WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
(ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI)
GEORGE WARREN BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (of St. Louis)  

SYLLABUS

Course: S20-5021  
Title: Social Aspects of Earthquake Hazards

Credit: 1  
Location: Brown Hall, Room 111

Day and Time: Monday, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Instructor: David Gillespie

Office Phone: (314) 935-6674

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

I. Course Domain and Boundaries

This course introduces some of the more important social aspects of earthquake hazards. The social aspects of earthquake mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery are considered for individuals and families, organizations and communities, and societies. Topics include earthquake planning, beliefs and myths, emergency actions, restoration, reconstruction, perceptions, and attitudes toward various adjustments to reduce risks. Social aspects are recognized as creating both obstacles and opportunities for engineers, architects, social workers, planners, and other professionals who must be concerned with earthquake hazards.

II. Course Objectives

A. To understand the social nature of earthquakes.
B. To acquire knowledge of the social factors affecting earthquake mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.
C. To reveal unfounded myths about human behavior in disasters.
D. To increase awareness of unequal social consequences stemming from earthquake events.
E. To gain an awareness of opportunities for policy adjustments and applications of research findings.
F. To create or strengthen an appreciation for the practical value of social theory and theorizing.

III. Organization of the Course

Course content will be covered through reading, thinking, writing, talking, and listening. Readings are suggested for each class meeting. The reading should be completed prior to the
class meetings. Additional reading material may be suggested or assigned to increase the usefulness of the class discussions.

IV. Written Assignment

An annotated bibliography is due on the last day of class. Your bibliography should be organized around a particular theme concerning the social aspects of earthquake hazards. The topics addressed in class present one set of alternative themes for consideration. The number of citations appropriate for each bibliography will vary depending upon the amount of literature relevant to the theme which is developed. There are no absolute limits for the number of citations to be included in the bibliographies.

V. Grading Criteria

Your bibliography will provide 60% of your final grade. The criteria to be used in evaluating the bibliographies include: (a) thoroughness, (b) internal consistency, (C) lack of redundancy, (d) accuracy of reporting, and (e) clarity of annotations.

Your participation in class discussions will contribute 40% of your final grade. Criteria used include: (a) frequency, duration and quality of participation; (b) lack of digression from topic; (c) avoidance of redundancy; and (d) creativity.

VI. Course Outline

Class 1:

Orientation and Framework for Assessing Earthquake Hazards

Social aspects of earthquakes are defined and their significance is discussed. A general framework for understanding earthquake hazards is presented. Four temporal phases of disaster are discussed. Three social system levels are distinguished. The phases of disaster are cross-classified with the system levels to provide twelve areas for focused discussion. After considering the varying amounts of work in these areas, we discuss the merits and limitations of this general framework. We finish up this first class by talking about the focus of the course.


Class 2:

Earthquake Preparedness for Individuals and Families

Planning issues are discussed along with the acceptance of planning, family disaster planning, preparedness levels, and beliefs in disaster myths. Identifying earthquake hazards within living quarters and making common sense adjustments to reduce the probability of casualties is a useful aspect of preparedness. Most injuries result from flying glass, overturned bookcases, etcetera. Anything that can break away or fall during the shaking of an earthquake needs to be secured. There are things to do before the shaking, during the shaking, and after the shaking.


Class 3:

Individual and Family Responses

Victim reactions, non-victim actions, and emotional responses are discussed. When an earthquake strikes, people begin almost immediately to help themselves; they do not panic. The so-called “disaster syndrome” or shock is rare. There are very few instances of looting; instead, there is a strong sense of common identity where victims unite to deal with the problem. Preparing for an earthquake on the basis of what we know about how people act, rather than on the basis of misplaced popular beliefs, will increase the effectiveness of our responses. Special consideration is given to the emotional responses of children and older people.


Class 4:

*Individual and Family Recovery*

The processes of both short-term and longer-term recovery are discussed for individuals and families. Aspects of victim health, definitions of loss, self-help, and helping behaviors are covered. We will consider both positive and negative impacts.


Class 5:

*Individual and Family Mitigation*

Hazard awareness, individual experience, and correlates of hazard perceptions are discussed. We also examine issues of earthquake insurance, and attitudes toward earthquake predictions.


Class 6:

**Organizational Preparedness**

Organizational preparedness has been identified with planning, resource identification, warning systems, training and simulations, and other predisaster actions intended to improve the safety and effectiveness of community response to earthquakes and other disasters. Drawing upon correlates of organizational preparedness, a preliminary model is presented and discussed.


Class 7:

**Emergency Response Systems**

Some hypotheses based on a typology of emergency response organizations are discussed. Issues of organizational stress, mobilization, control, effectiveness, and coordination are considered.


Class 8:

**Organizational and Community Recovery**

The recovery environment, emergent versus routine task structures, and media responses are discussed. We also examine the dynamics of the mass assault, the synthetic community, and patterns of community conflict.


Class 9:

*Community Mitigation*

Hazard perceptions and actions taken by organizational executives are discussed. We look at public education efforts and the influence of media organizations. Then we discuss what affects a community’s adoption of earthquake mitigation policies and procedures.


Class 10:

*Societal and International Preparedness*

Structural complexity in a society contributes to fragmented and uneven disaster planning. Changes in levels of preparedness are usually prompted by a particular disaster rather than a persistent threat. Lower socioeconomic classes consistently bear disproportionate losses from earthquakes and other disasters. We will consider some of the problems of cross-national comparisons and assessments of international planning systems.


Class 11:

**World Response**

Differential vulnerability and response patterns are discussed. Response patterns are affected by population concentrations, occupational trends, and various social institutions.


Class 12:

**World Recovery**

Earthquake relief measures are not distributed evenly. Experts from industrialized countries sometimes have difficulty distinguishing disaster-related needs from chronic problems characteristic of developing countries. There are many instances of countries given assistance that conflicts with cultural values or actual needs of people in the impacted region. Rumors of epidemics sometimes disrupt relief efforts. The evidence thus far suggests that wide-spread disasters like earthquakes seem to intensify rather than lessen previously existing status differences and patterns of social inequality.


Class 13:

*Societal and International Mitigation*

All societies reveal continuing structural change. Sometimes changes increase vulnerability to earthquakes and other disasters. Population shifts, increased corporate risk taking, increased propensity to seek compensation for injury through litigation, and increasingly complex interdependence of organizational networks are examples.


Class 14: Discussion of bibliographic Topics.
Course: S81-XXXX  
Title: Community Crisis Management Skills

Credit: 1  
Location: Brown Hall, Lounge

Months, Days, Time: January 23, February 6, February 20, and March 13, 1995  
Each class meets from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. with a short break

Instructors: David Gillespie and Mary Rogge

Office Phone: 935-6674 and 935-7087

Office Hours: Gillespie: Monday, 2-3 p.m., Tuesday, 1-2 p.m.  
             Rogge: Monday, 4:30-6:00 p.m.

I. Course Domain and Boundaries

This lab examines major facets of disaster management. Skills are learned for managing mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Different levels of intervention (individual, local, regional, national, international) as well as both private and public types of intervention are considered for each phase of disaster management. The skills that are covered include vulnerability screening, network building, leadership negotiation, and resource mobilization. These skills are useful for social workers, engineers, architects, planners, and other professionals who must be concerned with natural and technological hazards.

II. Course Objectives

A. To acquire mitigation skills that help communities reduce the amount of damage and losses from disaster.

B. To gain preparedness skills that increase community effectiveness in responding to disaster.

C. To know how to apply response skills that minimize hardship immediately after disaster strikes.

D. To attain recovery skills that improve the quality of life in communities struck by disaster.

E. To increase awareness of opportunities for applying skills to improve policy and practice.

F. To increase skills that create disaster management strategies at the individual, local, organizational, regional, national, and international levels.
III. Organization of the Course

Skills are learned through illustrations and exercises, as well as reading, talking, and listening. Supplemental reading is encouraged for each class meeting.

IV. Grading Criteria

Mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery skills will each contribute 25% of the final grade.

V. Course Outline

Class 1: Monday, January 23, 1995, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mitigation

Types of mitigation, issues of special populations, and the role of various organizations are considered. Skills to achieve adoption of mitigation policies and procedures are learned.


Class 2: Monday, February 6, 1995, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Preparedness

Disaster preparedness has been identified with planning, warning systems, training and simulations, and other predisaster actions intended to improve the safety and effectiveness of community response to disasters. Skills to build organizational preparedness are learned.


Class 3: Monday, February 20, 1995, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Response

Issues of organizational stress, mobilization, control, effectiveness, and coordination are considered. Skills to enhance response effectiveness are learned.


Class 4: Monday, March 13, 1995, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Recovery

The recovery environment, emergent versus routine task structures, and media responses are considered along with the dynamics of the mass assault, the synthetic community, and patterns of community conflict. Skills to minimize dysfunctional conflict are learned.


