social Vulnerabilities" (Tuesday); Readings: Enarson, Fothergill, and Peek, "Gender and Disaster: Foundations and Directions"; Ariyabandu, "Gender Issues in Recovery from the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami" (Thursday)

**Week of February 15:**

Disparities in disaster vulnerabilities and impacts: class, race, and ethnicity

Reading: Bolin, “Race, Class, Ethnicity and Disaster Vulnerability” (Tuesday)

**Second reaction paper due in class on Thursday, February 18**

**Week of February 22:**

The lived experience of disaster survivors: Hurricane Katrina

*Film: When the Levees Broke*

**Week of February 29:**

Disaster resilience. Resilience defined. Forms and dimensions of resilience.

Reading: Cutter, Burton, and Emrich, “Disaster Resilience Indicators for Benchmarking Baseline Conditions”; Tierney, “Defining Resilience in Relation to Risk” (Tuesday and Thursday)

**Week of March 7:**

Disaster recovery: What do we mean by disaster recovery? What factors influence recovery?

Reading: Phillips, “Frameworks and Approaches to Disaster Recovery”; Peek, “They Call it ‘Katrina Fatigue’: Displaced Families and Discrimination in Colorado” (Tuesday)

*Film: A Village Called Versailles*

**Week of March 14:**

Climate change, hazards, and disaster vulnerability: What do we know? The climate change denial industry.

Readings: Harlan et al., “Neighborhood Microclimates and Vulnerability to Heat Stress”; Weart, “Global Warming: How Skepticism Became Denial” (Tuesday and Thursday)

**Third reaction paper due in class Thursday, March 17**

**Week of March 21:**

**No classes—spring break**

**Week of March 28:**

Disasters and the mass media: Reporting on and framing disasters

Solnit, "When the Media is the Disaster"; Tierney, Bevc, and Kuligowski, "Metaphors Matter"; Hannigan, Mass Media and the Politics of Disaster" (Tuesday and Thursday)

**Week of April 4:**

Focus on the BP Deepwater Horizon accident and oil spill disaster: Guest lecture by Prof. Duane Gill on the BP disaster and its consequences.

Reading: Gill, Picou, and Ritchie, "The *Exxon Valdez* and BP Oil Spills: A Comparison of Initial Social and Psychological Impacts"

*Film: The Spill*

**Week of April 11:**

Organizations and disaster risk: How and why do accidents like the BP spill happen?

No readings for this week.

**First book reviews due in class on April 14**

**Week of April 18:**

Student presentations and discussions of books

**Week of April 25:**

Student presentations and discussions of books

Our last class is on April 28<sup>th</sup>!

**Second book reviews due in class on April 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Instructions for Reaction Papers and Book Reviews**

**Reaction papers:** Your reaction papers should be three double-spaced pages in length. The paper should focus on one of the scholarly articles or book chapters assigned for the course; media articles should not be used. Your paper should include discussions on the following: the main topic or research question the reading addresses; the research approach(es) used; the main findings and key points; and how the findings relate to other material covered in *this class or other classes you have taken*.

**Book reviews:** Each student will write two reviews of books he/she has selected. Book reviews should be approximately eight double-spaced pages in length. Each book review should discuss the following: the disaster event or condition focused on in the book; authors' key theoretical and research concerns and the research questions the book sought to address; the methods used; the key findings; the strengths and weaknesses of the book; and how the book is relevant to topics covered in this class. Regarding strengths and weaknesses, for example, is the author's intent clear? Are the methods sound?



Is the book written in a compelling and convincing way? Did reading the book help you to better understand the social aspects of disasters? Books may already have been reviewed by others; these reviews appear in sociological journals like *Contemporary Sociology* and other journals, as well as in press sources such as the *New York Times Book Review*. You will be able to see what others have said about the book. Feel free to refer to those reviews in your own review, but make sure you cite the original reviews and include them in a list of references.

**Note:** The quality of your writing will count in all written assignments. You will be graded on organization, grammar, punctuation, and the soundness of your arguments.