**INTD 397**  
Disasters and Development  
Fall 2018

**Class time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:35-9:55 (Lectures will run from 9:05-9:55 from 25 September onwards, with the exception of the mid-term exam)  
**Room:** MacDonald Engineering Building, room 276 (ENGMD 276)  
**Instructor:** Professor Megan Bradley ([megan.bradley@mcgill.ca](mailto:megan.bradley@mcgill.ca))  
**TA:** Cate Duin ([caitlyn.duin@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:caitlyn.duin@mail.mcgill.ca))  
**Office hours:** Tuesday, 10:30-12:30, Leacock 539 (or by appointment)

**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: Introduction – Creating disasters  
- Part II: Exploring core concepts in the “city care forgot” – New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina  
- Part III: International interventions  
- Part IV: Disaster dynamics and experiences  
- Part V: Recovery, risk reduction, accountability and justice

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, and development processes;  
- Critically analyze disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts, at intersecting local, national and international levels; and  
- Develop and present persuasive oral and written arguments on disasters and their impacts, drawing on insights from historical and recent cases.

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 September</td>
<td>Course begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 September</td>
<td>Conferences start this week, lecture runs from 9:05-9:55 from now on</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 October</td>
<td>No class</td>
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INTD 397: Disasters and Development (DRAFT—Subject to change)

23 October  Mid-term in-class test
18 November  Draft research essays to be emailed to peer review partner (with TA cc’ed) by noon, for discussion in conference
27 November  Research papers due at start of class
29 November  Last class
TBD  Final exam

Assignments and assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Participation in conference (including peer review of class member’s research essay)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Presentation in conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Mid-term in-class test</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Research essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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Further information on assignments, assessment and extra credit opportunities is available at the end of the syllabus.

Lecture program

Part I: Introduction – Creating disasters

Class 1: 4 September  
Introduction to the course

Class 2: 6 September  
What is a disaster?

Class 3: 11 September  
A tale of two disasters: Development dynamics in the 2010 Haiti earthquake and Japan’s 2011 “triple catastrophe”
Part II: Exploring core concepts in the “city care forgot” – New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina

Class 4: 13 September
Risk
• Documentary: Trouble the water (2008) (Available on reserve in the library, or for rent through iTunes)

Class 5: 18 September
Vulnerability
• D. Penner 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. (e-book)

Class 6: 20 September
Resilience

Part III: International interventions

Class 7: 25 September
Frameworks for international cooperation on disasters: Focus on Hyogo and Sendai

Class 8: 27 September
Humanitarian responses

Class 9: 2 October
“Dual disasters” and disaster diplomacy

Part IV: Disaster dynamics and experiences

Class 10: 4 October
Public health emergencies (I): The HIV/AIDS crisis
• Documentary: How to survive a plague (2013) (DVD available on reserve in the library, or for rent through iTunes)

Class 11: 9 October
Public health emergencies (II): Ebola

Class 12: 11 October
Emergence and impacts of technological disasters (I): Focus on Chernobyl

Class 13: 16 October
Emergence and impacts of technological disasters (II): Focus on Chernobyl
• Documentary: Babushkas of Chernobyl (2015) (DVD available on reserve in the library, streaming via the library’s Kanopy site, or for rent through YouTube or iTunes)

Class 14: 23 October (NB: The exam will run for the full class period, 8:35-9:55AM.)
In-class mid-term test (All students are expected to be in class to take the test at the scheduled time.)

Class 15: 25 October
Gender and disasters
INTD 397: Disasters and Development (DRAFT—Subject to change)


Class 16: 30 October
Famine

Class 17: 1 November
Displacement in disasters

Class 18: 6 November
Displacement as disaster: Relocation and resettlement in disaster risk reduction and development projects

Class 19: 8 November
Spectacle and invisibility: Representing disasters

Part V: Recovery, risk reduction, accountability and justice

Class 20: 13 November
Recovery and risk reduction (I): Building back better or reproducing risks?
Class 21: 15 November
Recovery and risk reduction (II): Focusing on participation

Class 22: 20 November
Memory, commemoration and loss

Class 23: 22 November
Responsibility and accountability for massive rights violations in disasters

Class 24: 27 November
Climate justice

Class 25: 29 November
Conclusion: Disasters and sustainable development revisited

Course Assignments and Evaluation Criteria

Participation in conferences (10%)
Active participation of all students is essential to a successful classes and conferences. Participation will be assessed on the basis of:
• Regular presence in conference (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. More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for participation.)
• Demonstrated preparation (required readings done, questions prepared on each reading)
• Active participation and contribution to discussion (attendance is not, in and of itself, sufficient for a good participation grade)
• Encouragement of participation of other students
• Timely completion of the peer review exercise (as per instructions below)

Conferences will, generally speaking, focus on material covered the previous week. There will be 9 conferences over the course of the term. Conferences start the week of 24 September, and finish the week of Nov 26; there will be no conferences the week of 22 October.

In the context of conference participation, each student will serve as a peer reviewer for another classmate’s draft research paper. The peer review exercise will take place the week of 19 November, in advance of the submission of the research papers at the start of class on 27 November. The TA will match up members of the conference for the purpose of the peer review exercise. Each student must email their peer reviewer a draft of their research paper by noon on Sunday November 18, with the TA cc’ed. In order to benefit fully from the peer review exercises, this should be a thoughtfully prepared, well-researched and carefully edited draft, with a precise research question, an explicitly stated thesis, and a clear structure (articulated in the introduction to the paper), drawing on a minimum of 8 relevant academic sources. In advance of the conference session, each peer reviewer will read their classmate’s draft, and prepare a minimum of one half-page of constructive comments. The comments should be sent to the author of the draft by email in advance of the conference session, with the TA cc’ed. In the conference, 20 minutes will be set aside for peer review pairs to meet, discuss their drafts and share constructive feedback (building on the points exchanged by email), with a view to further honing the research papers before submission on 28 November. Before the peer review exercise is completed, the professor will spend time in lecture discussing expectations in the peer review process, and how to serve as a collegial, supportive reviewer. Students will not receive a letter grade for their participation in the peer review process, but engagement in this exercise will inform the overall participation grade. Failure to complete the peer review exercise as per these instructions will result in a failing grade for participation.

**Presentation in conference (10%)**

In teams of max. 3 students per group, prepare a minimum 10-minute and maximum 12-minute oral presentation in English that explores a particular disaster situation, relevant to the conference session, in light of concepts/themes explored in the course. The case should be selected by the team and confirmed with the TA in advance of the presentation. In some cases, with the TA’s permission, it may be acceptable for a team to give a presentation on a case that has already been introduced in class or by a previous group, provided that the second presentation deepens rather than repeats the previous presentation. Generally speaking, however, teams should select cases that have not yet been covered in lecture or by other members of the conference.

Presentations should go beyond simply describing the case. They should engage the literature (including but not limited to the literature assigned for the conference session) to offer a clear argument and analysis of the case, deepening class members’ understanding of the concepts being discussed in the conference/course, and the case itself. Each team member must participate actively in delivering the presentation.

Presentations must include:

- A brief overview of the case (providing essential background information); and
- A focused analysis of the case, applying concepts and arguments from the course and relevant literature to advance a clearly expressed perspective;
- Questions to stimulate class discussion/reflection following the conclusion of your presentation.

The group case study presentations will be assessed by the TA. Teams will be formed in the first conference of the term.
Break-down of marks

8 points  Effective communication of ideas
- Logical organization of ideas/structure
- Clear explanations
- Appropriate use of visual or oral learning aids
- Ability to effectively communicate and engage with the class

12 points  Understanding of the topic, analysis and argument
- Explanation of relevant terms, concepts and debates
- Situation of the case in relation to the broader themes under discussion
- Clear argument and analysis of the case
- Appropriate engagement of concepts/arguments from the readings
- Articulation of insightful observations on the case
- Relevance and analytical depth of discussion questions

Mid-term in-class test (25%)
The mid-term tests will take place in-class on Tuesday 23 October. The entirety of the class will be devoted to the completion of the test (8:35-9:55). Any students requiring special arrangements for completing tests are requested to promptly contact the Office for Students with Disabilities. The mid-term will not be rescheduled; students are expected to be in class to take the test.

The test will consist of short essay questions covering the topics addressed in the first 13 classes. The test will be set out in two sections. The first part will include questions on material covered in Part I and Part II of the course (Classes 1-6). The second part will include questions on material covered in Part III and Part IV (classes 7-13). Students will be required to answer two questions, one question from the first part of the exam, and one question from the second part of the exam.

The question the student is answering must be clearly identified to avoid penalties.

Break-down of marks for each response

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 question

Research paper (25%)
Deadline: 10:05 AM, Wednesday 28 November
Each student will complete a research paper to be submitted at the start of class on Wednesday 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 academic 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).

**Break-down of marks**

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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Effective communication</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Clear and logical organization of ideas (well-structured paper; structure is explicitly indicated in the introduction)</td>
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<td>Pertinent examples</td>
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<td>Style, grammar and spelling</td>
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<td>Standardized referencing according to academic conventions</td>
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<table>
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<th>Points</th>
<th>Analysis and argument</th>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Clear articulation of student’s position (thesis must be explicitly stated in the introduction)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understanding and application of relevant concepts, theories and literature</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Effective support provided for argument</td>
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**Final exam (30%)**

The final exam will take place during the exam period (time/location TBD). Any students requiring special arrangements for completing tests are requested to promptly contact the Office for Students with Disabilities.

The test will consist of three short essays. Students may choose which essay questions they wish to complete from a list of questions that span the entire course, but are weighted towards topics covered after the midterm.

The question the student is answering must be clearly identified to avoid penalties.

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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Effective communication and argumentation</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Clear and logical organization and communication of ideas</td>
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<td>Pertinent examples (where relevant)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Understanding of key concepts, theories and studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Demonstrated command of the relevant literature</td>
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<td>Critical engagement with the relevant literature and debates</td>
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<th>Analysis and argument</th>
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<td>12</td>
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• Articulation of a clear thesis, demonstrating clear and critical engagement with the test question and relevant materials
• Development of a well-supported argument in response to the question

Extra credit opportunities

Course evaluations
In order to encourage the timely completion of course evaluations, each student will receive an extra 0.5% if at least 85% of enrolled students complete the on-line course evaluation on time. This will count toward participation grades. Please note that the participation grade is never to exceed the maximum percentage established for the course.

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 10% 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.

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).