

Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition
Summer 2016 Course Outline

McMaster University
Globalst 701, 1:00-4:00pm, May 9-20, KTH-709

Environment, Sustainability and Disaster

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Office hours: just following class and by appt.

Course description

Through examination of disasters in Fukushima, the Gulf of Mexico, Bhopal and elsewhere, this course builds analytic tactics for understanding and responding to disaster – recognizing that while catastrophic disasters are always shaped by very particular conditions and dynamics, they are also sobering in their predictability. The course also explores how disaster analytics advance understanding of *slow* disaster produced by climate change, toxic contamination, structural adjustment and other slow but forceful sources of vulnerability and injury.

Throughout the course, we will continually elaborate a set of questions that need to be asked to understand what causes disaster, what creates vulnerability to the effects of disaster, and how disaster often engenders a “second disaster” through flawed relief and rehabilitation initiatives. Our efforts will be informed by literatures in cultural anthropology and Science and Technology Studies (STS), and also by the now vast literature focused on human dimensions of climate change (which explores various ways of thinking about disaster mitigation, vulnerability, and coping strategies, at local, national, regional and global levels).

The course builds in many documentary films that are available online. We’ll watch them with “double vision”: to simulate ethnographic field work in contexts of disaster, and as reference points for discussing the challenge and politics of representing disaster. Many films and research articles will be annotated, using a structure that draws out critical perspective. We’ll also do a set of short research exercises that will give us perspective on the need for and challenges of disaster research and teaching.

We’ll also discuss possibilities for the [Disaster-STs Research Network](#), formed to bring together researchers from around the world, from many different disciplines, aiming to better coordinate efforts to understand, anticipate, prevent, and respond to disaster. A key goal of the network is to build an empirically rich, theoretically attuned, and comparative body of research on disaster, with practical relevance.

We will share course material at <http://thinkingthroughdisaster.wikispaces.com/home>.

**** SEE THIS WEBSITE FOR SYLLABUS UPDATES ****

Course credits and organization:

This course meets for 3 hours every week-day, May 9-20, with a work load equivalent to a 12-week (full term) course. Students will need to begin work prior to the start of the course to be adequately prepared. Assignments will include annotations of readings and films, and three short research exercises (including a brief plan for disaster teaching). Readings and assignments listed in the daily syllabus below should be completed prior to the class for which they are listed. Note that there are many, short, informal assignments instead of a major paper; throughout the course, you’ll build a portfolio of fieldnote-like writing about disaster. For most

class sessions, students are required to watch one film (usually about 60 minutes), and annotate two research articles. Additional readings listed are optional.

Course evaluation

8 film annotations	16%
12 article annotation	24%
3 research memos	30%
class participation	30%

Daily Syllabus

Please complete the work listed for each day prior to our class session on that day. For most class sessions, please watch and annotate one film, and read and annotate two research articles. You can select among the articles listed; additional articles listed are optional. Each annotation includes a slide that can be shared during our class session. For three sessions (Wed, May 11, Tues, May 17, Thurs, May 19), you'll submit short research memos instead of article annotations. Guiding structures for film and article annotations, and for researcher exercises are available on the course website.

Monday, May 9: *Disaster Experiences*

Please watch the films and read the articles listed below before our first class. Nothing written is due.

film

[BBC: One Night in Bhopal](#) (50 minutes)

[The Yes Men Fix the World](#) (90 minutes)

reading

Fortun, Kim. 2009. "Environmental Right-To-Know and the Transmutations of Law" in *Catastrophe: Law, Politics and the Humanitarian Impulse*, edited by Austin Sarat. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Erik R. Svendsen, Erik. et al. 2012. "[Epidemiologic Methods Lessons Learned from Environmental Public Health Disasters: Chernobyl, the World Trade Center, Bhopal, and Graniteville, South Carolina](#)," *International Journal of Environmental Research in Public Health*. 9(8): 2894–2909.

Fortun, Kim and Frickel, Scott: <http://fukushimaforum.wordpress.com/online-forum/making-a-case-for-disaster-science-and-technology-studies/>

Tuesday, May 10: *Disaster Research Genealogies*

Please annotate the film, and two of the articles listed below.

film

tba

reading

Kendra, J. and Nigg, J. 2014. "Engineering and the Social Sciences: Historical Evolution of Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hazard and Disaster." *Engineering Studies* 6: 134-158

Knowles, Scott. 2014. "Engineering Risk and Disaster: Disaster-STS and the American History of Technology." *Engineering Studies* 6: 227-248

Tierney, Kathleen J. 2007. "From the Margins to the Mainstream? Disaster Research at the Crossroads," *Annual Review of Sociology* 33:503-525.

Calhoun, Craig, 2004. "A World of Emergencies: Fear, Intervention, and the Limits of Cosmopolitan Order" *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*. 41(4): 373-395.

Comfort, Louise K. 2005. "Risk, security, and disaster management," *Annual Review of Political Science*. Vol. 8: 335-356.

Glik, Deborah C. 2007. "Risk communication for public health emergencies," *Annual Review of Public Health* 28:33-54.

Stephen Hilgartner, "Overflow and Containment in the Aftermath of Disaster," *Social Studies of Science* 37:1 (February 2007): 153-158.

Guggenheim, Michael. 2014. "Introduction: disasters as politics – politics as disasters," *The Sociological Review*. Volume 62, Issue S1, June 2014, Pages: 1–16.

Oliver-Smith, Anthony. 1996. "Anthropological research on hazards and disasters." *Annual Review of Anthropology*.25: 303-328.

Vaughan, Diane. 1999. "The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistakes, Misconduct and Disasters." *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 271-305.

Wednesday, May 11: Disaster Organizations

Please annotate the film listed below, and complete a short research memo about a disaster organization. See the course website for a guiding structure.

film

The Storm (50 minutes) (about organizational failure in response to Hurricane Katrina)

recommended

Tierney, Kathleen J. 2012. "Disaster Governance: Social, Political and Economic Dimensions," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 2012.

Elliot, Justin and Laura Sullivan. 2015. [How the Red Cross Raised Half a Billion Dollars for Haiti and only Built Five Homes](#). ProPublica. June

Elliot, Justin, Jesse Eisinger and Laura Sullivan. 2014. ["The Red Cross' Secret Disaster."](#) ProPublica. October 29.

National Science Foundation, 2001, "Disasters and Hazard Mitigation: Living More Safely on a Restless Planet," The National Science Foundation: America's Investment in the Future, 2000; <http://www.nsf.gov/about/history/nsf0050/pdf/mitigation.pdf>

Thursday, May 12: Disaster Talk

Please annotate the film, and two of the articles listed below.

film

[Chernobyl Heart](#)

reading:

Quarantelli, E.L. (ed). 1998. What is a Disaster? A Dozen Perspectives on the Question. London: Routledge.

----- . 1999 "What is a Disaster?" Anthropological Perspectives on a Persistent Question." In *The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by A. Oliver-Smith and S. Hoffman. New York and London: Routledge, 18-34

Rigg, Jonathan (2014) "The politics behind 'natural disasters', *Straits Times*, 10th November, A20.

Steinberg, Laura J., Hatice Sengul, and Ana Maria Cruz. 2008. "Natech Risk and Management: An Assessment of the State of the Art." *Natural Hazards* 46:143-152.

Rigg, Jonathan and K Oven (2015) "Building liberal resilience? A critical review from developing rural Asia". *Global Environmental Change*, 32, no. May: 175-186.

Button, Cat, Maria Adelaida Antonette Mias-Mamonong, Bernhard Barth and Jonathan Rigg (2013) "Vulnerability and resilience to climate change in Sorsogon City, the Philippines: Learning from an ordinary city?", *Local Environment* 18(6): 705-722.

Rigg, Jonathan and Salamanca, Albert (2009) "Managing risk and vulnerability in Asia: a 25-year village study from Thailand", *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 50(3): 255-270.

Clark, Nigel. 2014. "Geo-politics and the disaster of the Anthropocene," *The Sociological Review*. Volume 62, Issue S1, June 2014, Pages: 19–37.

Haraway, Donna. 2014. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene: Staying with Trouble." <http://vimeo.com/97663518>

Weichselgartner, Juergen, and Ilan Kelman. "Geographies of Resilience Challenges and Opportunities of a Descriptive Concept." *Progress in Human Geography*, February 7, 2014.

Alexander, D. E. "Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction: An Etymological Journey." *Natural Hazards and Earth System Science* 13, no. 11 (November 5, 2013): 2707–16.

Smithson, Michael. 1990. "Ignorance and Disasters" *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 8(3):207-235.

Hecht, Gabrielle. 2012b. "Nuclear Monads: A Look at the Subcontracted Heroes." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. Accessed September 2nd 2014. <http://thebulletin.org/nuclear-nomads-look-subcontracted-heroes>.

Friday, May 13: Disaster Criticism

Please annotate the film, and two of the articles listed below.

film

[TB Silent Killer](#)

reading

Lonngrogh, K., E. Jaramillo, B. G. Williams, C. Dye and M. Ravigloione. 2009. "Drivers of Tuberculosis Epidemics: The Role of Risk Factors and Social Determinants." [Soc Sci Med](#). 2009 Jun;68(12):2240-6. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.

[Rasanathan K¹](#), [Sivasankara Kurup A](#), [Jaramillo E](#), [Lönngroth K](#). 2011. The Social Determinants of Health: Key to Global Tuberculosis Control. [Int J Tuberc Lung Dis](#). 2011 Jun;15 Suppl 2:S30-6. doi: 10.5588/ijtld.10.0691.

Klein, Naomi. 2005. "The Rise of Disaster Capitalism." <http://www.thenation.com/article/rise-disaster-capitalism>

Smith, Neil. 2006. "There is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster." <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Smith/>

Bankoff, Greg. 2010. "No Such Thing as Natural Disasters." *Harvard International Review*, August 23. Accessed June 15, 2015., <http://hir.harvard.edu/no-such-thing-as-natural-disasters>.

-----2003. "Vulnerability as a Measure of Change in Society." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*. 21: 5–30.

Bond, David. 2013. "Governing Disaster: The Political Life of the Environment during the BP Oil Spill." *Cultural Anthropology* 28: 694–715.

Jauhola, Marjaana 2010. "When House Becomes Home"--Reading Normativity in Gender Equality Advocacy in Post-tsunami Aceh, Indonesia. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 14, 2 (2010): 173–195.

Pritchard, Sara. 2012. "An Envirotechnical Disaster: Nature, Technology, and Politics at Fukushima." *Environmental History*. 17(2): 219-243.

Beck, Ulrich. 1987. "The Anthropological Shock: Chernobyl And The Contours of The Risk Society." *Berkeley Journal of Social Sociology* 32: 153-165.

Monday May 16: Disaster Criticism

Please annotate the film, and two of the articles listed below.

film

tba

reading

Charles L. Briggs. "Theorizing Modernity Conspiratorially: Science, Scale, and the Political Economy of Public Discourse in Explanations of a Cholera Epidemic," *American Ethnologist* May 2004, Vol. 31, No. 2: 164-187.

Farmer, Paul. 1996. "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below." *Daedalus* 125 (1): 261-283.

Petryna, Andrea. 2004. "Biological Citizenship: The Science and Politics of Chernobyl-Exposed Population." *Osiris, Landscape of Exposure: Knowledge and Illness in Modern Environments 2* (19): 250-265.

Rajan, Ravi S. 2002. "Missing Expertise, Categorical Politics and Chronic Disasters: The Case of Bhopal." In *Catastrophe & Culture: The Anthropology of Disaster*, edited by Susanna Hoffman and Anthony Oliver-Smith, 237-259. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Samimian-Darsh, Limor. 2013. "Governing Future Potential Biothreats: Towards an Anthropology of Uncertainty." *Current Anthropology* 54 (1): 1-22.

Sternsdorff-Cisterna, Nicolas. 2015. "Food after Fukushima: Risk and Scientific Citizenship in Japan." *American Anthropologist* 117 (3): 455-467.

Anderson, B. 2010. "Preemption, precaution, preparedness: anticipatory action and future geographies," *Progress in Human Geography*, 34: p777-798.

Matsumoto, Miwao. 2013. "'Structural Disaster' Long Before Fukushima: A Hidden Accident." *Development & Society* 42: 165-190.

Oguma, Eiji. 2011. "The Hidden Face of Disaster: 3.11, The Historical Structure and Future of Japan's Northeast." *The Asia Pacific Journal*. 31(9)

Nixon, Rob. "Introduction: Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor." 2011.

Davis, Mike. "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn." *from Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*. 1998.

Ilana Feldman, "Difficult Distinctions: Refugee Law, Humanitarian Practice, and Political Identification in Gaza." *Cultural Anthropology*, 2007.

Frickel, Scott. 2008. "On Missing New Orleans: Lost Knowledge and Knowledge Gaps in an Urban Hazardscape" *Environmental History* 13(4):634-650.

Wynne, Brian. 1996. "May the Sheep Safely Graze? A Reflexive View of the Expert-Lay Knowledge Divide." In *Risk, Environment, and Modernity: Towards a New Ecology*, edited by S. Lash, B. Szerszynski, and B. Wynne. London: Sage, 27-83.

Redfield, Peter. 2008. "Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis." *Cultural Anthropology*. 20(3): 328-361.

Shun'ya Yoshimi, "Radioactive Rain and the American Umbrella." Trans. Shi-Lin Loh. *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 71, No. 2 (May) 2012: 1–13.

Tuesday, May 17: Disaster Mapping

Please complete a short research memo about the disaster vulnerability of a particular place. See the course website for a guiding structure.

Wednesday, May 18: Disaster Representations

Please annotate the film, and two of the articles listed below.

film

Darwin's Nightmare

reading

Kleinman and Kleinman. 1996. "The Appeal of Experience; The Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times." *Daedalus*, Vol. 125 (1): 1-23.

Jhala, Jayasinhji. 2004. "In a Time of Fear and Terror: Seeing, Assessing, Assisting, Understanding and Living the Reality of the Consequences of Disaster." *Visual Anthropology Review*. 20(1): 59-69.

Jones, Christopher F., Shi-Lin, Loh., and Kyoko Sato. 2013. Narrating Fukushima: Scales of a Nuclear Meltdown. *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* 7: 601-623.

Thursday, May 19: Disaster Literacies and Teaching

Please annotate the film listed below, and complete a short research memo about disaster teaching. See the course website for a guiding structure.

film

Children of the Tsunami

Friday, May 20: Disaster Research Networks

Please annotate two of the articles listed below.

reading

Buranakul, S., Grundy-Warr, K., Horton, B., Law, L., Rigg, J. and Tan-Mullins, M. (2005) "The Asian tsunami, academics and academic research", *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 26(2): 244-48.

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Beck, Ulrich. 2000. "Risk Society Revisited: Theory, Politics and Research Programmes." In *The Risk Society and Beyond: Critical Issues for Social Theory*, edited by Barbara Adam, Ulrich Beck, and Joost van Loon, 210-229. London: SAGE Publications.

Course policies

Academic Dishonesty

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Statement on Electronic Resources

In this course we will share course material at <http://thinkingthroughdisaster.wikispaces.com/home>.

Course Modification Statement

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-Mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html> *Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link.