INTD 352 Disasters and Development Fall 2019

Class time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:35–3:55
*(From 24 September onwards, lectures will run from 3:05-3:55)*
Room: MacDonald Engineering Building (ENGMD), RM 276.
Instructor: Dr. Blair Peruniak (blair.peruniak@mcgill.ca)
Office hours: Tuesdays, 10:30-12:30, (or by appointment) – Peterson Hall, RM 244.
TA: Nicolas Parent (nicolas.parent@mail.mcgill.ca),
Office hours: Thursdays, 11:00-12:00 Peterson Hall, RM 244.

Course description

Every year, thousands of people die in disasters, millions are displaced, and billions of dollars are lost in damages. Are these disasters *natural*? Are they temporary if tragic ruptures in the development process, or signs of the failure of mainstream development? Through interdisciplinary investigation and a wide range of case studies spanning the global South and North, this course will examine how disasters shape and are shaped by socio-economic conditions, inequalities and development processes. It will analyze disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts from the global to local levels, focusing on their social and political dimensions. It will also explore survivors’ perspectives and experiences, including as reflected in ethnographies, oral histories and film. Particular attention will be paid to questions of accountability and justice, including in recovery and reconstruction processes, and in relation to the effects of climate change.

Learning objectives and approach

This course is organized in five parts:

- Part I: Disaster Studies, the ‘Social Turn’, and the ‘Not Yet Impossible’
- Part II: Exploring Core Concepts and Planning for Disaster
- Part III: International Interventions and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Part IV: ‘Leave No One Behind’
- Part V: Accountability and Social Movements

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, how disasters shape and are shaped by socio-economic conditions, inequitable power distributions, development processes, and the media;
- Critically analyze disaster mitigation, planning, preparedness, response and recovery efforts, at intersecting local, national and international levels;
- Develop and present persuasive oral and written arguments on disasters and their impacts, drawing on insights from recent and historical cases; and
- Identify tools and develop critical skills necessary for predicting and planning for future disasters.
Required readings

Required readings are identified below. All required readings (journal articles and e-book chapters) can be accessed via the McGill Library website and/or MyCourses.

Important dates

03 September Course begins
09 September Minerva Registration for Conference sessions open at 9AM
24 September Conferences begin this week – lectures run from 3:05-3:55.
15 October No Class
17 October Questions distributed for the Mid-term (take home) exam
22 October Mid-term Exams Due
28 November Last Class/Final Research Papers Due

Assignments and Assessment

10% Participation
25% Presentation
25% Mid-term Exam (take home)
40% Final Research Paper

Assignment Instructions and Evaluation Criteria

Participation (10%)

At the end of each class, students will be invited to enter a critical reflection on the course lecture/material for that day on mycourses (approximately 5 min). All entries must be submitted during class time, preferably during the allotted time. (Alternatively, students may choose to write their reflections legibly on paper and submit them at the end of class to the course instructor.) Over the span of the semester, students are expected to submit a total of 5 critical reflections. Reflections that cite or otherwise engage with course materials are strongly encouraged. These reflections will be graded on a simple pass/fail basis to be assessed as a whole at the instructor’s discretion at the end of the course. If you choose to submit more than 5 critical reflections, the best 5 will be used for the course assessment.

Any remaining time (approximately 5-10 min.) will be devoted to questions and group discussion.

Presentation on Disaster Planning (25%)

In teams of three (maximum), prepare a minimum 10-minute and maximum 12-minute oral presentation in English that explains a strategy or plan to prevent, mitigate, or otherwise prepare for a (plausible) hypothetical future disaster that you anticipate between 2020 and 2100. A very
general description of the hypothetical disaster scenario should be identified by the team and confirmed with our TA in advance of the presentation.

The presentations will be assessed by Our TA. Teams will be formed in the second conference of the term. Each student will attend 9 conferences over the course of the term. Conferences start the week of September 24 and finish the week of November 19. Our TA will take attendance at the start of each conference. Absences will only be excused for medical issues or family emergencies, with appropriate documentation provided.

*NB.: More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for this assignment.

Presentations must:

- Provide a brief overview of the hypothetical anticipated future disaster scenario (i.e., essential background information);
- Develop a plan in anticipation of the hypothetical disaster, clearly indicating how the plan is intended to prevent, mitigate the effects of, or otherwise prepare for the disaster.
- Identify an historical analogue (a previous disaster or disaster-like event) that could help to guide your intervention strategy.
- All team members must participate actively in delivering the presentation.

Marking Guide:

12.5 points Effective communication of ideas

- Logical organization of ideas/structure
- Appropriate use of visual or oral learning aids
- Effective division of labour between participants
- Ability to communicate and engage with the class

12.5 points Understanding of the topic, analysis and argument

- Clear explanations of the disaster scenario, preparedness plan, and historical analogue
- Clear structure and implementation of disaster preparedness strategy
- Articulation of insightful observations regarding specific planning issues, critical uncertainties, responses to audience questions.

Mid-term (Take-Home) Exam (25%) Deadline: 3:05 PM, Tuesday October 22.

Five short-essay questions will be distributed on Thursday October 17th at the end of class. The midterm is due at the beginning of the following class on Tuesday October 22nd. Students will choose ONE of five questions to answer based on the assigned readings. The questions will cover the topics addressed in the first 13 classes. The question the student is answering must be clearly identified to avoid penalties.
Your exam answer should be maximum 4 pages, double spaced. In text citations only (Author Year: Page #). Cite only from course readings. All footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies are prohibited. There is no need to cite or to quote information taken from the course lectures.

The mid-term will not be rescheduled. Any students requiring special arrangements for completing tests are requested to promptly contact the Office for Students with Disabilities.

Marking Guide:

7.5 points Effective communication and argumentation
- Clear and logical organization and communication of ideas
- Structure of the argument clearly indicated in introduction
- Pertinent examples (where relevant)

7.5 points Understanding of key concepts, theories and studies
- Demonstrated command of the relevant literature
- Critical engagement with the relevant literature and debates

10 points Analysis and argument
- Articulation of a clear thesis, demonstrating critical engagement with the test question and relevant materials
- Development of a well-supported argument in response to the chosen exam question

Final Research Paper (40%) Deadline: 3:05 PM, Thursday, 28 November

Each student will complete a research paper to be submitted at the start of class on Thursday 28 November. The research paper should be a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 8 double-spaced pages (using 12-point Times New Roman font and standard 1-inch margins), excluding the bibliography. Citations should be in-text, following a standard academic format, e.g. Chicago. The pages must be numbered. The paper should have a clear title, and engage at least eight relevant, peer-reviewed scholarly sources.

The paper should explore a clearly expressed research question related to disasters and development. The paper should involve careful independent research going beyond the material covered in lectures. The final research paper must:

- Define/discuss the key terms used in the paper
- Advance a clear argument effectively supported by empirical research and/or theoretical analysis (both the argument and the structure of the paper must be explicitly articulated in the introduction to the paper)

*NB: Students must receive a passing grade on the research paper in order to pass the course. It is essential to understand and adhere to McGill’s policies on academic integrity (see below).
Marking Guide:

20 points  Effective Communication, Clarity, and Style

- Clear and logical organization of ideas (well-structured paper; structure of the paper is explicitly indicated in the introduction)
- The thesis identified in the paper is the thesis argued for in the paper
- The paper follows the structure identified in the procedural statement
- Pertinent examples
- Style, grammar and spelling
- Standardized referencing according to academic conventions
- Judicious use of quotes

20 points  Analysis and Argument

- Clear articulation of student’s position (thesis must be explicitly stated in the introduction)
- Understanding and application of relevant concepts, theories and literature
- Effective support provided for argument
- Claims supported by evidence and logical argumentation
- Quality of conclusions and/or recommendations
- Originality and insight
LECTURE PROGRAM

Part I: Disaster Studies, the ‘Social Turn’, and the ‘Not Yet Impossible’

Class 1: 3 September – Introduction to the course


Class 2: 05 September – The ‘Social Turn’ in Disaster Studies


Class 3: 10 September – Future Disasters and the ‘Not Yet Impossible’


Part II: Exploring Core Concepts and Planning for Disaster

Class 4: 12 September – Exploring Core Concepts in the “city care forgot”

*Documentary (96min): Trouble the Water. 2008. (Available on reserve in the library, or for rent through iTunes)

*Penner, D. and K. Ferdinand. 2009. Overcoming Katrina: African American Voices from the Crescent City and Beyond. London: Palgrave. Read “Introduction” (pp. xvii-xxv) and at least four narratives, one from each of the book’s four main sections: (i) Retirees; (ii) At the height of their careers; (iii) Thirty somethings; (iv) Coming of age.

Class 5: 17 September – Approaches to Disaster Planning (I)


Class 6: 19 September – Approaches to Disaster Planning (II)


Part III: International Interventions and Disaster Risk Reduction

Class 7: 24 September – Disaster Journalism and Social Media


Class 8: 26 September – The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction


* Fitzpatrick, Daniel and Caroline Compton. 2019. “Disaster Risk Reduction and the State: The

**Class 9: 01 October – Disaster Myths: Characteristics and Consequences**


**Class 10: 03 October – Public Health Emergencies: The HIV/AIDS Crisis**

*Documentary (65min.): *How to Survive a Plague.* 2013. (DVD available on reserve in the library, or for rent through iTunes)*


**Class 11: 08 October – Technology and Disasters (I): Energy Sources**


**Class 12: 10 October – Technological Disasters (II): Geoengineering**


Class 13: 17 October – Famine and Food Security


Class 14: 22 October - Forced Displacement


Class 15: 24 October – Rhetoric and Recovery (Part I)


Class 16: 29 November – Rhetoric and Recovery (Part II)


Part IV: ‘Leave No One Behind’

Class 17: 31 November – Development and Dispossession


**Class 18: 05 November – Social Isolation**


**Class 19: 07 November – Returning to Disaster**

*Documentary (70min.): *Babushkas of Chernobyl. 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBPIbFJeE98>*


**Class 20: 12 November – Disasters and Non-Humans**


**Part V: Rights, Justice, and Accountability**

**Class 21: 14 November – Authoritarian Responses to Disasters**


Class 22: 19 November – Gender and Disasters


Class 23: 21 November – Justice and Accountability


Class 24: 26 November – Disasters, Development, and Social Movements (I)


Class 25: 28 November – Disasters, Development, and Social Movements (II)


**General Instructions and Policies**

**Late policy**
Written work is due at the start of class on the specified due dates. Late papers will be subject to a 5% penalty per day, starting with the due date, except in exceptional cases (e.g. documented medical concerns and family emergencies), with the professor’s prior agreement. Extensions will not be granted in relation to deadlines or assignments in other classes, or extra-curricular commitments; it is the responsibility of each student to manage these obligations.

**Language**
In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

**Format and style**
Students are required to type their text in 12-point font with standard margins. Please double space the text. Use single spacing for block quotations, any explanatory footnotes and bibliographies. References and citations must follow a standard academic format; citations should be in-text.

**Mental Health**
All health and wellness services at McGill University have been integrated into our new Student Wellness Hub. Please visit the Virtual Hub for all health and wellness information, at <https://mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>.

**Special Needs**
As the instructor of this course I endeavour to foster an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, please do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities.

**Integrity**
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).
Relevant Journals

American Journal of Disaster Medicine
Management
Australasian Journal of Disaster and Trauma Studies
Australian Journal of Emergency Management
Climatic Change
Climate and Development
Climate Risk Management
Disaster Advances
Disaster Management & Response
Disaster Medicine and Public Health
Preparedness
Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal
Disasters
Earthquake Spectra
Ecology and Society
Economics of Disasters and Climate Change
Emergency Medicine Journal
Environment and Behavior
Environmental Hazards: Human and Policy Dimensions
Environmental Management
Environmental Sociology
European Journal of Emergency Medicine
Geomatics, Natural Hazards and Risk
Georisk: Assessment and Management of Risk for Engineered Systems and Geohazards
Global Environmental Change: Human and Policy Dimensions
Health in Emergencies & Disasters
Human and Ecological Risk Assessment: An International Journal
International Journal of Business Continuity and Risk Management
International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management
International Journal of Crisis Communication
International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment
International Journal of Disaster Response and Emergency Management
International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction
International Journal of Disaster Risk Science
International Journal of Earthquake and Impact Engineering
International Journal of Earthquake Engineering and Hazard Mitigation
International Journal of Emergency Management
International Journal of Emergency Services
International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters
International Journal of Natural Disasters & Health Security
International Journal of Wildland Fire
Jamba: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies
Journal of Business Continuity & Emergency Planning
Journal of Catastrophology
Journal of Climate
Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management
Journal of Critical Incident Analysis
Journal of Disaster Research
Journal of Earthquake Prediction Research
Journal of Emergency Management
Journal of Environmental Management
Journal of Extreme Events
Journal of Flood Risk Management
Journal of Geography & Natural Disasters
Journal of Integrated Disaster Risk Management
Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research
Journal of Natural Disaster Science
Journal of Risk Research
Journal of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering
Journal of Traumatic Stress
Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research
Landslides
Natural Hazards
Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences
Natural Hazards Review
Nature Climate Change
Population and Environment
Prehospital and Disaster Medicine
Progress in Disaster Science
Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy
Risk Analysis
Risk, Hazards, & Crisis in Public Policy
Science of Tsunamis Hazards
Traumatology