

SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY

**HAZARDS, DISASTERS & THE U.S. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
EMPD 301 (3 Credit Hours)
SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY, FALL 1999
Room 268, Health Professions Building**

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Class Schedule: Wednesday evenings, 6:30-9:00 PM, September 8th through December 22nd, with the exception of November 24th.

Course Purpose: To serve the continuing education needs of personnel in the public and private sectors working in or interested in working in emergency management or a related field, such as one of the emergency services fields.

Course Description and Context: This course provides an introduction to the phenomenon of hazards, disasters and the U.S. Emergency Management system. Throughout the history of the United States, disasters and catastrophic events have destroyed and devastated lives, destroyed and damaged property, and put large segments of our population at risk. Earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, floods, drought, blizzards, fires, hurricanes and hazardous materials spills are but a few of the hazards—both natural and technological—that threaten communities and challenge those who are responsible for the lives, safety, and well-being of others. The U.S. is becoming more hazardous, as is our vulnerability to those hazards. In the words of the Board on Natural Disasters of the National Research Council:

Losses of life and property from natural disasters in the United States—and throughout the world—have been enormous and the potential for substantially greater future losses looms. It is clearly in the public interest to reduce these impacts and to encourage the development of communities that are resilient to disasters (National Research Council 1998, 1).

There is no magic pill that will make these hazards disappear. There are, however, a variety of actions that can be taken to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. This course thus concerns

1. these mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery measures,
2. the national “system” put into place to implement these measures, and
3. the key actors involved.

In order to accomplish these objectives, some context will have to be provided—such as

1. an understanding of hazards and disasters;
2. an understanding of human response to hazards and reaction to disasters, including a look at such concepts as vulnerability and risk: and
3. an understanding of the social, cultural, economic, political and inter-jurisdictional context of emergency management.

Course Objectives

To provide knowledge of U.S. hazards and disasters—be able to describe the variety of hazards that exist—as well as the nature of the risk these hazards pose to the U.S.

To explain emergency management both as a term and as an occupation, and be able to explain the need for a structure within which to manage hazard/disaster-related activities.

To discuss the social, cultural, economic and political contexts within which emergency management takes place, including human behavior toward hazard risks and disaster.

To enable students to discuss common emergency management-related terms and definitions.

To teach the four phases that comprise the disaster life cycle.

To explain the development and evolution of U.S. emergency management.

To explain the multi-agency and inter-jurisdictional nature of U.S. emergency mgmt.

To gain appreciation of the problems inherent in emergency management due to its low salience.

To discuss Federal Emergency Management Agency policies and programs.

To discuss U.S. Federal, State and local government roles and responsibilities in emergency management.

To discuss private sector roles and responsibilities in U.S. emergency management, including business and industry, the media, volunteer organizations, and citizens.

To create an awareness of current trends and issues in U.S. emergency management.

To investigate the philosophical concept of sustainable development and the role of “building disaster resilient communities” within that concept.

Course Text: Graham A. Tobin and Burrell E. Montz. *Natural Hazards - Explanation and Integration*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1997.

Course Readings: From the text and other readings as assigned.

Course Format: Course material will primarily be delivered via the lecture format with significant student discussion and participation expected. Students will be responsible for delivering at least two presentations.

Student Requirements

Class participation includes attendance. Each unexcused absence (except for an emergency) will lead to a partial grade reduction (e.g. from A- to B+, or from B to B-). Class participation, however, is not merely class attendance—you are expected to participate. This will be particularly noted if there are guest speakers. You should feel free to ask questions and to interrupt if you do not understand something I have said.

Examinations (two) will be short-answer essay, though some objective questions (multiple choice) may be incorporated.

Missed exams: Make-up examinations will be given only in cases involving an excused absence. Written documentation may be required to support an excused absence. A make-up examination will be more difficult than the missed exam.

Readings should be completed prior to class identified on the schedule below. Readings will average approximately 40-45 pages per week.

Class papers: Two 5-8 page papers will be required. One will be on the hazards, disasters and emergency management roles and responsibilities of a Federal Agency other than the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The second will be on the hazards, disasters and emergency management responsibilities of a volunteer organization other than the American Red Cross. You must clear with me the subject of your paper ahead of time. If you do not have a preference, I will be glad to supply one. You are welcome to show me draft copies or outlines for comment. Only the final paper will be graded. Papers must be typed and double-spaced.

Unexcused late papers will be down-graded on the same basis as an unexcused absence.

Class presentations: You may negotiate your time. You are free to use overhead transparencies, Power-Point (if available), the blackboard, charts, figures, handouts, questions to the class and possibly video (sparingly and if approved beforehand). You are free to investigate inviting a guest speaker on your topic to address the class. This must be cleared with me in advance. Extra credit will be awarded for approved guest speakers. You are still required to introduce your guest and give a shortened presentation which puts your speaker's subject into the proper context.

Grading:

20%—Mid-term exam (approximately 1 hour)—on lectures and homework readings

20%—Final exam (approximately 1 hour)—on lectures and homework readings

10%—Class pres. on the role and responsibility of a Federal Agency in EM (10-15 min.)

- 15%—Paper (5-8 double-spaced pages) on a Federal Agency.
- 10%—Class pres. on the role/responsibility of a voluntary organization in EM (10-15 min)
- 15%—Paper (5-8 double-spaced pages) on a voluntary organization.
- 10%—Class participation

Grading Guidelines:	97 - 100 = A+
	94 - 96 = A
	93 - 94 = A-
	90 - 92 = B+
	87 - 89 = B
	85 - 86 = B-
	82 - 84 = C+
	79 - 81 = C
	77 - 78 = C-
	74 - 76 = D+
	71 - 73 = D
	69 - 70 = D-
	68 = F

Lecture Topics and Reading Schedule:

- Sep. 8 Course Introduction
- Sep. 15 Overview of U.S. Hazards and Disasters/Hazard Identification Disasters as a Growth Business
- Tobin & Montz Chapter 1, “Natural Hazards and Disasters: When Potential Becomes Reality,” pp. 1-47.
- Dombrowsky, Wolf. “Again and Again: Is a Disaster What We Call ‘Disaster’? Some Conceptual Notes on Conceptualizing the Object of Disaster Sociology.” *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 13, No. 3, November 1995, pp. 241-254.
- Gruntfest, Eve. “Internet and Emergency Management: Prospects for the Future.” *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 16, No. 1, March 1998, pp. 55-72).
- Porfiriev, Boris N. “Disaster and Disaster Areas: Methodological Issues of Definition and Delineation.” *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol. 13, No. 3, November 1995, pp. 285-292.
- Quarantelli, Enrico. “What Should We Study? Questions and Suggestions for Researchers About the Concepts of Disaster.” *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, March 1987, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 7-32.
- Hazard and Disaster Related Terms and Definitions Handout, 15 pages.
- Sep. 22 Human and Societal Response to Hazards and Disasters
- Tobin & Montz Chapter 3, “Perception Studies: The Individual in Natural Hazards,” pp. 132-165, Begin Chapter 2, “Physical Dimensions of Natural Hazards,” pp. 48-132.
- Sep. 29 Historical Overview of Civil Defense, Disaster Preparedness, EM Fundamentals and Background of U.S. Emergency Management Political Context of U.S. Emergency Management
- Tobin & Montz Chapter 2, “Physical Dimensions of Natural Hazards,” pp. 48-132–finish.
- Oct. 6 Federal Players in Hazard and Disaster Fields
Class Presentations
- Oct. 13 FEMA Policies and Programs

- Tobin & Montz Chapter 4, "Behavioral Studies: Community Attitudes and Adjustment," pp. 165-196.
- Oct. 20 Federal Interagency Planning and Response to Disaster
- Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, P.L. 93-288 as amended.
- Oct. 27 Mid-Term Exam
- State Organization and Role in U.S. Emergency Management
- Nov. 3 Local Government Role and Responsibility in Emergency Management
- Tobin & Montz Chapter 5, "Public Policy and Natural Hazards," 196-244.
- Nov. 10 Business and Industry Roles and Responsibilities
- Tobin & Montz Chapter 6, "The Economic Impacts of Hazards and Disasters," pp. 245-281.
- Nov. 17 "Third Sector" Roles and Responsibilities
- Class Presentations
- The Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management (IS-288)*. FEMA. Emergency Management Institute, January 1999.
- Dec. 1 Citizen Roles and Responsibilities/Community Disaster Education
- Dec. 8 The Role of the Media in U.S. Emergency Management
- Ford N. Burkhart. "Journalists as Bureaucrats: Perceptions of 'Social Responsibility' Media Roles in Local Emergency Planning." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, No. 1, March 1991, pp. 75-87.
- Ruth Seydlitz, et al. "Media Presentations of a Hazard Event and the Public's Response: An Empirical Examination." *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, Vol.12, No.3, Nov. 1994, 279-301.
- Dec. 15 Current Trends and Issues in U.S. Emergency Management
- Tobin & Montz Chapter 8, "An Integrated Approach to Natural Hazards," pp. 320-350.

Dec. 22

Building Disaster Resilient Communities

Final Examination

Note on this Syllabus: This syllabus may be modified at the instructor's discretion as necessary to meet the objectives of the course and/or the needs of the students.