

**University of North Texas at Dallas**  
**Spring 2012**  
**SYLLABUS**

<b>SOCI 3560 Sociology of Disasters</b>		<b>3Hrs</b>
<b>Department of</b>	<b>Sociology &amp; Psychology</b>	<b>Division of</b>
		<b>Liberal Arts &amp; Life Sciences</b>
<b>Instructor Name:</b>	<b>Brittany Longino Smith</b>	
<b>Office Location:</b>	Founder's Hall 305	
<b>Dept Phone:</b>	972-338-1501	
<b>Email Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:Brittany.LonginoSmith@unt.edu">Brittany.LonginoSmith@unt.edu</a> or blonginosmith@gmail.com	
<b>Office Hours:</b>	<b>Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. or by appointment</b>	
<b>Virtual Office Hours:</b>	By appointment, but I check my email throughout the day	
<b>Classroom Location:</b>	<b>Building 2 Room 336</b>	
<b>Class Meeting Days &amp; Times:</b>	<b>Monday/Wednesday 10:00 A.M. to 11:20 A.M.</b>	
<b>Course Catalog Description:</b>		
<b>Prerequisites:</b>		
<b>Co-requisites:</b>		
<b>Required Text:</b>	Fischer, H. (2008). <i>Response to disaster: Fact versus fiction and its perpetuation</i> . Lanham, MD: University Press of America.	
<b>Recommended Text and References:</b>	<b>Additional readings will be provided</b>	
<b>Access to Learning Resources:</b>	UNT Dallas Library: phone: (972) 780-3625; web: <a href="http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/library.htm">http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/library.htm</a> UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652; e-mail: <a href="mailto:1012mgr@fhcg.follett.com">1012mgr@fhcg.follett.com</a>	
<b>Course Goals or Overview:</b>		
	The goal of this course is to understand disasters, both natural and technological, and how they impact our society. Using sociological theories, this course will investigate the various definitions of disasters, review and debunk many myths that are portrayed of society in reaction to disasters and how research and preparedness can impact our futures. In the second section of this course we will focus specifically on how disasters uniquely impact various social groups in our society, including races, ethnicities, ages, genders, social classes, and disabled persons. In the final section of this class we will look at emergency organizations and preparedness in relation to future disasters and how these events create social change.	
<b>Learning Objectives/Outcomes:</b> At the end of this course, the student will		
1	Be able to identify disaster definitions and integrate sociological theories in analyzing societal behaviors and vulnerabilities in reaction to disasters.	
2	Understand common myths associated with disasters and why these myths are inaccurate in accordance to how society behaves during disasters.	
3	Demonstrate the ability to understand the unique experiences of different social groups in and after disasters.	

4	Be able to identify and understand various emergency organizations and how they have historically prepared and aided society members before, during and after disasters strike; in addition to understanding how organizations could be improved upon.
5	Understand how society changes after disasters
6	Be able to identify future disaster research themes and methodologies.

## Course Outline

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated by in class and through WebCT.

TOPICS	TIMELINE
1. What is a disaster? And Types of Disasters	1/14/13 to 1/28/13
2. Sociological theories and disaster research methods	1/30/13 to 2/4/13
3. First Short Research Paper DUE	2/4/13
4. FIRST EXAM	2/11/13
5. Behavior response to disasters and disaster mythology	2/13/13 to 2/18/13
6. Social groups and disasters	2/20/13 to 3/6/13
7. Second Short Research Paper DUE	3/4/13
8. Spring Break	3/11/13 to 3/17/13
9. SECOND EXAM	3/20/13
10. "When the Levees Broke" documentary	3/25/13 to 3/27/13
11. Third short research paper DUE	4/3/13
12. Emergency organizational response	4/1/13 to 4/8/13
13. Social Change and future research	4/10/13 to 4/17/13
14. Final Research Paper DUE	4/22/13
15. Presentations	4/22/13 to 4/24/13
16. FINAL EXAM	To be Announced

## Course Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course.

**Take-Aways/Muddiest Points** – *At the end of each lecture the student will be given the opportunity, in class, to recall at least three "Take-Aways" and at least one "Muddiest Point". Your Take-Away points should reflect something that you learned from the lecture that day and your Muddiest Point(s) should reflect some point or section of the lecture that you did not fully understand. The student will write out their Take-Aways and Muddiest Point(s) and turn them in at the end of class. The Take-Aways and Muddiest Points will also serve as a baseline for the instructor to develop the exam reviews and the exam themselves.*

**Short Research Papers** – *Three short research papers (300-500 words each) will be assigned throughout the course of this class. Remember that these papers should contain accurate APA formatting.*

*Paper 1: For your first short research paper, you will pick a disaster. There are several listed suggestions; however you are free to pick a disaster outside of the examples provided. You will first identify if this disaster was natural or technological (manmade) and then will discuss why this event was a disaster, being sure to note specifics and examples to support your analysis. Remember to cite all of your sources correctly within your paper and on your reference page.*

*Paper 2: For your second short research paper, you will keep the same disaster you picked previously, so be sure to pick a disaster that has adequate information available. Your topic for this paper will discuss how people reacted to this disaster. For example, was there social organization during this event, or complete social disorganization? What are some examples to support your analysis? Also, within this second paper, be sure to report if the reaction of those affected differed from the public's perception/media's portrayal of how people act during a disaster. Remember to cite all of your sources using correct APA formatting.*

*Paper 3: Your third short research paper will keep the same disaster you have reported on previously, and compare and contrast two social groups (race, ethnicity, class, gender, age or disability) on how these groups were impacted by the disaster. How did the disaster impact each of the groups similarly? How did it impact them differently? Don't forget to cite all sources using correct APA formatting.*

**Final Research Paper** – *Your final research paper is a full length research paper and will consist of all of the short research paper topics with the addition of another topic described below. You are to take my feedback on your short research papers and apply them to your final paper. In addition, you will also include how emergency responders and organizations provided assistance before, during and after the disaster event and if these actions could have been improved upon. Also, give suggestions for how emergency organizations could reduce the effects of a similar disaster in the future. Your full length research paper should be 1200-2000 words in length. However, keep in mind that the majority of your points will have already been researched and written. Correct APA formatting should be applied.*

**Presentation** – *You will provide a short, in-class presentation on your final research paper. Be sure your presentation covers all of the points reflected in your final paper. Your presentation should include a PowerPoint, or some form of visual aids.*

**Course Exams and Final Exam:** *Throughout the length of this course, three exams will be given. The first exam will cover the material presented in the first section of this class. Topics include the identification of disasters, distinguishing between natural and technological disasters, sociological theories, how these theories integrate in disaster situations and methods for studying disasters in our society. The second exam will focus on topics covered in the second section of this course. These topics include the behavioral responses of society to disasters, how these responses differ from established myths, and how disasters uniquely impact specific social groups (races, ethnicities, classes, ages, genders and the disabled). The final exam will cover topics from the first two sections of this class plus topics covered in the third section of the course. New topics covered in the final section include crime in disasters, morbidity and mortality in disasters, emergency response and preparedness, social change after disasters and future research needs. Adequate study guides and reviews will be provided before each exam.*

**Grading Matrix:**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Value (points or percentages)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Take-Aways/Muddiest Points	20 TA/MP at 1/2 points each	10
Short Research Papers	3 papers at 5 points each	15
Course Exams	2 course exams at 15 points each	30
Final Research Paper	20	20
Presentation	5	5
Final Exam	20	20
<b>Total:</b>		<b>100</b>

**Grade Determination:**

- A = 100 – 90 pts; i.e. 90% or better
- B = 89 – 80 pts; i.e. 80 – 89 %
- C = 79 – 70 pts; i.e. 70 – 79 %
- D = 69 – 60 pts; i.e. 60 – 69 %
- F = 59 pts or below; i.e. less than 60%

## University Policies and Procedures

### **Students with Disabilities (ADA Compliance):**

*The University of North Texas Dallas faculty is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students' with documented disabilities are responsible for informing faculty of their needs for reasonable accommodations and providing written authorized documentation. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed as accommodations are not retroactive. For more information, you may visit the Student Life Office, Suite 200, Building 2 or call Laura Smith at 972-780-3632.*

### **Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Policy:**

*The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.*

### **Assignment Policy:**

*Late "Take-Aways/Muddiest points" will not be accepted. However, should you be unable to turn in your short research papers on time, I will take them up to four days late. But, late points will be deducted from your paper for each day it is late (10% of the possible points for each late day). Should you submit a late paper, it is suggested that you email your completed paper so that your work is time-stamped and no additional late points are taken than necessary.*

### **Exam Policy:**

*Exams should be taken as scheduled. No makeup examinations will be allowed except for documented emergencies (See Student Handbook).*

### **Academic Integrity:**

*Academic integrity is a hallmark of higher education. You are expected to abide by the University's code of Academic Integrity policy. Any person suspected of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating or plagiarism) will be handled in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Refer to the Student Code of Academic Integrity at <http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/policies/Chapter%2007%20Student%20Affairs,%20Education,%20and%20Funding/7.002%20Code%20of%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf> for complete provisions of this code.*

*In addition, all academic work submitted for this class, including exams, papers, and written assignments should include the following statement:*

**On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance that violates the UNTD Academic Integrity Policy.**

### **Bad Weather Policy:**

*On those days that present severe weather and driving conditions, a decision may be made to close the campus. In case of inclement weather, call UNT Dallas Campuses main voicemail number (972) 780-3600 or search postings on the campus website [www.unt.edu/dallas](http://www.unt.edu/dallas). Students are encouraged to update their Eagle Alert contact information, so they will receive this information automatically.*

### **Attendance and Participation Policy:**

*The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Class attendance and participation is expected because the class is designed as a shared learning experience and because essential information not in the textbook will be discussed in class. The dynamic and intensive nature of this course makes it impossible for students to make-up or to receive credit for missed classes. Attendance and participation in all class meetings is essential to the integration*

*of course material and your ability to demonstrate proficiency. Students are responsible to notify the instructor if they are missing class and for what reason. Students are also responsible to make up any work covered in class. It is recommended that each student coordinate with a student colleague to obtain a copy of the class notes, if they are absent.*

**Diversity/Tolerance Policy:**

*Students are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights to class discussions. However, offensive & inappropriate language (swearing) and remarks offensive to others of particular nationalities, ethnic groups, sexual preferences, religious groups, genders, or other ascribed statuses will not be tolerated. Disruptions which violate the Code of Student Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Life as the instructor deems appropriate.*

**Optional Policies:**

- *WebCT/Blackboard will be used in this class. Here, I will post lecture slides and links to additional class readings.*