

GEOG 306 Geographies of Disaster

Course Description

This course provides a broad global overview of disasters resulting from natural or technological hazards. Disasters continue to maim and kill; the property losses continue to increase. This course emphasizes the spatial and temporal distribution of hazards, the human impact of disaster, roles played by technology and society in creating or worsening risky situations, and policy options for disaster preparation and loss reduction. This is an approved General Education course and is part of Upper Division Theme U Catastrophe and Humanity.

Course Objectives

- Understanding how the analysis of natural disasters illuminates the relationship between society and nature
- Gaining insights into how different societies manage crises
- Identifying the "normal" response to disaster
- Providing insights into how natural disasters are inevitable byproducts of human interaction with their environment

Course Materials

Required: Guide to Global Hazards by Robert Kovach and Bill McGuire, Firefly, 2003
"Earthweek" at www.earthweek.com, at <http://wizard.csuchico.edu:8092/>, or each week in your Saturday newspaper.

Course Grading: Attendance is not mandatory, but absences generally have an adverse impact on a student's grade. Make-up work will be permitted only with instructor approval. Grades will be awarded in accordance with University catalog standards. Classroom participation will be considered when resolving borderline grades. Course grades will be determined in the following manner:

Assignment	Value	Total
Exam questions	3@5 points	15 points
Earthweek Quiz	12@5 points	60 points
Bidwell Mansion	1@20 points	20 points
Lecture Review	1@20 points	20 points
Play Review	1@20 points	20 points
Midterm Exams	2@40 points	80 points
Final Exam	1@40 points	50 points
Total		265 points

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exams: There will be three midterm examinations and one final examination. The exams are a combination of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, matching, and essay questions. The final exam is comprehensive.

Exam Questions: Each student will submit four exam questions (multiple choice format) for each exam.

Readings: Students will read the news column *Earthweek*. Other readings will be posted on Professor Melcon's website (<http://wizard.csuchico.edu:8092>). A short quiz on the previous week's column will be given each Tuesday.

Mansion Tour: Students will visit the Bidwell Mansion Visitor Center and tour the mansion. A listing of hazards and disasters present in the museum displays and tours will be compiled, and a two-page review of the site will be prepared and submitted on the date of the first exam.

On the Creek Lecture: Terry Tempest Williams: Environmental advocate and author Williams will be speaking about her newest book *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*. *Finding Beauty* chronicles Williams' search to find a reason for the mindless destruction and despair that surrounds us. A two-page review of the lecture will be prepared and submitted on the date of the second exam.

Theater Performance: Students will attend and write a review of the play "The Laramie Project" by Moises Kaufman. The play will be produced at the Blue Room Theatre (above Collier's Hardware store at 1st and Broadway in downtown Chico) during the first three weeks of November. A two-page review of the play will be prepared and submitted on the date of the third exam.

Field Trip: A single field trip will take place during "dead week" preceding the final exam. The field trip will be to Lassen Park, Lake Oroville, or the Sacramento floodplain.

Course paper: Each student will collect ten news articles concerned with a single disaster occurring after 1 October, 2008. An analysis of the articles, along with printed copies of the articles themselves, will be submitted at the final exam. The paper will be in essay format, typed and double-spaced, and no more than three-four in length. The paper will discuss the articles in the context of course concepts.

GEOG 306 COURSE SCHEDULE

Date (week of)		Text Topic/ Activity	Tuesday/Thursday Section
Aug	25	Earthquakes, Volcanoes	
Sept	1	Tsunami, Waves, Storm	
	8	Surges Coastal Erosion, Ice Hazards	
	15	Flooding	
	22		
	29	Winds, Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Storms	Bidwell Mansion review due at exam Midterm Exam Thursday 10/02
Oct	6	Rain, Hail, Lightning Snow and Ice, Avalanches, Landslides	
	13	Desertification, Drought, Famine	Terry Tempest Williams, Lecture 10/15
	20		Williams lecture review due Thursday 10/23
	27	Fires	
Nov	3	Diseases	
	10	Water Pollution, Ozone Depletion, Acid Rain, Land Contamination	
	17		Midterm Exam Thursday 11/20 <i>Laramie</i> review due Thursday 11/20
	24	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec	1	Global Warming, El Niño	
	8	Meteorites and Comets, Great Extinctions	
	15		Final Exam 12/16 Tuesday 12:00-1:50