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# GLOBAL DISASTER POLITICS

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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

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This course, "Global Disaster Politics," is a graduate seminar, taught online every fall semester since 2012. The course typically has 9-15 students, the majority of whom are part of the department of political science's Masters in Public Administration (MPA) program.<sup>1</sup> This program is delivered entirely online, and students must choose a 4-course concentration in a particular subfield. One of their subfield choices is a concentration in "Disasters and Emergency Management." This course is also one of the four courses in this concentration.

The focus here is on so-called natural disasters. While a disaster can be defined as any event that overwhelms any entity's capacities to respond, natural disasters are more often incorrectly perceived as being a-political. This course pushes back against this misperception.

The course includes weekly ongoing discussion, which occurs via a community page on Google+. Once per week, we conduct a live videoconference via Google Hangouts, and students are required to participate in at least three of these during the semester. Finally, the students write a series of shorter (5-6 pages) analytical essays on specific prompts and must complete a major project on a topic of their own choosing.

Over several semesters teaching this course, I have developed four perspectives that form the foundation for the course's specific objectives, content, and mechanics. First, I want students to come away with a deeper understanding of the ways in which disasters and all of their attendant processes are fundamentally political events. While I would probably be hard pressed to find anyone that explicitly disagrees with this statement, I continue to encounter post-disaster op-eds and analyses that are built on the question, "When will we learn?" In many ways, a deep understanding of the political tensions involved with the phases of disasters leads one to reject the idea that disaster outcomes are a function of knowledge or simple will. There are deeper tensions at the root of these issues, tensions that exist at the core of many of the world's most intractable challenges. Even if we imagined a world where everyone had complete knowledge of and agreement about the gravity of these issues, political tensions would remain and continue to make various aspects of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery quite difficult.

Second, because the political tensions regarding disasters are so fundamental and very often not unique, disasters offer a good issue space to explore. In other words, I want students who come into the class interested in political science more generally but not necessarily in disasters, more specifically, to walk away at the end of the semester feeling that the broad issue of disasters and disaster management provided a tremendous analytical window in which we could see at work many of the abstract concepts we talk about—often too abstractly—in other political science seminars. If successful in this goal, this

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<sup>1</sup> In the past, the course has included 1-3 students who are part of our Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science program.

course should fit nicely as a general special topics course in any political science program, even one that has no formal concentration in or emphasis on disasters or emergency management.

Third, for two reasons, I want the course to be rooted in a comparative analytical approach these issues. First, my opinion of the literatures on the politics of disasters and emergency management is that there is too little research that is explicitly and systematically comparative. Second, the majority of students in this seminar are practitioners of one kind or another; however, their experiences are very local, focused mainly on the greater-Houston and broader- Texas areas. In the course, I attempt to rectify (in some small way) both of these issues by using weekly case studies that we explore comparatively. In addition to broadening students' knowledge of other disaster and emergency management situations, it helps them develop useful comparative analytical skills that are useful in a variety of professional contexts.

Finally, I want this course to be different than their other online courses. While this perspective is someone rooted in context and time (i.e., this course exists within an MPA program that is entirely online and many of those are currently structured in very similar ways), I am more universally and regularly looking for ways to promote the same quantity and quality of person-to-person engagement in an online seminar as one would get in a face-to-face graduate seminar. This goal drives my use of Google Hangouts: online videoconferences where small groups of the class meet once a week to discuss the cases for the week.

## **CLASS DESCRIPTION**

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Always and everywhere, disasters are political events.<sup>2</sup> Each of the phases of disaster management—mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery—is subject to political causes and effects. In this course we attempt to explain variation throughout the world and across these phases, using the theories and methods of political science and economics. Our focus is not just the politics of disasters themselves but how disasters can serve as analytical windows, allowing us to better view and appreciate some of the underlying incentives that always shape our domestic and international processes.

Throughout the semester we will illustrate these concepts by comparing cases. These stories provide us with a common narrative for analysis and hopefully force us to think carefully about the difficult choices facing policymakers and the powerful incentives that guide them as they navigate these choices, even in policymaking around disasters.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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Students should leave this course with an understanding of the fundamental political and economic tensions that sit at the core of the emergency management challenge. In addition, the course will improve critical thinking and writing skills, specifically the ability to think systematically and comparatively across different cases at a variety of levels of analysis.

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<sup>2</sup> Disasters are typically defined as events that overwhelm any entity's capacities to respond. In this course, more of our focus will be on so-called natural disasters because the popular wisdom tends to incorrectly dismiss these as a-political more than other types of events. However, we will discuss other types of disasters, and nothing precludes you from focusing on a human-induced disaster for your course project.

1. Students should be able to articulate the general challenges human beings have regarding properly assessing risk.
2. Students should be able to identify the political challenges associated with attempting to plan for low probability, high impact events.
3. Students should be able to discuss the ways that various types of socio-economic vulnerabilities link with hazards to create the space in which disasters can occur.
4. Students should be able to discuss and critically analyze theories of why disaster mitigation policies might be more likely and potentially more effective in democracies than in non-democracies.
5. Students should be able to utilize an economic understanding of *institutions* to think through the way incentives are structured (intentionally and unintentionally) in various disaster-related processes
6. Students should be able to compare and critically analyze the fundamental challenges associated with disaster risk reduction at the global, regional, national, and local levels.
7. Students should be able to critically analyze and discuss the conditions in which disasters are likely to produce political change, whether that change is institutional change, public opinion, or change in pre-existing domestic or international relationships (conflict).

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION<sup>3</sup>**

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#### **REGULAR COURSE INTERACTION (10%)**

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Our primary interaction in this course will occur in our virtual classroom, our community page through Google+. See the Google+ site for a video and accompanying PDF covering a number of different ways you can participate.

#### **PARTICIPATION IN LIVE GOOGLE HANGOUTS (10%)**

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Once per week (different days, different times), we will have a live, multi-person videoconference via Google Hangouts. These videoconferences will provide opportunities for us to discuss the case studies. I will post a couple of discussion questions to get us started each week, and I will ask each of you to post one as well. While the questions will provide us with guideposts, we'll also strive to keep the conversation free flowing and open-ended. Each of these sessions will last approximately one hour, and you will be required to participate in three of these during the semester. More details about these events and how I will assess your participation are posted on our Google+ site.

#### **ANALYTICAL ESSAYS (45%)**

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Toward the end of the preparedness, response, and recovery sections of the course, I will post a prompt that will serve as the basis for an analytical essay. You will have two weeks to craft a 6-7 page analytical essay that responds to the prompt. The prompts will be written in such a way that (1) you will be forced to make an argument, and (2) you will need to comparatively analyze the readings and cases from multiple weeks in order to support your argument.

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<sup>3</sup> Examples of assignments or ways to participate referenced in this section can be found in "Appendix 1: Assignment Examples" for the list of different ideas for participation. Rubrics are included in "Appendix 2: Rubrics."

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**COURSE PROJECT (35%)**

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Each student will complete a major project on a course-related topic and will have some choice as to the type of project produced. Please see the video on the Google+ site where I describe the mechanics and expectations of these papers. The final papers are due Sunday evening (11:59pm) following the last class day of the semester.

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**COURSE POLICIES**

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**DEADLINES**

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All assigned work must be completed and submitted by due date/ times indicated. There is no grace period. I will not accept the excuse that "there was an issue with Blackboard." It is your responsibility to ensure that you leave yourself enough time to post/submit your assignment before the deadline. Everything that comes in after is late, and penalties will start to accrue as follows:

1. 1 minute-24 hours = 10% penalty
2. 24-48 hours = 30% penalty
3. 48-72 hours = 50% penalty
4. 72-96 hours = 75% penalty
5. 96+ hours = 100% penalty

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**DETERMINING THE FINAL GRADE**

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At any given point of the course, your current grade will be available via the course Blackboard page. The final letter grade will be determined as follows per university policy regarding graduate courses:

1. 90-100% earns a grade of A, indicating excellent work
2. 80-89% earns a grade of B, indicating acceptable work
3. 70-79% earns a grade of C, indicating passable but insufficient work
4. Below 70% earns a grade of F, indicating failure

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**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will fail the course. In addition, the university and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. If you have any questions, please ask.

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

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The course is divided up into four main sections:

1. The Politics of Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation (weeks 2–5 inclusive)
2. The Politics of Disaster Response (weeks 6–8 inclusive)
3. The Politics of Disaster Recovery (weeks 9–11 inclusive)
4. The Lingering Political Effects of Disasters (weeks 12–13 inclusive)

Week 1 is used as an opportunity to introduce the course's broad themes and mechanics. For fall semesters, week 14 is usually Thanksgiving week. Week 15 is used to reflect on what we have learned and re-assess the broad themes.

### **WEEK 1: INTRODUCING THE COURSE**

- Olson, R. S. (2000) "Towards a Politics of Disaster: Loss, Values, Agendas, and Blame," *International Journal of Mass Emergencies & Disasters* 18: 265–287.
- Olson, R. S. and V. T. Gawronski (2010) "From Disaster Event to Political Crisis: A '5C+A' Framework for Analysis" *International Studies Perspectives* 11: 205–221.
- Case studies: Hurricane Katrina, United States 2005; Hurricane Sandy, United States 2012

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### **THE POLITICS OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION**

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#### **WEEK 2: THE POLITICS OF RISK AND INSURANCE [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 1 AND 2]**

- Kahneman, D. (2011) *Thinking Fast and Slow* New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, pp. 109–145; 300–341.
- Ropeik, D. (2010) "Bounded Rationality: Because Reason Alone Can't Keep You Safe" in *How Risky Is It, Really? Why Our Fears Don't Always Match the Facts* New York: McGraw Hill, pp. 21–64.
- Kunreuther, H. and M. Pauly (2004) "Neglecting Disaster: Why Don't People Insure Against Large Losses?" *The Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 28(1): 5–21.
- Sachs, J. (2015) "Insuring for Disaster" *The New York Times* 4 May p. A23.
- Case studies: Earthquake, L'Aquila Italy 2009; Various predictions about "big one" on United States West Coast

#### **WEEK 3: DISASTERS AS A PROBLEM OF VULNERABILITY? [LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3]**

- Wisner, B., P. Blaikie, T. Cannon, and I. Davis (2004) *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability, and Disasters*, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 3–18; 49–124; 274–292.

- Thomas, D. S. K., P. K. Stephens, and J. Goldsmith (2010) "Measuring and Conveying Social Vulnerability" in B. D. Phillips, D. S. K. Thomas, A. Fothergill, and L. Blinn-Pike, eds., *Social Vulnerability to Disasters*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 323–344.
- Case studies: Earthquake, Haiti 2010; Earthquakes, Nepal 2015

#### **WEEK 4: THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL ECONOMIES OF MITIGATION AND PREPARATION [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 3, 4, AND 5]**

- Anbarci, N., M. Escaleras, & C. Register (2005) "Earthquake Fatalities: The Interaction of Nature and Political Economy" *Journal of Public Economics* 89: 1907–1933.
- Kenny, C. (2009) "Why Do People Die in Earthquakes? The Costs, Benefits and Institutions of Disaster Risk Reduction in Developing Countries" World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4823.
- Keefer, P., E. Neumayer, & T. Plumper (2011) "Earthquake Propensity and the Politics of Mortality Prevention" *World Development* 39(9): 1530–1541.
- Berlinski, C. (2011) "The Politics of Earthquakes" *Los Angeles Times* 24 July at <http://lat.ms/zXKdSc>
- Case studies: Earthquake, İzmit Turkey 1999; Earthquake, Van Turkey 2011

#### **WEEK 5: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF GLOBAL/REGIONAL PUBLIC GOODS [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 4, 5, AND 6]**

- Barrett, S. (2007) "Introduction: The Incentives to Supply Global Public Goods," in *Why Cooperate? The Incentive to Supply Global Public Goods*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–21.
- Enia, J. (2013) "The Spotty Record of the Hyogo Framework for Action: Understanding the Incentives of Natural Disaster Politics and Policy Making" *The Social Science Journal* 50(2): 213–224.
- Case studies: "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction," 2015; Various regional platforms for disaster risk reduction, 2015

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### **THE POLITICS OF DISASTER RESPONSE**

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#### **WEEK 6: HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE MIDST OF DISASTERS [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 1, 2, AND 5]**

- Drabek, T. E. (2010) *The Human Side of Disaster*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, pp. 41–105.
- Case studies: Terrorist attacks, United States 2001; Earthquake and tsunami, Japan 2011; Hurricane Katrina, United States 2005

#### **WEEK 7: THE POLITICS OF DISASTER DECLARATION [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 4, 5, AND 6]**

- McCarthy, F. X. (2014) "FEMA's Disaster Declaration Process: A Primer," Congressional Research Service Report for Congress R43784, pp. 1–32.

- Garrett, T. A. & R. S. Sobel (2003) "The Political Economy of FEMA Disaster Payments," *Economic Inquiry* 41(3): 496–509.
- Reeves, A. (2011) "Political Disaster: Unilateral Powers, Electoral Incentives, and Presidential Disaster Declarations" *The Journal of Politics* 73(4): 1142–1151.
- Case studies: Industrial explosion, West TX, United States 2013; Volcano, Philippines 2014; Volcano, Indonesia 2014.

#### **WEEK 8: FOREIGN AID AND EXTERNAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 3, 5, AND 6]**

- Hannigan, J. (2012) "The Kindness of Strangers" in *Disasters without Borders*, Cambridge: Polity, 42–58.
- Drury, C., R. S. Olson, & D. Van Belle (2005) "The Politics of Humanitarian Aid: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, 1964–1995," *The Journal of Politics* 67(2): 454–473.
- Case studies: Earthquake, Bam Iran 2003; Earthquake, Haiti 2010

### **THE POLITICS OF DISASTER RECOVERY**

#### **WEEK 9: RECOVERY AS A COLLECTIVE ACTION CHALLENGE [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 3, 4, 5, AND 6]**

- Chamlee-Wright, E. (2010) "Collective Action in the Wake of Disaster," in *The Culture and Political Economy of Recovery*, London: Routledge, pp. 39–56.
- Boettke, P., E. Chamlee-Wright, P. Gordon, S. Ikeda, P. Leeson, and R. Sobel (2007) "The Political, Economic, & Social Aspects of Katrina," *Southern Economic Journal* 74(2): 363–376.
- Chamlee-Wright, E. & V. Storr (2009) "Club Goods & Post-Disaster Community Return" *Rationality & Society* 21(4): 429–458.
- Case studies: Hurricane Katrina, United States 2005 (comparing various neighborhoods, parishes)

#### **WEEK 10: THE POLITICS OF RESILIENCE [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, AND 6]**

- Aldrich, D. (2012) Ch. 1 and 2 in *Building Resilience: Social Capital in Post-Disaster Recovery*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1–53.
- Chamlee-Wright, E. & V. Storr (2011) "Social Capital, Lobbying and Community-Based Interest Groups," *Public Choice* 149: 167–185.
- Chamlee-Wright, E. & V. Storr (2008) "The Entrepreneur's Role in Post-Disaster Community Recovery: Implications for Post-Disaster Recovery Policy," Mercatus Policy Series, Policy Primer No. 6. Arlington, VA: George Mason University, pp. 1–11.
- Case studies: Tsunami, Indian Ocean 2004; Earthquake, New Zealand 2010–11

**WEEK 11: CHANGING THE RULES TO AFFECT BETTER OUTCOMES [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 5, 6, AND 7]**

- Kahn, M. E. (2005) "The Death Toll from Natural Disasters: The Role of Income, Geography, and Institutions" *The Review of Economics & Statistics* 87(2): 271–284.
- Coyne, C. (2011) "Constitutions and Crisis" *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 80(2): 351–357.
- Enia, J. (draft) "Capitalist Institutions & Disasters: Do Contract Intensive Economies Save Lives?"
- Case studies: Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda), Philippines 2013; Earthquakes, Nepal 2015.

**THE LINGERING POLITICAL EFFECTS OF DISASTERS****WEEK 12: DISASTERS & POLITICAL CHANGE [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 4 AND 7]**

- Birkland, T. (2007) *Lessons of Disaster: Policy Change After Catastrophic Events* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1-30; 103–156; 157–195.
- Quiroz Flores, A. & A. Smith (2013) "Leader Survival and Natural Disasters," *British Journal of Political Science* 43(4): 821–843.
- Case studies: Earthquake & tsunami, Japan 2011; Earthquake, Guatemala 1976; Earthquake, Chile 2010

**WEEK 13: DISASTERS IN ZONES OF CONFLICT [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 3, 4 AND 7]**

- Akcinaroglu, S., J. DiCicco, & E. Radziszewski (2011) "Avalanches & Olive Branches: A Multimethod Analysis of Disasters and Peacemaking in Interstate Rivalries," *Political Research Quarterly* 64(2) pp. 260–275.
- Slettebak, R. & I. de Soysa (2010 draft paper) "High Temps, High Tempers? Weather-Related Natural Disasters & Civil Conflict" prepared for Conference on Climate Change & Security, Trondheim, Norway, 21–24 June.
- Kelman, I. (2012) "Hypotheses and Research Questions," in *Disaster Diplomacy*, London: Routledge, pp. 11–17.
- Case studies: Earthquake & tsunami, Indonesia 2004; Earthquake & tsunami, Sri Lanka 2004; Earthquake, Pakistan 2005

**WEEK 15: COURSE CONCLUSIONS**



## APPENDIX 1: ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLES

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### WAYS TO EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THIS COURSE AND HANGOUTS<sup>4</sup>

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10% of your grade for this class is based on your participation in discussion via our Google+ site. Another 10% of your grade is based on your participation in our videoconferences via Google Hangouts. In both of these settings, participating in discussion does not necessarily mean writing a lot or speaking a lot (in terms of quantity). Good discussion participation involves people trying to build on, and synthesize, comments from others, and on showing appreciation for others' contributions. It also involves inviting others to say more about what they are thinking.

Below are some specific behavioral examples of good participation in discussion:

Ask a question or make a comment that encourages another person to elaborate on something they have already said. (e.g., I appreciate your criticism of the author's argument, but I'm not sure I fully understand it. Can you provide a specific example that illustrates the tension you discuss?)

Bring in a resource (a reading, web link, video) not covered in the syllabus but one that adds new information/perspectives to our learning.

Make a comment that underscores the link between two people's contributions & make this link explicit in your comment. (e.g., I think that the examples given by Julia and Mary good illustrations of this underlying tension that exists in disaster recovery.)

Post a comment that summarizes our conversations so far and/or suggests new directions and questions to be explored in the future. (e.g., In reviewing the past 2 days of discussion posts, I think a common theme has emerged: these rules have subtle effects that their authors don't always appreciate in advance. In Pete's post, for example...)

Make a comment indicating that you found another person's ideas interesting or useful. Be specific as to why this was the case. (e.g., This is an excellent point, Ben—and it's actually one I've been thinking about quite a bit lately given one of the tensions I see with local-level emergency management in my community...)

Contribute something that builds on, or springs from what someone else has said. Be explicit about the way you are building on the other person's thoughts. (e.g., Ashish, you mention the role of emergency assistance compacts. This reminds me of something that came up during the Bastrop wildfires in 2011...)

Make a comment that at least partly paraphrases a point someone has already made. (e.g., Shirley, is it fair to say that the underlying thrust of your argument is that democracies seem to have institutional safeguards in place that non-democracies do not?)

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<sup>4</sup> Much of this is taken directly and the rest is adapted from Stephen Brookfield, "Class Participation," found on his website at [http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr.\\_Stephen\\_D.\\_Brookfield/Workshop\\_Materials\\_files/Class\\_Participation\\_Grading\\_Rubric.pdf](http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/Class_Participation_Grading_Rubric.pdf)

Ask a cause and effect question (e.g., Can you explain why you think it's true that if these things are in place such and such a thing will occur?)

If it's truly applicable, find a way to express appreciation for what you have gained from the discussion. Try to be specific about what it was that helped you understand something better. (e.g., I've always been puzzled by the variability in individual's preparation for an oncoming disaster—especially in the face of stern warnings from experts. This entire discussion on risk and risk perception has really helped me place some of these behaviors in context. For example...)

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## ANALYTICAL ESSAYS

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### ESSAY PROMPT FOR WEEKS 2-5 [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, AND 6]

Please react to the following argument: "Everything about disaster mitigation and preparedness comes down to risk. While we know more and more about why individuals have difficulty properly thinking about risk, the problem is that something entirely different is going on when we think about risk at a macro level, that is risk involves groups of individuals (e.g., town, city, state, country, etc.). This is why effective policy making will always be nearly impossible when it comes to low probability, high impact events." Do you agree or disagree? In your analysis, feel free to take issue with the prompt in its entirety or with specific segments. Remember to bring in whatever readings you think are relevant for your argument. (And don't just use the readings from the week on risk!) Finally, all I'm looking for is a well-reasoned, well-supported argument. Please don't waste time worrying about my opinion(s) on this issue.

### ESSAY PROMPT FOR WEEKS 6-8 [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, AND 6]

Drabek points out that there is, of course, wide variance in how humans behave in the face of disaster. But there are also some patterns visible. If you're a policymaker, what do you do with this information? As you consider any policies (evacuation or otherwise) that you might develop in an attempt to improve disaster response, be sure to think about the need to balance civil liberties. Also, would these different policies have improved any of the situations that went "poorly" in the Ripley cases? As you analyze and write, remember also to think through some of the readings and discussions we had about institutions. How do various kinds of rule structures and levels of institutional quality play into this discussion?

### ESSAY PROMPT FOR WEEKS 9-11 [LEARNING OBJECTIVES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, AND 7]

Critically analyze the following argument: "The big theme of our three weeks on the politics of disaster recovery is that collective action is more likely to occur and more likely to be effective when it emerges from the bottom up rather than top down. This implies that government should stay out of as much of the disaster recovery process as possible." As you craft your response, be sure to think carefully about all aspects of the argument. You don't have to address every reading in your essay, but at least consider them (especially the cases) as you think about the mechanics and implications of your argument.

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## **COURSE PROJECT**

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A major component of this course is a research project on a course-related topic. You will have two choices to make regarding this project: 1) the topic and 2) the type of project. Please think hard about what interests you, what motivates you, and what will be most beneficial to your career. While the topic of the paper is fairly wide open, the type of project will be limited to one of the following:

### 1. **EXPLANATORY RESEARCH PAPER**

As the title indicates, this type of paper has a goal of explaining some phenomenon. The key here will be starting off with a good research question. Questions that are merely descriptive (e.g., What is the emergency management structure in El Campo?) are not good research questions for this type of paper. Good questions will begin with "why" or "what explains" or something similar. In addition to a good question, this type of paper will contain some review of the relevant literature, a theoretical foundation, and some empirical work (quantitative or qualitative). The paper should be no more than 8,000 words (the typical maximum for an article-length research paper).

### 2. **POLICY-FOCUSED REPORT USING COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

The goal of this project is to produce a report (of the kind that governments and organizations put out) that aims to generate insights into a particular policy issue by systematically comparing multiple cases. There are a number of other possibilities here. For example:

1. Locality X has a policy. Locality Y has this same policy. Compare the way these policies were/weren't influential in two different/similar disasters to explore their effects.
2. Locality X and Y have similar policies. Yet, we see two very different results in similar disaster situations. Why? What are the policy implications?
3. Locality X and Y are similar. But they had very different outcomes in recent (or historical) disasters. What policy differences explain these outcomes? What are the implications?
4. Locality X and Y are very different. Yet they had very similar outcomes in recent (or historical) disasters. Why? What are the policy implications?

The report should be no more than 8,000 words and should be well divided (with headings and subheadings) to make it quickly readable (in the way most reports are). It should also include a 1-page executive summary at the front (which is part of the overall word count).

### 3. **TEACHING CASE**

A teaching case is a very different type of project. The goal is to tell a story about a single event that lends itself to good discussion. Good case studies have no analysis within the case itself. However, the story needs to be compelling and written in a way that introduces the many layers of the issues at hand. Good cases do not suggest single "right" or "wrong" answers—they make readers think and generate debate. One strategy (although there are many) is to write a multi-part decision forcing case. In Part A, the story proceeds up to the point of the decision, laying out all of the issues and tensions, and ends by asking the reader "What would you decide?" Then Part B reveals what the person/organization/etc. actually decided. Any teaching case project must include the story (in one or multiple parts) and a separate "Teaching Notes" section. Here, discuss what the case can be used to teach/illustrate and introduce questions that instructor can use to begin the discussion. The total case (all parts) and the teaching notes should be no more than 8,000 words.

## APPENDIX 2: RUBRICS<sup>5</sup>

### PARTICIPATION RUBRIC (FOR REGULAR INTERACTION AND HANGOUTS)

<b>Evidence of critical analysis (40%)</b>	Is your participation (through any of the ways listed in the "Ways to Effectively Participate..." document) analytical? Are you just posting things on Google+ or "existing" in the video Hangout in order to gain participation points, or are you engaged in attempts to break a problem into their component parts, question assumptions, recognize and critically assess multiple and competing sources of information, evaluate alternative perspectives on problems, think creatively about solutions?
<b>Advance the discussion (40%)</b>	Does your participation (through any of the ways listed in the "Ways to Effectively Participate..." document) make a contribution that establishes or significantly impacts the direction of discussion in a given week or in a single videoconference?
<b>Engage course materials (20%)</b>	Is your participation (through any of the ways listed in the "Ways to Effectively Participate..." document) fundamentally rooted in references to and analysis of course materials (i.e., readings, cases, etc.)?

### ANALYTICAL ESSAYS RUBRIC

	<b>A-level Work</b>	<b>B-level Work</b>	<b>C-level Work</b>	<b>Failing</b>
<b>Argument &amp; Evidence (60%)</b>	A paper of this quality provides a clear summary introduction which states the overall argument clearly. The argument is logical and extremely well	The paper presents an argument that is logical and (for the most part) well organized. However, the paper may overlook a fairly	The paper's argument is good in spots but fairly weak overall. There might be a number of logical inconsistencies. There are	The paper's argument is difficult to ascertain. These papers will have a rambling quality to

<sup>5</sup> At author's institution, graduate students are assessed using A, B, C or F.

	organized. Also the paper marshals evidence in support of the argument in a logical & convincing fashion. It addresses counterarguments by arguing that the evidence better supports its own argument or pointing out their logical deficiencies.	obvious counterargument. In addition, while the paper does a very good job marshaling evidence to buttress the main argument, there may be some small pieces of counter-evidence that are missed or ignored.	likely to be a number of counterarguments that go unaddressed. In addition, it may be the case that the paper "cherry-picks" evidence that suits the author's thesis and doesn't address any counter-evidence.	them, displaying little in the way of formal, systematic arguments. In addition, this paper may have very little evidence to support its argument.
<b>Course Ideas (20%)</b>	The paper makes an argument in the context of the themes, ideas, theories, models, and/or frameworks used in the course.	The paper mentions course material but only employs it in a cursory analysis.	The paper mentions course material but doesn't really utilize it for analysis and/or to address the question/prompt.	The paper barely mentions course material.
<b>Prompt (10%)</b>	A paper of this quality will address all aspects of the prompt.	The paper addresses the majority of the prompt but ignores 1 aspect.	The paper addresses the key aspect of the prompt but ignores a number of other aspects	The paper ignores the key components of the prompt.
<b>Writing Quality (10%)</b>	The paper is completely free of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.	The paper contains 1-2 minor factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.	The paper contains a handful of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors. Your paper would have benefited from another read-through before submission.	The paper is full of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors. Please have an outside reader proofread your papers!

**COURSE PROJECT (RESEARCH PAPER) RUBRIC**

	<b>A-level Work</b>	<b>B-level Work</b>	<b>C-level Work</b>	<b>Failing</b>
<b>Research Question (10%)</b>	<p>The research question is explanatory in nature (e.g., "What explains...?" rather than "What is...?" or "What should be...?")</p> <p>The question is stated clearly in the introduction and there is some discussion of why the question is important: interesting policy implications, a puzzle, etc.</p>	<p>The research question is decent and fits the requirement that it is explanatory. But there is little discussion of why the question is important or interesting.</p>	<p>The research question is descriptive instead of explanatory (e.g., "What is the city of Austin's disaster plan?")</p>	<p>There is no question that guides the paper.</p>
<b>Theoretical Explanation/Approach; Quality of Research (40%)</b>	<p>The answer to the research question is driven first and foremost by existing literature on the topic or a related topic.</p> <p>The argument developed is logical and extremely well organized. If the research is such that it is testing specific hypotheses, the connection between the theory and the hypothesis should be clear.</p>	<p>The paper may have a decent argument, but it is not built on any existing research. There may also be some problems with the organization of the argument or a lack of connection between theory and hypothesis(-es).</p>	<p>The paper's argument is good in spots but fairly weak overall. There might be a number of logical inconsistencies. Or, the paper has a rambling quality to it, displaying little in the way of formal, systematic arguments.</p>	<p>The paper's argument is difficult to ascertain; the paper demonstrates no attempt to make an argument at all; or the argument has nothing to do with the research question.</p>
<b>Evidence/Empirical Work (40%)</b>	<p>The paper marshals evidence in support of the argument in a logical &amp; convincing fashion. It addresses counterarguments by</p>	<p>While the paper does a very good job marshaling evidence to</p>	<p>The paper has weak evidence. For example, it may be the case that the paper "cherry-</p>	<p>This paper has very little—if any—evidence to support its argument.</p>

	arguing that the evidence better supports its own argument or pointing out their logical deficiencies.	buttress the main argument, there may be some small pieces of counter-evidence that are missed or under explored.	picks" evidence that suits the author's thesis and doesn't address any counter-evidence.	
<b>Writing Quality (10%)</b>	The paper is completely free of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.	The paper contains 1-2 minor factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.	The paper contains a handful of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors. The paper would have benefited from another read-through before submission.	The paper is full of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.

**COURSE PROJECT (COMPARATIVE POLICY REPORT) RUBRIC**

	<b>A-level Work</b>	<b>B-level Work</b>	<b>C-level Work</b>	<b>Failing</b>
<b>Interesting policy focus (15%)</b>	The report has an interesting policy-related question at its core. In the introduction to the report (or whatever the first section is called) considerable effort will be made to show why this policy question—the subject of the report—is important.	The topic of the report is decent, but there is little discussion of why the question is important or interesting.	The topic of the report is obvious and/or uninteresting on its face, and (more importantly) there is not much of an attempt to make the case that this is an important topic.	Focus of the report has no real policy implications, and the report makes no attempt to persuade the reader otherwise.

<p><b>Employment of comparative analysis (25%)</b></p>	<p>The cases employed in the report—and the way the comparative analysis is conducted—create a fairly clear path toward answering your question or providing analytical depth on your issue.</p>	<p>The report makes a decent effort to employ a comparative analysis—but there are some marginal questions about the specific cases selected and extent to which the comparison can help deal with the topic of the report.</p>	<p>The report utilizes comparative analysis, but the cases have little relevance for the issue/question at the core of the report. More importantly, there is little attempt to persuade the reader otherwise.</p>	<p>The report makes no use of comparative analysis.</p>
<p><b>Depth and quality of research (25%)</b></p>	<p>The report marshals evidence in support of the argument in a logical and convincing fashion. It relies on a number of sources including primary sources where available.</p>	<p>The evidence in the report is generally good, but there are 1-2 pieces of obvious evidence that were absent from the report.</p>	<p>The evidence in the report is barely satisfactory.</p>	<p>The evidence in the report is not satisfactory at all. There are little (if any) citations provided for many of the assertions made in the report.</p>
<p><b>Discussion of implications (25%)</b></p>	<p>The report does an excellent job connecting the comparative analysis to novel and interesting policy implications.</p>	<p>The report does a good job connecting the comparative analysis to policy implications. Here, though, some of the connections are not as obvious.</p>	<p>The report does a weak job connecting the comparative analysis to policy implications.</p>	<p>The report contains no real discussion of the policy implications of the comparative analysis.</p>
<p><b>Writing Quality (10%)</b></p>	<p>The report is completely free of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.</p>	<p>The report contains 1-2 minor factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.</p>	<p>The report contains a handful of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors. The paper would have benefited from another read-through before submission.</p>	<p>The report is full of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.</p>



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**COURSE PROJECT (TEACHING CASE) RUBRIC**


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	<b>A-level Work</b>	<b>B-level Work</b>	<b>C-level Work</b>	<b>Failing</b>
<b>Compelling story (15%)</b>	The case is very compelling. If I were reading this for a case discussion, I would be chomping at the bit to get to the discussion because it introduces a number of obvious and very interesting topics for discussion.	The case is interesting and generally well written. But if I were reading it for a case discussion it would be a bit less obvious to me what we would need to talk about after reading the case.	The case is not very interesting, and it is obvious that any discussion we might have afterward would be pretty short and not all that useful.	No attempt is made to tell a story that is interesting or think in terms of what might be pedagogically useful.
<b>Introduces a number of analytical layers (25%)</b>	An A-level case study will be like an onion: as the reader peels back the layers about (for example) decisions made, policies changed, etc., he/she only encounters more layers. A-level cases tell stories for which there is no obvious "right answers" and for which the reader should be left having to think deeply about the issues involved.	The case achieves some analytical depth, but falls short in 1-2 places.	The case makes attempts to achieve depth, but consistently falls short.	The case makes no attempt to achieve analytical depth.
<b>Depth and quality of research (25%)</b>	The case contains a wide range of sources and introduces a wide number of voices.	The case contains a decent number of sources and voices, but there are 1-2 voices and/or bits of evidence that are missing.	The case is told from a very small number of perspectives (given the actors involved) and relies on very few pieces of evidence.	The underlying research for the case is not satisfactory at all. There are little (if any) citations provided and no attempt to introduce multiple voices.

<p><b>Teaching/discussion questions. (25%)</b></p>	<p>An A-level case includes a "Teaching Notes" section that includes a series of ideas for teaching the case. These are most often discussion questions that are very thoughtfully tied to the specifics of the case. In addition, it should be obvious to the reader that these questions will generate a good amount of discussion.</p>	<p>The case contains good teaching ideas and/or questions but there are 1-2 obvious ideas/questions that are missing.</p>	<p>The case contains a couple of questions but these are barely satisfactory.</p>	<p>The case contains no teaching ideas or questions.</p>
<p><b>Writing Quality (10%)</b></p>	<p>The case is completely free of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.</p>	<p>The case contains 1-2 minor factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.</p>	<p>The case contains a handful of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors. The paper would have benefited from another read-through before submission.</p>	<p>The case is full of factual, grammatical, syntactical, and/or spelling errors.</p>