**DSC 101 – Natural Disasters: Living on the Edge**

[Oxford College of Emory University - Fall 2020]

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**We cannot stop natural disasters but we can arm ourselves with knowledge: so many lives wouldn't have to be lost if there was enough disaster preparedness.**

- Petra Nemcova

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**Basic Information**

**Lecture:**
T and Th 1:00 – 2:15 pm, OSB 223

**Assignments and Communication:**
Canvas

**My Contact Info:** Dr. Melissa Hage
mhage2@emory.edu

**Office Hours:** Via Zoom
Tuesdays 2:15 – 3:30 pm
Wednesdays 2:30 – 3:30 pm
Thursdays 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
https://emory.zoom.us/j/3449302253

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**Course Description and Objectives**

Natural disasters occur every day and affect the lives of millions of people each year. The aim here is not to just understand geologic hazards; it is for you to be able to ask the central questions necessary to address the increasing number of disasters occurring globally and to develop a foundation for critically evaluating current and future approaches to mitigating these hazards.

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As a student in this course you will:

- Think like a scientist.
- Understand the processes that give rise to natural hazards.
- Explore how society evaluates and confronts the dangers posed by natural hazards.
- Evaluate the role humans play in creating and mitigating natural disasters.
- Learn how to locate, read, understand, and evaluate different sources of information.
- Learn how to effectively communicate scientific information using a variety of methods.
Classroom Philosophy

The classroom:
- is an interactive learning community
- requires our attention
- is a safe place

Our interactions should follow these general guidelines:
- listen respectfully without interrupting
- integrate the ideas of others with your own as any conversation moves forward
- criticize ideas and not individuals
- avoid inflammatory language

Class Participation

The success of this class depends on all of us. Don’t be a spectator! You have great thoughts and ideas that are uniquely yours and we want to hear them.

How to Participate:
- Come to class prepared
- Answer and ask questions
- Share your experiences, perspectives, questions, and analyses of text, reading materials and assignments.
- If you tend to be a less vocal participant in class, find a way to let me know that you are critically thinking about the material (ex. contribute to online discussion boards, send your thoughts or questions to me via email, or talk to me after class).
- Don’t forget “active” listening, including eye contact, nodding, smiling, raising eyebrows, and taking notes.
- You will learn more and enjoy class more if you are an engaged participant.

Grades

Class participation (22 at 5 pts each) 110
Modules (20 at 15 pts each) 300
Section reflections (6 at 50 pts each) 300
Media update (1) 40
Final project (250 pts total)
  Prelim Research 25
  Annotated Bibliography 25
  Project Check-In #1 25
  Project Check-In #2 25
  Final Article or Video 75
  Final Presentation 75
TOTAL 1000

Grades are not curved. If you would like to appeal any grade, please do so within 1 week of receiving the graded work. You are always welcome to come and talk to me during office hours about your grade.
Attendance
Attending class regularly is really the only way you’ll get the most out of this course and you should attend if you are able. There will be opportunities to earn some participation points if you are unable to attend class (ex. online discussion boards). Your 22 highest participation grades will count towards your final grade. Exceptions will be made for COIVD-related absences.

Late Work
All assignments except for the final project can be submitted late, losing 5 points a calendar day.

Laptops
Laptops will be used during class to access material posted on Canvas but I strongly encourage you to take notes using pen and paper.

Cell Phones
Please keep phones out of sight and silent.

Academic Integrity
Do your best work. Seeking an inappropriate advantage over other students will not be tolerated and handled according to the Oxford College Honor Code.

Accommodations
If you have Academic Accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible so we can communicate with the Office of Accessibility Services.

Religious Holidays
Please communicate your religious holiday needs within the first two weeks of the semester so that we can make an accommodation plan together.

Final Project
You will research a specific natural disaster event and evaluate pre- and post-disaster mitigation strategies. There will be several benchmark assignments to help guide you. You will present your findings more formally through a conference-style oral presentation, as well present your findings to the general public through either the writing of a newspaper article or an oral presentation to a city council meeting.

Section Reflections
These are short writing assignment where you will summarize material presented in class, reflect on your own performance and understanding of the material, and relate the material to previous sections and to your life. These are in lieu of exams.

Media Updates
You will choose a recent natural disaster and create a ~ 5 min long podcast summarizing and evaluating the event, as well as answer questions from the class about your chosen event.
## SYLLABUS OF LECTURE TOPICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Aug. 20</td>
<td>Class Intro</td>
<td>Module 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>(1) Thinking like a Scientist</td>
<td>Module 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Aug. 27</td>
<td>(2) Natural Disasters and the Human Population</td>
<td>Module 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td>(3) Risk and Vulnerability; Hazard Mitigation</td>
<td>Module 3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>(4) Learning How to Research a Disaster</td>
<td>Module 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>(5) Reading Scientific Papers</td>
<td>Module 5; Section Reflection #1 (Modules 1 – 3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Sept. 10</td>
<td>Milestone</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>(6) Plate Tectonics: Interpreting the Data</td>
<td>Module 6; Preliminary Research on 3 Potential Project Topics</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>(7) Plates, Plate Boundaries, and Driving Forces</td>
<td>Module 7</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>College Check-In and Skill Development</td>
<td>Select Research Project Event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>(8) Earthquakes: Causes and Measurements</td>
<td>Module 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>(9) Earthquakes: Hazards and Mitigation</td>
<td>Module 9; Section Reflection #2 (Modules 6 – 7)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>Project Work Day</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Oct. 6</td>
<td>(10) Tsunamis</td>
<td>Module 10</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>(11) Earthquake Case Studies</td>
<td>Module 11</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>(12) Volcanoes: Magma, Eruptions, Landforms</td>
<td>Module 12; Annotated Bibliography</td>
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<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>(13) Volcanoes: Hazards, Prediction, and Benefits</td>
<td>Module 13; Section reflection #3 (Modules 8 – 11)</td>
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<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td>(14) Volcano Case Studies</td>
<td>Module 14; Project Check-In #1</td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>(15) Weather and Climate</td>
<td>Module 15</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>(16) Hurricanes - Basics</td>
<td>Module 16; Section reflection #4 (Modules 12 – 14)</td>
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<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>(17) Hurricanes: Case Studies</td>
<td>Module 17</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Nov. 3</td>
<td>(17) Hurricanes: Case Studies</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>Project Work Day</td>
<td>Project Check-In #2</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>(18) Understanding Floods</td>
<td>Module 18 Section reflection #5 (Modules 15 – 17)</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>(19) Understanding Floods</td>
<td>Module 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>(20) Floods: Case Studies</td>
<td>Module 20</td>
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<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td>(20) Floods: Case Studies</td>
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<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>Class Wrap Up (Async)</td>
<td>Section reflection #6 (Modules 18 – 20)</td>
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<td>Dec. 1</td>
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<td>Final Newspaper Article or Video</td>
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<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>Final exam period (11:30 am – 2:00 pm)</td>
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