

Sociology 4037

Hazards, Disasters, and Society: Selected Topics in Research, Practice, and Policy Spring 2015

HLMS 241—Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:45

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Office Hours: Thursday
12:30-3 in IBS 1B31
and by appointment any time

Natural Hazards Center Web Site: <http://www.colorado.edu/hazards>

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 enable students to learn about and access a wide array of information sources related to hazards, disasters, and risk; 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.

Even though this is a relatively large class, it 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 and other materials, including PowerPoint lecture materials, will be available through the Desire2Learn (D2L) web site. 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. **Please note:** Even though some trees will die as a result, you should print out readings and keep them in a notebook along with your class notes. This is because you will not be permitted to use computers during the exams.

On most Thursdays, unless there are guest speakers, the last 30 minutes of class will be set aside for group discussion on the week’s readings. Students will be asked to volunteer to lead the group discussion and will receive 5 points of credit for doing so.

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 Institute of Behavioral Science building at 15th 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

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."

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 Earth Institute
- Center for the Study of Natural Hazards and Disasters, University of North Carolina
- 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). 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_relig.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 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 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. As this is a 4000-level course, 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, guest discussion facilitators and multi-media presentations. 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 be a distraction to your peers. **Research, some of it conducted right here at CU Boulder, shows that those who use devices in class score one-half to one full letter grade**

lower than their peers who refrain from the use of phones and computers. Be present!!

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. Announcements are often made at the beginning of class. In addition, you are responsible for getting lecture material, class assignment sheets and handouts you missed from D2L and/or your classmates and not from me. Office hours will not be spent going over lectures you missed.
6. You are responsible for turning in assignments on time. Your course paper is due in **hard copy** at the beginning of class. No emailed papers will be accepted. You cannot leave it in my mailbox in the Sociology office. Papers that are turned in after the due date will lose one-half of a letter grade for each day the paper is late.
7. I expect you to attend every class. Attendance will be taken randomly during the semester and will count toward your grade. 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

8. **Note regarding email:** I am more than willing to answer questions via email as long the as answers to your questions cannot be found in the syllabus. However, grades cannot be discussed over e-mail.
9. **Partner up!**
I suggest that you obtain the contact information of a few of your classmates. As soon as possible, make a list of your class contacts. You should consider those on this list as resources for notes, questions, and group study sessions.

GRADES:

Basis for Grades:

- 1) Exams—80 points. There will be a midterm and a final examination for the course. The midterm will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. The final will be an essay exam that will be given on the last day of class. Each exam is weighed equally. Both exams will be open-book and open-notes—but computers cannot be used.
- 2) Quizzes—40 points. There will be four 10-point multiple choice/true-false/essay quizzes at different points during the semester. Quizzes will not be announced and cannot be made up. Miss a quiz, lose 10 points.
- 3) Independent research and writing assignment—30 points. The writing assignment is a ten-page, double-spaced paper on the sociological aspects of a major disaster. The paper must contain a discussion of **a minimum of three scholarly articles/books** that deal with some aspect of the disaster event that is relevant to the sociological study of disasters. Mass media, government, and other sources should be used in addition to scholarly sources. Paper topics can include warning and evacuation, post-disaster responses; post-disaster temporary and permanent housing; differential disaster vulnerability (deaths, injuries, other losses); psychological impacts; post-disaster recovery planning; and other topics like those covered in the course. Your paper should focus on one of the following events: the Loma Prieta earthquake (1989); Hurricane Andrew (1992); the Northridge earthquake (1994); the Kobe (Japan) earthquake (1995); the 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center; the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004); Hurricane Katrina (2005); the Haiti earthquake (2010); the Great Tohoku (Japan) earthquake (2011); or the BP oil spill (2011).

Due dates for your description of your paper topic, your paper outline, and the final paper are specified in the syllabus.

- 4) Five extra-credit points. Students can receive credit for leading weekly discussions.

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

Grade Breakdown (consistent with University policy)

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Grade</u>
94% to 100%	A	74% to 76%	C
90% to 93%	A-	70% to 73%	C-
87% to 89%	B+	67% to 69%	D+
84% to 86%	B	64% to 66%	D
80% to 83%	B-	60% to 63%	D-

77% to 79%

C+

Below 60%

F

Course Outline:

Week of January 12:

Introduction. Discussion of student and instructor goals for the course. Course overview and discussion of requirements. Basic concepts: What is a disaster? Disaster characteristics and typologies. Phases of the disaster cycle. Disciplines involved in the study of hazards and disasters.

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

Cutter, Boruff, Bryan, and Lynn, "Social Vulnerability to Environmental Hazards"; Tierney, "From the Margins to the Mainstream?"

Week of January 19

Theories (cont'd.) Additional theoretical insights: Disasters and broader social and environmental processes.

Pelling, "Cities as Sites of Disaster"; Tierney, "Communities and Societies at Risk"

For discussion this week: What is disaster vulnerability? What produces vulnerability? Looking at this week's readings, were there things that surprised you?

Week of January 26:

Risk Perception: What worries us, and why?

Reading: Slovic, "Trust, Emotion, Sex, Politics, and Science: Surveying the Risk Assessment Battlefield"

When disaster strikes: Myths and realities of public disaster response

Readings: Clarke, "Panic: Myth or Reality?"; Clarke and Chess, "Elites and Panic"

Week of February 2:

Public disaster response (Cont'd.)

Studying disasters: Guest speaker Elizabeth Bittel, sociology graduate student, discusses her research on disaster recovery in Sri Lanka, which was struck by the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004.

Readings: "The Cajun Navy;" New York Times, "Occupy Sandy: A Movement Moves to Relief"

Week of February 9:

Disparities in disaster vulnerability and impacts: gender, race, class, and ethnicity

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

For discussion: What connections do you see between what we're learning here about disparities and what you've learned in other courses?

One paragraph description of your independent research topic and paper due in class on February 12.

Week of February 16:

The lived experience of disaster survivors: Hurricane Katrina

Film: "When the Levees Broke"

For discussion: Reactions to the film. Connections between what's shown in the film and what we've learned in class so far.

Week of February 23:

Wildfire hazards, mitigation, and preparedness: a discussion with wildfire researcher Dr. Hannah Brenkert-Smith. Midterm prep.

Reading: Brenkert-Smith, "Building Bridges to Fight Fire"

Week of March 2:

Midterm Exam, in class, Tuesday, March 3

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

Reading: Cutter, Burton, and Emrich, "Disaster Resilience Indicators for Benchmarking Baseline Conditions"

For discussion: What attributes and factors make individuals, groups, and communities resilient in the face of disasters? Can resilience for disasters help with other kinds of social stresses?

Week of March 9

Disaster resilience (Cont'd.) Discussion with Greg Guibert, Boulder's Chief Resilience Officer

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"

Week of March 16:

Hurricane Katrina: An extended family's early recovery experiences

Film: "Still Waiting"

Discussion with anthropologist and film maker Prof. Kate Browne, Colorado State University, who will talk about how this large family progressed through the recovery process

Paper outline due in class on Tuesday, March 17, with list of references. Outlines will be reviewed and returned with comments after spring break.

Week of March 23:

No classes—spring break

Week of March 30:

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

Disasters and the media

Readings: Harlan et al., "Neighborhood Microclimates and Vulnerability to Heat Stress"; Weart, "Global Warming: How Skepticism Became Denial"; Solnit, "When the Media is the Disaster"; Tierney, Bevc, and Kuligowski, "Metaphors Matter"

Week of April 6:

Organizations and disaster risk: How and why do accidents happen?

No readings this week.

Week of April 13:

Focus on the BP Deepwater Horizon accident and oil spill disaster: Guest lecture by Dr. Liesel Ritchie on the BP disaster and its consequences.

Film: "The Spill"

Readings: Ritchie, Gill, and Picou, "The BP Disaster as an Exxon Valdez Rerun"; Gill, Picou, and Ritchie, "The Exxon Valdez and BP Oil Spills: A Comparison of Initial Social and Psychological Impacts"

Week of April 20

Emergency and disaster management: History, programs, professions

No readings for this week

Papers due in class on Tuesday, April 21.

Week of April 27

Course wrap-up

Final exam in class on the last day of classes—April 30.