

University of Western Ontario
Department of Geography
GEOG 2152F: Geography of Hazards
Fall 2013

Instructor: Mark Moscicki

Lectures: Wed 2:30 – 5:20 pm
UCC 56

E-mail: mmoscic@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Wed 5:30 – 6:45 pm
SSC 2223

Overview:

The course is a survey of the methods and models used to understand human responses to hazards. The tradition of hazards research in geography will be reviewed particularly through the lens of social science. The course will examine both natural and technological hazards and the models for understanding human influences on and responses to hazards.

Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to provide students with:

- an introduction to social science theories of hazards and case examples of disasters
- recognition of the risks to humans and the environment caused by hazardous events
- knowledge of hazard planning and management solutions
- enhanced geographic problem solving skills, map reading abilities, and geographic awareness

Readings:

A list of readings will be posted on the course website.

Assessment:

| <i>Assessment Method</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Value</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Discussion Questions | On-going | 10% |
| In-Class Assignments | On-going | 7% |
| Midterm Exam | Oct 23 | 28% |
| Essay | Nov 20 | 20% |
| Final Exam | TBA | 35% |

There are 10 discussion questions to be answered online within your discussion group. Questions are designed to encourage you to think critically about issues related to hazard risks and to share those thoughts and ideas among your group members. Answers to each question are due on Tuesdays at 11:55 pm. The first question will be posted on Sep 18.

The in-class assignments are practical applications of course content. More information about the essay will be provided throughout the semester. The midterm exam will cover material studied from Sep 11 through Oct 16. The final exam is heavily weighted toward material studied in the second half of the semester. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true or false, matching, and short answer questions.

Schedule:

| <i>Lecture</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Topic</i> |
|----------------|-------------|--|
| 1 | Sep 11 | Introduction |
| | | Overview of Hazards |
| 2 | Sep 18 | Disaster and Risk Research |
| | | <i>Assignment 1: Flood Risk Assessment</i> |
| | | <i>Video: Japan Tsunami</i> |
| 3 | Sep 25 | Tsunami |
| | | <i>Assignment 2: Tsunami Inundation</i> |
| | | Models of Human Response |
| 4 | Oct 2 | Risk and Culture |
| | | <i>Assignment 3: Landslide Risk</i> |
| | | Landslides |
| 5 | Oct 9 | Severe Weather |
| | | <i>Video: Hurricane Katrina</i> |
| 6 | Oct 16 | Human-Environment Relations |
| | | <i>Assignment 4: Environmental Change</i> |
| | Oct 23 | Midterm Exam |
| 7 | Oct 30 | Earthquakes |
| | | <i>Assignment 5: Hurricane Tracking</i> |
| 8 | Nov 6 | Volcanoes |
| | | <i>Video: Mt. St. Helens</i> |
| 9 | Nov 13 | Technological Hazards |
| | | <i>Assignment 6: Groundwater Contamination</i> |
| | | Pollution |
| 10 | Nov 20 | Wildfires |
| | | <i>Video: Firewars</i> |
| 11 | Nov 27 | Snow Avalanches |
| | | <i>Assignment 7: Snowpack Monitoring</i> |
| | | Social Unrest |
| 12 | Dec 4 | Pandemics |
| | | <i>Video: Chelyabinsk Meteor</i> |
| | | Meteorite Impacts |

Accessibility:

The University of Western Ontario is committed to achieving barrier free accessibility for everyone studying, visiting and working at the university. Please contact the instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make the course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at ssd@uwo.ca for any specific questions regarding an accommodation.

Accommodation Policy:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for missed exams or late essays must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home faculty and provide documentation to that office. Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for missed discussion questions or assignments must provide documentation to the instructor. For the University of Western Ontario policy on accommodation for medical illness and a downloadable Student Medical Certificate, see this link:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf

Academic Integrity:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a scholastic offense at this site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

All essays will be submitted to the plagiarism detection software Turnitin and will then be included as documents in the database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in essays subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the current licensing agreement between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.

Computer marked multiple choice exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate academic misconduct.

Electronic Devices:

No electronic devices other than calculators will be permitted during examinations.

Mental Health:

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources at the university to assist. Visit this site for more information on mental health resources:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/>

Support Services:

Registrarial Services: <http://www3.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm>

Student Development Services: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>