



DEMS
3706

Humans & Disasters
Special Theme: COVID-19

Summer 2020 | *Dr. Eric Kennedy* | *Online Course* | *ebk@yorku.ca*

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What this course is all about...

How do people deal with the stress and anxiety of an emergency? What determines which disasters we're afraid of and which we don't care about? Why do 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?

This course is all about the human dimensions of disasters, with emphasis on the psychology and cognitive science of emergencies.

Given this unique semester, we'll apply these topics to understanding social and behavioural responses to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). We will, of course, consider other emergencies too – but we're going to work together to make sense of this pandemic as it unfolds.

Course Resources



Questions?
ebk@yorku.ca



No textbook.
Readings/video on Moodle.



Tutorials & Office Hours
Held Virtually (see p. ??)



A hospital in Wuhan, China, where medical staff are pictured treating COVID-19 patients.

(Image: Reuters, via NPR, <https://n.pr/3bRfZd6>)

Course Purpose

Throughout this course, our goal is to help you grow – personally and professionally – in several ways:

1. You will develop a deep knowledge of about the cognitive, psychological, and behavioural dimensions of disasters. You'll be able to articulate key theories related to how people respond to emergencies.
2. You will be able to apply this theoretical knowledge to analyzing the Coronavirus outbreak of 2020, as well as other emergency and disaster scenarios of all types. You'll be able to reflect on how you'll use these theories and ideas to be a better emergency manager.
3. You will develop rigorous reading and critical thinking skills to be able to effectively understand research in the social sciences. You'll build your abilities to read (and understand!) complex peer-reviewed articles and to identify the key ideas.
4. You will improve your abilities to write clearly and concisely.

Learning Goals

This is a challenging course! Throughout the semester, you'll need to read – and understand – some really complicated articles about cognitive processes. You'll also need to apply these abilities to analyzing an outbreak currently underway and changing rapidly.

Making matters more challenging, we'll be conducting this course remotely/online. This isn't how we normally run DEMS 3706, and these are incredibly unique times. As such, this course is also about:

1. Learning how to work independently,
2. Developing skills for doing high-quality work while maintaining mental health and work/life balance, and
3. Learning how to “metacognate” – that is, how to think about your own thinking (for instance, being able to identify what you understand and what still needs work).

To make this possible, this course has **three primary forms of engagement**. First, I'll be posting readings, notes, and short videos to Moodle to learn the core material. Second, we'll have written reflections, a Moodle discussion board, and tutorial sessions via online meetings to help solidify your understanding of the course material. Third, you'll be working on a term project to synthesize your learning.



The WHO press conference on March 11th, 2020, when COVID was declared a pandemic.
 (Image: Getty Images, via Vox News, available at <https://bit.ly/2RgKame>)

Course Structure

To help you learn as much as possible during this course, I've tried to design a structure that's highly flexible and that has multiple ways for you to show your learning.

First, each student will write a term paper that applies the theoretical ideas we're studying to understanding the COVID-19 outbreak. The paper includes a short proposal (so I can help make sure you're on the right track), submission of your first (of three) analysis sections for feedback, and the final paper itself. You'll also have a short video conference with the professor to discuss your first and final draft. See the posted instructions for more details.

Second, you'll write four short reflections analyzing the readings from the course. For each module, there will be a 'reading guide' that helps you know what to focus on in the readings and guides you through the key points. You need to submit the answers for at least *four* of these guides. A few notes:

- If you submit more than four, I'll only count your four best grades.
- You may submit these reading reflections either alone or in pairs. However, there's one catch: you can't submit with the same pair more than twice.
- There is a due date for these reading reflections so that I can give timely feedback to everyone.

Deliverable	Weight	Due Date
Four Reading Reflections	10% each, 40% total	See schedule below
Term Paper Proposal*	10%	???
Term Paper First 1/3 rd	15%	???
Participation & Engagement	10%	Ongoing throughout semester
Final Term Paper*	25%	???

**indicates items where you're required to have a 10-15 minute virtual meeting with the professor to discuss.*

Finally, even though it's a virtual class (and we can't meet in person because of COVID), I still am looking for you to participate meaningfully during our semester together.

There are several ways you can demonstrate participation and engagement in the course:

- Completing your pre-class learning plan.
- Contributing thoughtful questions, answers, and comments on the discussion board.
- Participating during our video tutorial sessions.
- Being prepared, ready, and thoughtful during our one-on-one project conferences.



Businesses have been boarded up during the COVID-19 pandemic: hope and fear co-exist in this image. (Image: CNN, available at <https://cnn.it/2XdcNEK>)

My Commitments to You

Obviously, this is a strange and difficult time around the world. This course is meant to help you continue your studies (even if you're no longer near campus) and to help us understand and process what we're experiencing together.

I care about making sure that this course is a good experience for you. No matter who you are, or what perspectives you bring, I want to ensure that you are both (a) challenged by the material and (b) are able to learn, grow, and perform to the best of your abilities.

- All assignments have a no-questions-asked, no reasons needed 24-hr extension policy. This extension is automatic, as long as you send me an email (ebk@yorku.ca) *before the deadline*.
- I'm happy to work with you to develop an extension/plan for these assignments, if you need more than 24hrs. Please contact me as early as you are able. I understand that lots of unexpected things will happen as this pandemic continues, **so all I ask for is communication** 😊. Even if it's just a quick email to let me know something is up, that will start the process of figuring out how we can make things work for you.
- To prevent unintentional bias, I grade all assignments blinded. Please never put your name on an assignment (e.g., on page; in file name): student numbers only!

If you think you might need other adjustments to maximize your learning in this class, please speak with me! I'm very happy to work with you, and the earlier you reach out, the more we can do.

Your Commitments to Us

As a member of our community, you also have a few responsibilities as we learn together:

- Before signing up for this class, please reflect on whether you have the capacity to be fully engaged. This is a challenging time, and many of us have unexpected and significant responsibilities (caring for family/friends; work schedules; living situations where we can't focus on school; etc). I'm excited to have you in this class... but I'm equally excited for you to join, in person, during an upcoming semester. Make an honest decision about what's right for you.
- As an online class, self-motivation & time management are important. Be sure to plan enough time to complete readings, to participate in discussions, and to be thoughtful about your papers.
- Struggling to understand material? Please talk to me early! I'm happy to answer questions via email or set up a time to talk virtually.
- Academic honesty is **incredibly** important, and this class has a zero-tolerance policy for infractions. You could receive an immediate zero on your assignment (or worse!) if you:
 - > Use an idea without citing it
 - > Copy & paste words without quotation marks and citations
 - > Attempt to cheat/gain unfair advantage
 - > Have someone else do your work for you



Twenty one people were killed in Boston in 1919 by an eight foot wave of molasses.

(Image: Public domain, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BostonMolassesDisaster.jpg>)

Course Schedule

Each week in the class is on a different theme in emergency management. Weeks are subject to change based on guest speakers, current news, class preference, etc. Readings will be posted to Moodle.



Toronto, August 2nd, 2005: Air France 358 crashes off the end of the runway at Pearson Airport.

(Image: By Paul Cardin, Creative Commons, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Airfranceflight358.jpg>)

University Regulations

TL;DR: Talk to me early if there's anything I can do to help you learn, feel comfortable, and succeed!

Deferred Exams: 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>

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

Attending Physician's Statement form: <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>

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.

Academic Honesty: 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>

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/>

Grading Scheme and Feedback Policy: 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>

In-Class Tests and Exams - the 20% Rule: 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/>

Reappraisals: 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>

Accommodation 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-accommodations/>

Religious Accommodation: 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/edm.woa/wa/reqobj>

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (Senate Policy)

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/>

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/>

Please alert the Course Director as soon as possible should you require special accommodations.