

Session No. 1

Course Title: Social Dimensions of Disaster, 2nd edition

Session 1: Course Orientation

Time: 1 hr.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Discuss the course objectives and general content
 - 1.2 Describe the course assignments
 - 1.3 Articulate the modes of student evaluation
 - 1.4 Differentiate between the cultures of research and practice
 - 1.5 Describe two historical disasters.
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Scope:

During this session the professor will assist students in understanding the objectives, general content, rationale, assignments, and modes of evaluation. Also, students will be introduced to the differences between the cultures of research and practice and a few historical disasters. It is recommended that the professor start the session with a “pre-test” (see Student Handout No. 1). It should be emphasized that this is an opinion survey. The results have nothing to do with student grades, rather these data will be discussed in a subsequent class session, (i.e., Number 7). After collecting the completed “pre-tests,” the professor should divide the class into four small groups (4-8 students each, depending on class size). Explain that this type of workshop learning strategy will be used frequently during the course. Designate three student roles: 1) chair; 2) reporter; and 3) timer (see **Remarks** under objective 1 for explanation of the responsibility of each role and the task assignment). Emphasize that these role assignments and group compositions will vary each class session. Following the five minutes of group discussion, ask each of the four reporters to summarize the group’s response in one or two minutes. Proceed with the prescribed lecture materials, overheads, and handouts as specified in the **Remarks** section for each of the objectives.

Readings:

Student Readings:

Course Syllabus.

Course Bibliography.

Professor Readings:

Opinion Survey (see Student Handout 1-1).

Course Syllabus (see Student Handout 1-2).

Course Bibliography (see Appendix to this course entitled: “Bibliography: Social Dimensions of Disaster”).

Overheads (see Appendix).

Student Handouts (see Appendix).

Background References:

Robins, Joyce: 1990. *The World's Greatest Disasters*. Secaucus, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, Inc.

Dynes, Russell R. 2000. “The Lisbon Earthquake in 1755: Contested Meanings in the First Modern Disaster” *TsuInfo Alert 2* (No. 4):10-18 (available from Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Earth Resources, P.O. Box 47007, Olympia, WA 98504-7007 or e-mail: Connie, Manson @wadnr.gov).

Kozak, Jon T. and Charles D. James. 2000. “The 1775 Lisbon Earthquake and Tsunami.” *TsuInfo Alert 2* (No. 4):3-4. (available from Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Earth Resources, P.O. Box 47007, Olympia, WA 98504-7007 or e-mail: Connie.Manson@wadnr.gov).

General Requirements:

The professor will prepare the following items for distribution and use in class. Recommended use of each item is described in the **Remarks** section below.

Course Syllabus (see Student Handout 1-2).

Course Bibliography (see Appendix to this course entitled: “Bibliography: Social Dimensions of Disaster”).

Overheads (see Overheads 1-1 through 1-5).

Student Handouts (see Student Handouts 1-1, 1-3 and 1-4).

Objective 1.1 Discuss the course objectives and general content.

Requirements:

Opinion Survey (Student Handout 1-1).

Course Syllabus (Student Handout 1-2).

Course Bibliography.

Overheads 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3, if desired.

Remarks:

I. Introduction.

A. The professor should introduce him or herself.

B. Specify:

1. Office location.
2. Office hours.
3. Telephone number.
4. e-mail address.

C. Explain rationale for “Opinion Survey”.

1. Do **not** include your name.
2. Results **will be used** in a subsequent session.
3. **Distribute** survey (Student Handout 1-1).
4. **Collect** survey when completed.

II. Exercise.

- A. Explain that workshop exercises will be **used frequently** during this course.
- B. Emphasize that this learning strategy promotes **cooperation** and **collaboration** within and among the workshop groups to develop ideas; it is **not a competition**.
- C. Explain student roles and responsibilities:
1. **Chair:** move discussion toward assigned tasks; insure participation by all members.
 2. **Reporter:** take notes on discussion; orally report group conclusions to entire class.
 3. **Timer:** observe announced time limit; remind group periodically of time remaining to complete task.
 4. **Participant:** all other group members who are to solve the problems assigned.
- D. Procedure:
1. **Divide** class into four groups (five to eight students in each group depending on class size).
 2. **Assign** the three student roles.
 3. Announce **time limit:** 5 minutes.
 4. **Display** Overhead 1-1: "Discussion Group Tasks".
 5. Announce **two tasks:**
 - a) "Discuss the types of things you expect to learn in this course. As a group select the **three** ideas you believe are most important."
 - b) "What do you think the objectives of this course are? Select the **two** that are most important."
 6. **Start** discussion.
 7. **Stop** discussion.
 8. **Student reports** from each group (1-2 minutes).

III. General Course Objectives.

- A. **Display** Overhead 1-2: “Social Dimensions of Disaster: General Objectives”.
- B. **Relate** these to student workshop group conclusions as appropriate.
- C. **Distribute** Course Syllabus (Student Handout 1-2).
- D. **Highlight** six to twelve of the session topics listed throughout the course syllabus.
- E. **Relate** a few of the session topics to student workshop conclusions.

IV. Emergency Management Objectives.

- A. **Display** Overhead 1-3: “Objectives: Emergency Management”.
- B. **Relate** these objectives to student workshop group conclusions as appropriate.

V. Liberal Arts Objectives.

- A. **Display** Overhead 1-4: “Objectives: Liberal Arts”.
- B. **Comment** on student workshop group conclusions as appropriate.

Supplemental Considerations:

Following professor introduction, student reactions to an “Opinion Survey” will be obtained (Student Handout 1-1). Students **should not** sign their names on the survey and the professor should emphasize that the results will be used in a later session (No. 7) wherein various disaster myths will be discussed. The workshop learning strategy should then be used to **stimulate student involvement** in thinking seriously about the course objectives. The process of cooperative exploration of ideas will be a strategy used frequently throughout this class. Following the group reports, the professor should display each of the overheads and relate student reactions where appropriate. The broader course objectives related to emergency management and liberal arts will provide a context for the course.

Objective 1.2 Describe the course assignments.

Requirements:

Student Handout 1-2: “Course Syllabus”.

See sections entitled: “Disaster Case Study Analysis” and “Field Trip Reaction Reports”.

Remarks:

I. Disaster Case Study Analysis.

A. Refer students to Student Handout 1-2: “Course Syllabus”.

B. **Review requirements** listed therein:

1. Report length.
2. Case study selection criteria.
3. Report format.

II. Field Trip Reaction Report.

A. Refer students to Student Handout 1-2: “Course Syllabus”.

B. **Review requirements** listed therein:

1. Reports on each of four field trips.
2. Report length.
3. Report format.

III. Course Bibliography.

A. **Distribute** course bibliography.

B. Most selections listed were **published since 1995** although some older publications of unique merit are included.

C. Use of one reference work is **required**.

1. Citation: Thomas E. Drabek. 1986. *Human System Response to Disaster: An Inventory of Sociological Findings*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
2. **Required** for disaster case study analysis report.
3. May **be used** in mid-term and final examinations.
4. Available in **reserve room** of library.

Supplemental Considerations:

It is important that students understand the nature of the **two core writing** assignments. Questions about details should be encouraged, but the focus should be on urging students to visit the library where they can review several alternatives for their case study selection. The professor should emphasize that the selection of a case study in which they are very interested will make the assignment much more **enjoyable**. The professor should highlight the “credentials of the author” section and explain that an Internet search may provide relevant information. Standard reference works, e.g., *American Men and Women of Science* also may be consulted. Students should be advised that if they **consult three sources** and can not find pertinent information, they should simply list these sources and indicate that their author was not listed therein. Finally the professor should announce the citation and **format required** for bibliographic citations to be used in all written work, e.g., style used by the American Sociological Association.

The rationale for the format requirements in the “Field Trip Reaction Reports” should be emphasized. The goal is to provide an opportunity for students to **integrate** course materials and social theories with the work of emergency management practitioners.

Objective 1.3 Articulate the modes of student evaluation.

Requirements:

Course Syllabus (Student Handout No. 1-2).

Remarks:

See Sections entitled: “Modes of Evaluation,” “Late Paper Policy” and “Plagiarism”.

I. Examinations:

- A. **Mid-Term** examination (take-home essay) – 28% (For sample examination questions see Session No. 18).
- B. **Final** examination (take-home essay) – 28% (For sample examination questions see Session No. 45).

II. Reports:

- A. **Case Study Analysis** – 10% (Described above).
- B. **Field Trip Reaction Report** – 16% (Described above).

- III. In-Class Activities:
 - A. **Oral Summary** of Case Study – 5%.
 - B. **Persuasive Mitigation Speech** – 5% (Described in Session No. 34).
 - C. **Class Discussion** – 8% (Assessment will be made at the end of the course and will reflect both **attendance** and the **quality of contributions** made in class).
- IV. Late Paper Policy:
 - A. **Assumption:** all work will be submitted on the date due.
 - B. **One point deduction** from grade assigned each day beyond the due date.
 - C. Parallel to a **bank late fee**, i.e., “routine problems of living” such as illness are not accepted as excuses.
- V. Plagiarism:
 - A. A form of academic **dishonesty**.
 - B. **Review** statement on Syllabus.
 - C. **Emphasize:** cooperative learning strategies will be used in this class; this **does not** include having a classmate, or anyone else, write your papers.

Supplemental Considerations:

Several different modes of student evaluation are recommended. It is assumed that each professor **will modify** the types and relative weights assigned to each of these recommendations. During brief discussion of these, the professor should emphasize that this variation reflects the **liberal arts objectives** of the course by assisting students to enhance their communication skills, both written and oral. Similarly, critical thinking, problem analysis, cooperative team building, and the like will be fostered through these activities. **Effective emergency managers** also require these general skills. The “late fee” promotes organizational skill and personal responsibility. While students will be encouraged to seek information from the Internet and to work cooperatively, both in class and out, **plagiarism** will not be tolerated. Just as false recordings on a physical exercise chart can undermine the value of the exercise, so too does the purchasing of term papers or other work.

Objective 1.4 Differentiate between the cultures of research and practice.

Requirements:

Overhead 1-4.

Remarks:

I. Emergency Management.

A. **Distribute** Student Handout No. 1-3: “Core Definitions”.

B. **Highlight** key elements in the definition:

1. **Process.**
2. **Minimize** hazard potential.
3. **Goal:** limit costs.
4. **Strategies and tactics.**
5. Disaster **life cycle.**

II. Emergency Managers.

A. **Review** definition in Student Handout No. 1-3: “Core Definitions”.

B. **Highlight** key elements in the definition:

1. **Professionals.**
2. **Apply.**
3. **Coordinate.**
4. **Array of agencies.**
5. **Preventing and responding.**

III. Two Cultures: Research and Practice.

A. **Display** Overhead 1-5: “Two Cultures: Research vs. Practice”.

B. **Highlight** key elements that characterize the **culture of research:**

1. **Goal:** theory construction and testing.
2. **Constituency:** other researchers.

3. **Time horizon:** long-term.
4. **Generalization:** disaster and other social phenomena.

C. **Highlight** key elements that characterize the **culture of practitioners**, like emergency managers:

1. **Goal:** solve real world problems.
2. **Constituency:** citizens in local community.
3. **Time-horizon:** short-term.
4. **Generalization:** immediate application to local context.

D. **Dynamic tension:**

1. Both cultures merit respect.
2. Each is different.
3. Course will increase student capacity to bridge these two cultures.

Supplemental Considerations:

The **culture of research** that is reflected in the orientation of most social scientists, including sociologists, encourages a focus on understanding aspects of human behavior as it naturally occurs. The key issue is what is occurring **not** whether the behavior is “good” or “bad” or how it should be changed given any particular set of value judgments. The **primary objective** of sociologists is to **construct and then test sociological theories** that identify factors that constrain human behavior. They ask first, what is the general pattern of behavior? And second, what social factors guide it. Contrary to public belief, much disaster behavior is not unique or random. Rather it reflects much patterning. Predicting and understanding these patterns is the purpose of theory. Sociologists are **knowledge producers**.

In contrast, emergency managers are **professionals dedicated to the protection of citizens and their communities** that might be impacted by disasters. Like structural engineers who use knowledge from many disciplines to solve real world problems in building construction, for example, emergency managers **use the knowledge** produced by disaster sociologists and other disciplines to design better community evacuation plans, more skillfully implement disaster response systems, and initiate more effective risk communication programs. They practice their profession through the skillful use of knowledge primarily produced by others. At times, emergency managers may participate

in the design and execution of research, but their primary activity is **to use research** as they try **to solve real world problems**.

Objective 1.5 Describe two historical disasters.

Requirements:

Student Handout No. 1-4: “Historical Disasters”.

Remarks:

I. Volcano.

A. **Distribute** Student Handout No. 1-4: “Historical Disasters”.

B. **Highlight** the following:

1. **Location:** Mt. Vesuvius eruption near Naples, Italy. One-fourth of the residents of Pompeii were buried alive.
2. **Historical importance:** the first written account of a disaster by an on-scene observer. Eruption was recorded in AD79 by Pliny the Younger in letters sent to the historian Tacitus.
3. **Death toll:** 20,000 buried alive in AD79 eruption.
4. **Future risk:** rich soil encourages population to remain at risk.

C. Source: adapted from Robins 1990, pp. 6-10.

II. Earthquake and tsunami.

A. **Refer** students to Handout No. 1-4.

B. **Highlight** the following:

1. **Location:** centered in the Atlantic Ocean, about 200 km WSW of Cape St. Vincent (Southern tip of Portugal).
2. **Date:** November 1, 1755.
3. **Historical importance:** first “modern” disaster, i.e., cause attributed to natural vs. supernatural forces.
4. **Death tolls:** great variation: high = 70,000; low = 5,000.

C. Source: adapted from Dynes 2000, pp. 13-14 and Kozak and James 2000, pp. 3-4.

III. Hurricane.

A. **Refer** students to Handout No. 1-4.

B. **Highlight** the following:

1. **Location:** Galveston, Texas.
2. **Date:** September 8, 1900.
3. **Death toll:** 6,000.
4. **Historical importance:** highest death toll in U.S.A. history from any single natural disaster event.
5. **Mitigation:** sea wall constructed for future island protection; extended to 10.4 miles by 1962.

C. Source: adapted from McComb 1986, pp. 122-130.

IV. Earthquake.

A. **Refer** students to Handout No. 1-4.

B. **Highlight** the following:

1. **Location:** San Francisco, California.
2. **Date:** April 18, 1906.
3. **Death toll:** 700 killed.
4. **Property loss:** 38,000 buildings destroyed; 500 blocks burned.
5. **Historical importance:** example of secondary effects of fire following earthquake; highest U.S.A death toll from earthquake.

C. Source: adapted from Robins 1990, pp. 20-23.

Supplemental Considerations:

It is recommended that the professor suggest to students that they begin creating a listing of disasters studied. This list will be a helpful **resource** when writing class papers and in discussions. As with the four examples that comprise the Student Handout, they should note unique features where relevant. For example, the destruction of Pompeii in AD79 generally is regarded as the **first disaster** where a **written record** by a first hand observer has been preserved. Although the matter is complex, the Lisbon earthquake often is referred to as the **first “modern” disaster**. This issue remains an area of study and interpretation by scholars as recent assessments by Dynes (2000) illustrates.

“. . . the argument will be made that changes in the social structure of Portugal and its modernization was a more determinative factor in undermining the interpretation that earthquakes communicate God’s wrath than the intellectual and theological arguments which have come to be characterized as the ‘Enlightenment’.” (Dynes 2000, p. 10).

Students should be encouraged to go beyond a simple listing of events, dates, and death tolls. Instead they should consider broader issues of disaster impacts on societal change.

General Supplemental Considerations:

- I. **Course text:** Professors are encouraged to update the readings listed and eliminate some of the course text by placing selected books or journal articles on reserve at the library.
- II. **Course topics:** Each of the 45 sessions in this course are designed for a one hour class meeting. Any could be expanded into two hour sessions, however, by extending the student discussion time and/or depth of lecture material. It is assumed that each professor will select some sessions for expansion and others for deletion depending on personal interest and student response.
- III. **Course bibliography:** The Appendix to the course is entitled: “Bibliography: Social Dimensions of Disaster.” Professors are encouraged to prepare a customized bibliography for their course by selecting items from this listing and adding more recent materials.
- IV. **Overheads as handouts:** Throughout this course, various materials have been prepared to be used as overheads. Depending on professor choice, however, any or all of these items could be distributed to the class as student handouts or not used at all.
- V. **Evaluation modes:** The modes of evaluation will vary at the discretion of the professor. Those listed herein are illustrative although they are included in the course syllabus. They also are reflected in the overall design of this course. Alteration is expected so as to best reflect professorial preference, teaching styles, and student cultures.

Course Developer References:

- I. Dynes, Russell R. 2000. "The Lisbon Earthquake in 1755: Contested Meanings in the First Modern Disaster" *TsuInfo Alert 2* (August):10-18.
 - II. Kozak, Jan T. and Charles D. James. 2000. "The 1755 Lisbon Earthquake and Tsunami" *TsuInfo Alert 2* (August):3-4.
 - III.. McComb, David G. 1986. *Galveston: A History*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
 - IV. Robins, Joyce. 1990. *The World's Greatest Disasters*. Secaucus, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, Inc.
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