**DEMS 3707 | Fall 2019 | Syllabus Summary**

Mondays, 4:00-7:00pm, HNE Room B15

Dr. Eric Kennedy, eric.kennedy@yorku.ca

**Our Goal:**

How do humans think when they’re trying to escape a disaster? How do the brains of firefighters or police officers react when they’re responding? How can you convince people to actually get prepared before the catastrophe hits? And, what effect do disasters have on our psychology?

This class is all about the human dimensions of disasters and emergencies. We’ll be exploring psychology, cognitive science, sociology, philosophy, and other disciplines to understand how disasters affect us on an individual level. This course is meant to complement DEMS 3708 (“Social Issues in Disaster Management”), which explores the social and community dimensions of DEM. You’re more than welcome to take only one, but it’s worth considering both!

**Weekly Themes:**

Week 1: Our Limited Brains

Week 2: Rational Choice Theory & Bounded Rationality

Week 3: Cultural Cognition

Week 4: Evacuation Behaviour

Week 5: Decision Making Under Stress/Recognition Primed Decision Making

Week 6: Thinking about the Future & Probabilities

Week 7: Psychology of Risk Tolerance

Week 8: Motivating Change

Week 9: Thinking like a Bureaucrat

Week 10: Development of Expertise

Week 11: Psychological Trauma & PTSD

Week 12: Protective Factors and Mental Health

**Assignments:**

There are three assignments in this course. Throughout the term, you’ll bring **six reading reflections** to class (on weeks of your choice!) that link the two weekly readings together. You’ll also write a **synthesis paper** where you apply the theory we’re learning to your prospective career. Finally, you’ll work on a **term paper** which analyzes a disaster or emergency through a psychological lens. This assignment will require a proposal/outline, a first draft, and a final draft.

**Benefits & Challenges:**

This class is heavy on both reading and writing. Some of the articles we read will be very dense and difficult, and you’ll be challenged to think deeply about how to integrate the theories you’re learning with real-world case studies. It’s a class where you can learn a lot about the psychology of disasters – and have fun along the way! – but it’s important that you are mentally prepared for the challenge. In return, you’ll leave the class with a much richer understanding of how we think about, during, and after disasters.

**DEMS 3707 | Fall 2019 | Detailed Syllabus**

Mondays, 4:00-7:00pm, HNE Room B15

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**Introduction**

How do people deal with the stress and anxiety induced by experiencing an emergency? What determines which disasters we’re afraid of and which ones we don’t care about? Why do so many people choose not to evacuate, even when they’re given lots of warning? How do emergency managers make high-stakes decisions when everything is confusing and uncertain? And, how do you actually motivate people to prepare for disasters?

This class is all about the human dimensions of disasters, with a special emphasis on the psychology and cognitive science of emergencies. Each week will have a different theme, where we’ll be linking a case study with theory from disciplines like psychology, cognitive science, sociology, and philosophy. By the end of the course you should have a good handle on a variety of the ways that psychology shapes the field of disaster and emergency management, as well as related areas.

It’s worth noting that this isn’t a class that’s narrowly focused on PTSD or the psychological impacts of disasters on individuals. While we will discuss these topics during two of the weeks, there are also a huge number of other psychological and cognitive issues that are important to consider, from how individuals and governments make decisions to how we can encourage people to take ownership over being better prepared.

We’re also here to do more than just talk about the psychology of disasters. This is also a class about reading, writing, and critical thinking. While we’re looking at topics in disaster and emergency management, our ultimate goals are broader. These are transferable skills that are applicable beyond just emergency management! You’ll see that the assignments below require significant writing – and also mean that you need to be doing the readings each week. The philosophy is simple: by doing /smaller/ amounts of work on a regular basis, you’ll learn more and do better than if you try to cram a paper at the end of the semester.

An important note: you don’t need to be a Disaster and Emergency Management student to benefit from, enjoy, or participate fully in this class! While we’ll talk about lots of disasters, we’ll also be exploring issues around science, decision-making, and psychology more broadly. As long as you have at least a little interest in disasters or emergencies, you’re likely to find material you’ll enjoy and connect with.

Finally, this is a class where participation and thoughtfulness are key. During our sessions together, we’ll be having activities, guest speakers, debates, group work, and lots of other modes of interacting. Doing well in this class means being engaged fully!

**Textbooks & Readings**

To reduce the cost you face – and because no single book is a perfect resource – there is no required textbook in this course. Each week you will have readings to complete in advance of the class, ranging from after action reports to policy documents to laws to textbook chapters. These readings will be posted on Moodle, which is the definitive guide to what you should read on a weekly basis (it may change from what’s listed in this syllabus).

**Assignments**

In this class, I’m looking for you to demonstrate what you’re learning in three different ways: (1) short reflections on the readings, (2) a paper that reflects on how you’ll apply the lessons from in-class to your future job, and (3) a paper that applies the theory from class to a new disaster case study.

Assignment 1: Reading Reflections

First, I’ll be asking you to write a **very short reflection on the readings** (no more than 300 words). Each week will always have two readings: one piece of ‘theory’ and one case study. Your task is to apply the theory to the case study *in a way that helps us understand the case study better*. In other words, what does the theory tell us that helps explain why things happened the way they did? We’ll do the first week’s in class together to help you get the hang of it.

You are expected to submit seven of these assignments throughout the term (a total of 30% of your overall grade). The first two assignments will be worth 2.5% each, and you’ll work on them in groups during class on Week 2 and Week 3 (the theory papers are complicated those weeks!). For the remaining five – worth 5% each – you write them individually before coming to class. You must submit them in person (hard copy) in class. You can choose which weeks (W4-W11) you hand these in, but I’d recommend that you start early for two reasons:

1. *There is no way to make up assignments you’ve missed*. I’ll be giving you feedback on each one that you hand in. Your job is to apply that feedback to become a better reader and writer throughout the semester. So, you couldn’t get that benefit if you waited until the end of the semester to hand them all in! If you start handing these in early (week 4, week 5…), then that gives you flexibility if things go wrong later in the semester (e.g., if you get sick in week 12).
2. The final paper is basically a big version of this assignment. The earlier you practice them and get feedback, the earlier you can start on your final assignment (which usually translates into doing better!).

If you so desire, you are welcome to hand in more than 5 – although I will prioritize giving detailed feedback to those on their first 5. I will consider your best 5 scores.

Here’s what I’m looking for when I grade the reading reflections:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Excellent:5 points | * You’ve chosen interesting, specific parts of the case study and reading that are relevant to each other.
* You’ve demonstrated an exceptionally detailed understanding of the theory and case study alike.
* You’ve been able to apply the theory to reveal something about the case study in a way that surprises and intrigues me.
 |
| Above average:4 points | * You’ve demonstrated that you understand nearly all of the theory and case study in an accurate way.
* You’ve selected an interesting part of the case study that has relevance to the theory and made the connection clearly.
* Your connection is a fair application of the theory and helps to illustrate something about why the case study happened the way it did.
 |
| Meets expectations:3 points | * You’ve demonstrated that you have a good understanding of much of the theory and case study.
* You’re able to apply the theory to something within the case study in a way that is relevant, although the connection might not be terribly unique or precise.
 |
| Problems!0, 1, 2 points | * There’s a problem in your understanding of the case study or theory.
* Your connection doesn’t really make sense or contains errors.
* You didn’t hand the assignment in in-person, or left class after handing it in.
* There was plagiarism academic dishonesty.
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Assignment 3: Why Does This Matter?

One of the things I’m looking for is to see you applying the lessons from this class to your own professional development. It’s okay if you don’t know ‘what you want to do with your life,’ but in this assignment I want you to consider a career you *might* hold in the future. In 800-1,200 words, you should reflect on how the lessons you have learned in-class thus far will be useful (or not!) going forward.

A few notes:

1. This assignment is deliberately open-ended. You might choose to focus on 3 key lessons and explore them in detail, or to choose 5 or 6 that are interconnected and talk about what you’ve learned from thinking about how they connect. You’re allowed to be creative in this essay, and it doesn’t need to follow a traditional essay structure.
2. You can write in first person, although I do expect the assignment to have polished grammar, writing, and argumentation. You should also use a consistent style to cite ideas from class or elsewhere – normal plagiarism rules apply.

This assignment will be due on November 2nd at 11:59pm, and is worth 25% of your grade. A detailed rubric will be distributed by the 6th week of class.

Assignment 3: Final Paper – A Deep Dive

Your final paper for the class, due on December 7th at 11:59pm, is a chance to demonstrate your ability to understand the theories and apply them to a real-world disaster, emergency, or crisis. I define these quite broadly, so don’t feel like you have to choose a common example of a disaster. The only rule is that it cannot be one of the case studies we’re considering in class.

Once you’ve chosen a disaster, emergency, or crisis, your task is to use three theoretical ideas from class to help analyze that case study. This is like a scaled up version of the reading reflections: your job is to help me understand the disaster more richly, accurately, and insightfully through your theoretical analysis.

You’ll hand in this assignment in three parts:

1. First, on September 28th at 11:59pm, you’ll turn in a ~100-word summary that explains (a) your chosen case study and (b) what part of the case study you’re focusing on (most disasters are too big for this assignment!). In addition, you should list bibliographic details for 3 different, reliable sources for data about this disaster. With each, you should provide 3 sentences that articulate (a) what this source can offer, (b) what the limitations of this source are, and (c) your reaction – based on what you’ve read – of how this source differs from the others. This is worth 5% of your final grade.
2. Second, on October 19th at 11:59pm, you’ll turn in a draft of the first application of your paper. As 1/3rd of the overall paper, this should be between 600-900 words long. It will be graded on the same criteria as the weekly reading reflections, but with much higher expectations (given you’ve been getting feedback all semester long!). This is worth 10% of your grade.
3. Third, on December 7th at 11:59pm you should turn in the final 2,000-3,000 word paper, which is worth 30% of your final grade.

**Outline of Course Topics**

***Note that the readings in this list will be finalized by the end of August, with an updated copy of the syllabus distributed then.***

Week 1: Our Limited Brains

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| --- | --- |
| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:*  |
| We like to think that we’re really good at making decisions, but it turns out that we’re actually quite flawed. Our brains have limited capacity and have evolved to use a large number of shortcuts to compensate. In this first class, we’ll explore the symptoms of these cognitive limitations through illusions and fallacies. We’ll also discuss the syllabus, the weekly reflection assignments, and the semester ahead. |

Week 2: Rational Choice Theory & Bounded Rationality

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| --- | --- |
| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:* Kahneman, D. (2003). A perspective on judgment and choice: mapping bounded rationality. *American psychologist*, *58*(9), 697. |
| In the first week, we discussed the ways our brains are limited and prone to errors – but we need to understand this in more detail. Throughout history, economists (and others) have made a big assumption: that humans are ‘rational.’ But we’re not… we are full of emotion, bias, and limitations. This week, our theoretical reading is pretty difficult (so I’ve chosen a much easier case study!). We’ll work together in class to unpack what Kahneman means by ‘Bounded Rationality,’ and what it means for disasters and disaster management. |

Week 3: Cultural Cognition

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:* Kahan, D. M., Jenkins‐Smith, H., & Braman, D. (2011). Cultural cognition of scientific consensus.*Journal of risk research, 14(2)*, 147-174. |
| If people don’t make decisions on a *rational*basis, how do they decide? In this class, we’ll be exploring the other things that influence our decision-making. We work through our second challenging reading of the semester – Kahan’s Cultural Cognition – so we’ll spend some time making sure that we understand it fully. We’ll also explore some other theories about how our decisions are influenced by ‘non-rational’ factors. |

Week 4: Decision-Making in an Emergency

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* Evacuation Behaviour |  |
| *Theory:*  |
| In week 2 and 3, we explored how decision-making is limited: we’re not very rational and we tend to use other, affective factors to guide our choices. What happens when you introduce stress, panic, and emergency to the equation? This week, we’ll explore how people react when you inject chaos! We’ll take a deep dive into behaviour during evacuations, using both micro (e.g., escaping a building) and macro (e.g., escaping a hurricane) examples. |

Week 5: Responder Decision-Making Under Stress

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* Mann Gulch Story |  |
| *Theory:* RPDM article |
| By now, you’ll be quite familiar with how bad us lay-people are at thinking clearly. But, certainly professionals – like firefighters or paramedics or emergency managers – must be better, right? Not so fast! We’ll explore how decision-making can get all messed up for responders as well using examples from firefighting and policing, before turning to some of the more positive things that can be done to help improve decisions. |

Week 6: Thinking about the Future and Probabilities

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:* Gigerenzer, G., Hertwig, R., Van Den Broek, E., Fasolo, B., & Katsikopoulos, K. V. (2005). “A 30% chance of rain tomorrow”: How does the public understand probabilistic weather forecasts?. Risk Analysis: An International Journal, 25(3), 623-629. |
| To this point, we’ve focused mostly on making decisions about the here and now: what do we do with the stuff in front of us. But, lots of decision-making isn’t about the obvious stuff we can see… instead, it’s about things like the future or possible outcomes. We’ll start by looking at something that seems simple (but isn’t!) – how we understand weather forecasts – before diving into more complicated ways of ‘seeing the future.’ |

Week 7: Psychology of risk tolerance (where we live)

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:*  |
| To bring things back to crisis and emergencies, one specific kind of prediction we have to make is about *risk*. Where should we live? What planes should we fly? What should we eat? Will climate change kill us all? This week, we’ll dive in to what happens when we add our own values, hopes, and fears to those probabilities. We’ll explore the cognitive psychology of risk and try to explain why different people see different things as being risky. |

Week 8: Motivating change

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:*  |
| So far we’ve discussed a lot of challenges and many ways that questionable decision-makers. Is there any hope for improving things? This week we’ll be talking about solutions. First, how do you get someone to change their mind? And, second, if they *do* change their mind, how do you get them to change their behaviour?  |

Week 9: Thinking like a government

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:*  |  |
| *Theory:* Chapter 1 from Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press. |
| We usually think of ‘thinking’ as something that happens at an individual level. But, when we get together as groups, two things happen. First, the very way that we think changes. Second, some of our ‘thinking’ doesn’t happen only in our brains anymore, but as a group instead. This week we’ll talk about how groups think with a focus on governments (because you’re like to work for/with one!). |

Week 10: Development of expertise

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:*  |
| Throughout our discussions in the class, we’ve assumed something of a dichotomy between ‘the public’ and ‘experts.’ We hold police officers or emergency managers to higher standards and expect them to think more clearly about the risks they’re managing. But what makes these ‘experts’ different? And, how does somebody even become an expert in the first place? We’ll investigate different theories of how people become experts and think about what skills you should take away to become a *good* expert yourself! |

Week 11: Psychological Trauma & PTSD

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:*  |
| It would be impossible to have a course exploring the human dimensions of emergencies without considering how they affect us and our brains. This week we’ll take a trip through the psychological impacts of disasters, with a special focus on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We’ll focus on understanding why disasters cause impacts on our mental health and what this can mean for different groups.  |

Week 12: Protective Factors and Mental Health

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| **You’ll read:** | **Notes** |
| *Case Study:* |  |
| *Theory:*  |
| Finally, we’ll try to end the course on a slightly more positive note, exploring what positive things you can do to take care of your own mental health while being in the field of emergency management. We’ll discuss the idea of ‘protective factors’ and identify what differentiates those who can survive – and even thrive! – in difficult situations versus those who suffer tremendously. |

**Late Assignments & Grading**

There is a lot of material in this class and the readings are complementary. By ‘complementary’ I mean that you need to read the materials to fully understand what’s happening in class, but (1) you can’t substitute readings for being in class nor (2) attending class for doing the readings. You need both to be successful! To get top grades in this course, you need to be present in class, stay on top of your readings, and demonstrate mastery on the fundamentals each and every week.

That being said, life happens: family emergencies, illnesses/injuries, mental health challenges, and similar pressures can arise. As such, I have a few options that are available to help you make this class work well with your life.

* For the weekly reflections, you only need to turn in seven. Of course, you’re welcome to turn in more (as explained earlier). But, if life happens, there’s some flexibility built in here. Do remember, though, that there is no ability to turn in these assignments late or to make them up if they are not completed.
* For the rest of your assignments, I offer the option of a 24-hour extension, no questions asked. Take care of the stuff that matters – you don’t need to disclose what’s going on or explain yourself. All you need to do to take advantage of this extension is to *notify me by email before the deadline* that you’ll be requesting this extension. It’s automatic, so no need for confirmation back from me – simply turn in the materials within 24 hours of the original deadline.
	+ If you need additional accommodation beyond this 24-hour period, please reach out to me by email. I’m happy to work with you to figure out a plan that allows you to perform well on the deliverable. The earlier you can reach out to me, the more flexible I can be (both in terms of *what* kinds of issues we can accommodate and *how* we can accommodate them). Don’t be afraid: reach out early, as soon as you know something will impact you.
	+ Beyond the 24-hr window, or if you fail to notify me by email by the due date, late assignments will have their grade reduced by 5% per 24-hr period *beginning from the date it was due*. So, if the assignment was due Friday at 11:59pm, you notified me before then that you were taking the 24-hour extension (i.e., that you’ll hand it in by Saturday at 11:59pm), but you handed it in on Sunday at 10:13am, it would receive a deduction of 10%.
	+ Finally, unless individual accommodations are arranged before the due-date, late assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days (168 hours) after the original due date.

If you need additional accommodations beyond those listed above, please contact me as soon as possible. I’m happy to work with you to help you succeed at this course. The earlier you reach out, the more flexible I can be in working with you.

Both the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and the School of Administrative Studies require that grades follow a pre-determined distribution. As such, please note that final grades may be adjusted to comply with these requirements.

**Discussion Hours/Office Hours**

One of the bonuses of being in university: you don’t just get our class time together. You can also get one-on-one opportunities to discuss things related to the class. These are typically called ‘office hours,’ but they’re basically just a chance to come talk to the professor, get help on assignments, discuss a reading in more detail, or work through something you’re struggling with. Because you all have different schedules, I run my ‘office hours’ by appointment. To schedule a meeting, send me an email with 2-4 suggested times that could work well for you. Please note that it can sometimes take several days from when you first think of having a meeting until it actually happens… so if you want to discuss an assignment, plan ahead and don’t request a meeting the day before!

Generally speaking, I hold office hours at my office, Atkinson 249. That said, many of you commute a long distance to get to York and have very busy personal and professional lives in addition to school! I’m happy to set up an ‘office hour’ via Zoom Meeting or phone to save you a trip in. I’d rather meet via Zoom or phone than have you pay to take the bus or subway to York just to chat with me.

**University Regulations**

At the end of every syllabus, you’ll find a bunch of text (the university regulations that follow) that looks familiar. Make sure to read it carefully, as it’s here to provide you with protections and resources for different kinds of situations you might face as a student. I’ve provided a little bit of context with each different topic to help explain why it matters.

Most importantly, please don’t be afraid to talk to me with questions or concerns. I care about your success in this course, in your degree, and in your development as a person, and so I’m eager to help make sure that you can perform to the best of your ability. The earlier you reach out with a question or concern (e.g., a need that you have, an uncertainty about something in an assignment or the syllabus, or a change that’s happened), the more quickly and effectively we can figure out accommodations and options that work well for you. Contact me by email any time or drop by an office hour – whatever you’re more comfortable with.

**Deferred Standing**

In some cases, you might encounter a situation (e.g., illness, family emergencies, religious observances, etc) that prevents you from being able to complete all outstanding coursework by the last day of classes. To be able to turn in this coursework – rather than receive a zero – you can formally apply for something called “deferred standing.” As the university regulations state:

*Deferred standing may be granted to students who are unable to write their final examination at the scheduled time or to submit their outstanding course work on the last day of classes. Details can be found at* [*http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing*](http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing)*. Any request for deferred standing on medical grounds must include an Attending Physician's Statement form; a “Doctor’s Note” will not be accepted.*

*DSA Form:* [*http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/deferred\_standing\_agreement.pdf*](http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/deferred_standing_agreement.pdf)

*Attending Physician's Statement form:* [*http://registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/attending-physicians-statement.pdf*](http://registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/attending-physicians-statement.pdf)

*In order to apply for deferred standing, students must register at* [*http://apps.eso.yorku.ca/apps/adms/deferredexams.nsf*](http://apps.eso.yorku.ca/apps/adms/deferredexams.nsf)

*[The online registration must be] followed by handing in a completed DSA form and supporting documentation directly to the main office of the School of Administrative Studies (282 Atkinson) and add your ticket number to the DSA form. The DSA and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than five (5) business days from the date of the exam. These requests will be considered on their merit and decisions will be made available by logging into the above mentioned link. No individualized communication will be sent by the School to the students (no letter or e-mails).*

*Students with approved DSA will be able to write their deferred examination during the School's deferred examination period. No further extensions of deferred exams shall be granted. The format and covered content of the deferred examination may be different from that of the originally scheduled examination. The deferred exam may be closed book, cumulative and comprehensive and may include all subjects/topics of the textbook whether they have been covered in class or not. Any request for deferred standing on medical grounds must include an Attending Physician's Statement form; a “Doctor’s Note” will not be accepted.*

Remember, don’t be afraid to contact me if you’re concerned that factors like illness, personal or family needs, or other constraints might be affecting your ability to complete this class effectively. You do not need to initiate these formal proceedings with me to have a conversation about possible accommodations.

**Academic Honesty**

In everything you do in this class, your work must be your own. Among other things, you can’t cheat, copy someone else’s work, use someone’s ideas without attribution, turn in material you already submitted somewhere else (like for another course), or have someone else do your work for you. In short, you need to practice “academic honesty” by submitting only your own work and giving credit whenever you’re using someone else’s ideas. Remember: it’s not a problem to build on the ideas of others, but they must be given acknowledgement in a clear and easy to understand way, and they cannot make up the bulk of what you do.

Both York University and I take academic honesty very seriously. If you cheat, use ideas without attribution, or commit other forms of academic dishonesty, you could face penalties like reduced grades, being required to entirely rewrite assignments, or even being suspended from the university. As the formal regulation states,

*The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies considers breaches of the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty to be serious matters. The Senate Policy on Academic Honesty is an affirmation and clarification for members of the University of the general obligation to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. As a clear sense of academic honesty and responsibility is fundamental to good scholarship, the policy recognizes the general responsibility of all faculty members to foster acceptable standards of academic conduct and of the student to be mindful of and abide by such standards. Suspected breaches of academic honesty will be investigated and charges shall be laid if reasonable and probable grounds exist.*

*Students should review the York Academic Honesty policy for themselves at:* [*http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69*](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69)

*Students might also wish to review the interactive on-line Tutorial for students on academic integrity, at:* [*https://spark.library.yorku.ca/academic-integrity-what-is-academic-integrity/*](https://spark.library.yorku.ca/academic-integrity-what-is-academic-integrity/)

**Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy**

It’s important that you understand how I will be grading your work in this course. It’s outlined in this syllabus so that you can decide if this is the right course for you. You’ll also receive 40% of your grade (assignment 2 and 3.1/3.2) as well as however many reflections you’ve submitted before the ‘withdrawal without grade’ deadline (November 8, 2019) so that you’re able to make an informed choice about whether to continue in the class. As the university states in their regulations,

*The grading scheme (i.e. kinds and weights of assignments, essays, exams, etc.) shall be announced, and be available in writing, within the first two weeks of class, and, under normal circumstances, graded feedback worth at least 15% of the final grade for Fall, Winter or Summer Term, and 30% for ‘full year’ courses offered in the Fall/Winter Term be received by students in all courses prior to the final withdrawal date from a course without receiving a grade, with the following exceptions:*

*Note: Under unusual and/or unforeseeable circumstances which disrupt the academic norm, instructors are expected to provide grading schemes and academic feedback in the spirit of these regulations, as soon as possible. For more information on the Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy, please visit:* [*http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=86*](http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=86)

**In-Class Tests and Exams - the 20% Rule**

In this course, no assignments are worth more than 20% and assignments are spaced out throughout the term, making it easy to comply with this university regulation:

*For all Undergraduate courses, except those which regularly meet on Friday evening or on a weekend, tests or exams worth more than 20% will not be held in the two weeks prior to the beginning of the official examination period. For further information on the 20% Rule, please visit:* [*http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/limits-on-the-worth-of-examinations-in-the-final-classes-of-a-term-policy/*](http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/limits-on-the-worth-of-examinations-in-the-final-classes-of-a-term-policy/)

**Reappraisals**

It’s possible that you might have a concern about the grade that you receive for your work in this class. If this occurs, you should contact me via email or office hours to discuss the grade received. I’m happy to take time to explain the grade, consider concerns you might have with how it was graded, and offer feedback about how you can do better on future assignments. If you still have concerns after this process, there’s also a formal procedure that you can use to request a “reappraisal” of your grade. As noted by the university regulations, it’s important to remember that this request could result in an increase, decrease, or no change to your grade:

*Students may, with sufficient academic grounds, request that a final grade in a course be reappraised (which may mean the review of specific pieces of tangible work). Non-academic grounds are not relevant for grade reappraisals; in such cases, students are advised to petition to their home Faculty.*

*Students are normally expected to first contact the course director to discuss the grade received and to request that their tangible work be reviewed. Tangible work may include written, graphic, digitized, modeled, video recording or audio recording formats, but not oral work. Students need to be aware that a request for a grade reappraisal may result in the original grade being raised, lowered or confirmed. For reappraisal procedures and information, please visit the Office of the Registrar site at:* [*http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/grade-reappraisal-policy*](http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/grade-reappraisal-policy)

**Accommodations**

It’s important to me – and the university! – that you’re able to perform to the best of your abilities in your courses. There are many reasons that you might need to make adjustments, including religious observances, emergencies, disabilities, or other factors. I encourage you to reach out as early as possible about these needs, and can help direct you to the appropriate procedures, resources, and alternatives. There’s no reason to be afraid or ashamed about these kinds of topics – I want to work with you to help you be as successful as possible here at York, and I recognize that each student has a unique set of perspectives, experiences, and needs. When possible, the earlier you contact me, the more opportunities there are to develop accommodations that are convenient for everyone involved. The University Regulations offer a few details:

*Accommodations Procedures: LA&PS students who have experienced a misfortune or who are too ill to attend the final examination in an ADMS course should not attempt to do so; they must pursue deferred standing. Other students should contact their home Faculty for information. For further information, please visit:* [*http://ds.info.yorku.ca/academic-support-accomodations/*](http://ds.info.yorku.ca/academic-support-accomodations/)

*Religious Accommodations: York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. For more information on religious accommodation, please visit:* [*https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs*](https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs)

*Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses. Provided that students have given sufficient notice about their accommodation needs, instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate these needs in a manner consistent with the guidelines established hereunder. For more information, please visit the Counselling and Disability Services website at* [*http://www.yorku.ca/dshub/*](http://www.yorku.ca/dshub/)*. York’s disabilities offices and the Registrar’s Office work in partnership to support alternate exam and test accommodation services for students with disabilities at the Keele campus. For more information on alternate exams and tests please visit* [*http://www.yorku.ca/altexams/*](http://www.yorku.ca/altexams/)*. Please alert the Course Director as soon as possible should you require special accommodations.*