1. Textbook and Resource Material

Textbook

Resource Material
2. Course Description and Prerequisites

The course examines the relationship between disasters and society from a sociological perspective. Key themes involve preparedness, warning response, mitigation, social vulnerability, long- and short-term recovery, and international hazard management.

Prerequisites: 3 hours of sociology

3. Learning Objectives for the Course

After taking this Disasters & Society course, you should be able to demonstrate, through a sociological lens, understanding of:

(1) The concepts of hazards, risks, disasters, vulnerability, and resiliency;
(2) Various types of disasters and their impacts on society;
(3) The importance of addressing the needs of the populations affected by a disaster;
(4) Myths and realities regarding human behavior in catastrophic events;
(5) The key actors in the disaster management process, which constitutes mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery; and
(6) Problems associated with response, both, short-term and long-term recovery operations, in local and international settings.

5. Grading Policies

Grade points: This course consists of face-to-face lectures and small group discussions. There are three elements that contribute to your grade points; namely exams, assignments, and class participation. First, there are two exams in this course. The exams are based upon class lectures and the study materials provided such as presentation slides, videos, and required reading materials. Second, there are two assignments, one group assignment and one individual assignment. Third, your class attendance and class participation will be counted for grade points. The point distribution for the exams and group assignment are as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>200 (2 exams @ 100 pts each)</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual assignment</td>
<td>50 (1 assignment @ 50 pts each)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group assignment</td>
<td>50 (1 assignment @ 50 pts each)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30 (30 classes @ 1 pts each)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>330</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Final grade:** The grade scale will be based on the total points you earn at the end of the course (out of a total of 330 points) and is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>297-330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>264-296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>230-263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>198-229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your grade:** Your grade in this course will reflect your efforts in class participation, required reading, tests and assignments. To earn a good grade in this course, you should carefully follow instructions and announcements, take all exams at your best, do assignments and submit them on time, and actively participate in all class discussions. To receive a satisfactory grade in this course, students are encouraged to regularly attend classes, with minimal absences.

**Incomplete:** I do not give “I” (incomplete) grades, however, understanding that in some unusual circumstances, life emergencies may occur, I may assign an incomplete grade during the last quarter of a semester, if a student is unable to complete the course due to justifiable, documentable, and non-academic circumstances. These circumstances will be reviewed in a case by case basis, and are limited to significant illness or other emergency condition beyond your control.

**Grade appeals:** If you think your exam or assignment is not graded correctly, you must make an appeal within 7 days of receiving the grade.

6. Course policies

**Emails:** You are required to use UTRGV email, originating from UTRGV.EDU. I will not respond to emails sent from other accounts. To email Dr. Kyne, please use your UTRGV email and write “SOCl 1301.01” in the subject line of your email. I expect email communication in professional settings in this course. I believe that you must learn a proper form and way of communication in professional settings for your future success. It is important that your email must show respect and courteousness in tone and content. You must begin with a proper
salutation, e.g. Dear Dr. Kyne or Hi Dr. Kyne, and a proper ending, e.g. Sincerely, John Doe or Thank you, John Doe). In addition, you must NOT use text-messaging and incomplete sentences in your content. If your email does not have the required format mentioned, I will not respond to your email.

**Electronic devices:** My goal is to encourage you to engage in class activities and discussion. To achieve this goal, your electronic devices including smart phones and computers must not be used in class.

**Class participation:** Students are expected to read study materials before and must be prepared to engage in class learning activities.

**Guest speakers:** To enrich the practical knowledge of disaster management, five guest speakers who are in the disaster management profession from local, county, federal agency and non-government organization are invited to speak, on various dates, throughout the course. They will provide a 45-minute presentation on the topic relevant to the course (see table below). Their presentation topics are described in the calendar activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guest speaker</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shwan Snider</td>
<td>City of Edinburg, Texas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/9/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin Migues</td>
<td>Salvation Army, Texas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/16/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardo Saldana</td>
<td>Hidalgo County, Edinburg, Texas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/23/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Canterbury</td>
<td>City of McAllen, Texas</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3/22/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Hannes</td>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4/12/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exams:** There are two exams in this course. Each exam consists of 50 items multiple choice, or true or false questions; each question is worth 2 points. The exams are not cumulative, each exam covers chapters learned prior to the exam.

**Missing an exam:** If you are not able to take the exam due to any reason, you are required to inform the instructor via email within seven days. If there is a documentable, instructor-approved reason for missing the exam, you will be provided with another opportunity to make-up the exam. However, students are strongly encouraged not to miss any of the exams.

**Individual assignment:** Students will be individually assigned a research article on 02/20/2016. You are required to read and write a page summary of the article. You will submit the article no later than 03/20/2016.

**Group assignment:** Students will form a group of no less than three, but no more than 13 groups. You are required to work on a group project in which you will study assigned article(s) (see table below). You will be asked to write a page summary of the assigned article as well as present orally in class, for a 20-minute presentation. You are required to submit your summary page and presentation PowerPoint slides a day prior to being assigned your presentation on Blackboard. Your oral presentation will be evaluated by your peer groups during your presentation in class.
Late submission: No late assignments are accepted for this course.

Important dates: The schedule for the exams and group assignment are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>03/08/2016</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/20/2016</td>
<td>Individual assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/10/2016</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Calendar of Activities

Week 1 (1/19/2016)

Introduction to Disaster Response and Recovery
Chapter 1 “Knowing What to Expect”
   Session 1: Overview of course
   Session 2: The nature of disasters
   Session 3: The need for response and recovery operations
Week 2 (1/26/2016)

The Actors Involved in Response and Recovery
Chapter 2 “Understanding the Actors”
  Session 4: Activities of local, state and federal government
  Session 5: Roles of businesses and non-profits
  Session 6: Emergent groups and citizens in disasters


Week 3 (2/2/2016)

Myths, Exaggerations and Realities
Chapter 3 “Anticipating Human Behavior in Disasters”
  Session 7: The impact of Hollywood and media portrayals
  Session 8: Research about myths
  Session 9: How people actually react


Week 4 (2/9/2016)

Management Approaches
Chapter 4 “Recognizing Alternative Response and Recovery Approaches”
  Session 10: The traditional approach
  Session 11: The professional approach
  Session 12: Comparing the two models


Guest Speaker: Shwan Snider, Fire Chief, City of Edinburg
Topic: TBA
Time: 4:40~5:40pm

Week 5 (2/16/2016)

Generic Functions
Chapter 5 “Implementing Initial Response Measures”
  Session 13: Hazard detection
  Session 14: Warning
  Session 15: Evacuation and sheltering

**Guest Speaker:** **Alvin Migues**, Director of Emergency Disaster Services Salvation Army  
**Topic:** Partnerships in Disaster Response  
**Time:** 4:40–5:40pm

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**Week 6 (2/23/2016)**

**Generic Functions (cont.)**  
Chapter 6 “Caring for the Injured, Dead, and Distraught”  
   - Session 16: Search and rescue operations  
   - Session 17: Medical care and mass fatality management  
   - Session 18: Treating post-traumatic stress disorder


**Guest Speaker:** **Ricardo Saldana**, Emergency Management Coordinator, Hidalgo County Office of Emergency Management  
**Topic:** Addressing the Needs of Population Affected by a Disaster  
**Time:** 4:40–5:40pm

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**Week 7 (3/1/2016)**

**Generic Functions (cont.)**  
Chapter 7 “Managing Public Information, Donations and Volunteers”  
   - Session 19: Communicating with the media  
   - Session 20: Accepting donations  
   - Session 21: Working with volunteers  
   - Session 22: Exam 1 review


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**Week 8 (3/8/2016)**

**Exam 1**  
No Reading Assignment  
   - Session 23: Exam 1
Week 9 (3/15/2016)

Spring Break
No class

Week 10 (3/22/2016)

Generic Functions (cont.)
Chapter 9 “Promoting Recovery and Mitigation”
   Session 27: Individual and public assistance
   Session 28: Fraud, historic buildings and the environment
   Session 29: Reducing vulnerability after disaster


Guest Speaker: Robert L. Canterbury, Deputy Director Operations, City of McAllen
Topic: Emergency Management and Response
Time: 4:40~5:40pm

Week 11 (3/29/2016)

Expected Problems
Chapter 10 “Overcoming Typical Challenges”
   Session 30: Decision making, transportation and politics
   Session 31: Special populations, communication and coordination
   Session 32: Legal issues and record keeping


Week 12 (4/5/2016)

Using Tools and Strategies
Chapter 11 “Harnessing Technology and Organization”
   Session 33: Technology in emergency management
   Session 34: Incident command, emergency operations centers and mutual aid

Week 13 (4/12/2016)

**Interorganizational Coordination**
No Reading Assignment/Term Papers Due
  Session 35: EMAC, NIMS and the National Response Plan


Guest Speaker: **Kevin Hannes**, Federal Coordinating Officer, FEMA
Topic: Disaster Declaration Process
Time: 4:40~5:40pm

Week 14 (4/19/2016)

**Looking to the Future**
Chapter 12 “Foreseeing the Future”
  Session 36: The interaction of hazards
  Session 37: New threats
  Session 38: Rising vulnerability


Week 15 (4/26/2016)

**How to Prepare and React**
Chapter 13 “Enhancing Disaster Resilience”
  Session 39: Acquiring resources, hazard and vulnerability assessments, planning, training
  Session 40: Exercises, community education, improvisation and leadership

Week 16 (5/3/2016)

**Generic Functions (cont.)**

Chapter 8 “Moving Beyond Immediate Needs”
- Session 24: Damage assessment
- Session 25: Disaster declarations
- Session 26: Debris removal


Week 17 (5/10/2016)

**Exam 2**
- Session 42: Exam 2

8. **UGRTV policy statements**

**Students with disabilities:** If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.

**Mandatory course evaluation period:** Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Online evaluations will be available April 13–May 4, 2016. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.
Scholastic integrity: As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence: In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

Course drops: According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

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