**COURSE OUTLINE  
DEMS 3707  
Ethics: Society, the Environment and Disasters**

Tuesdays, 7:00-10:00pm

Fall 2020

**Remote Learning**

**Course Director:** Dr. Jennifer Spinney

**Office:** XXXX

**Office hours:** Virtually Tuesdays 1-2pm or by appointment. Emails will be answered within 24 hours

**Email:** [jspinney@yorku.ca](mailto:jspinney@yorku.ca)

**Credit value:** 3.0 credit

**Calendar Course Description:** This course explores ethical uncertainties associated with disasters and emergencies and develops a basic understanding of ethical decision-making processes and moral reasoning. It also explores the moral imperatives associated with emergency management in a variety of contexts, locally and globally. Emphasis is placed on applied ethics, development of moral competence in response to issues, and implications of socially responsive environmental and disaster management.

**Prerequisites:** AP/ADMS 1000 (3.00) and AP/ADMS/DEMS 2700 (3.00)

**Cross-Listing:** AP/ADMS 3707 (3.00)

**Course Syllabus:**

This course introduces students to the relationship between society, the environment and disasters/emergencies from an ethical standpoint. Over the next 13 weeks, we will use ethical theories and an anthropological perspective to explore ethical dilemmas as they relate to society’s role in disasters and emergencies. The course emphasizes a holistic approach, which means that we will consider the social, economic, historic and political factors that come together to our ethics and moral systems, how these systems come to be established and reinforced, and how they are used during our management of, and experiences with, disasters and emergencies. Throughout the term, we will draw on cases that span multiple types of disaster and emergency scenarios in the Canadian and international context, and those that represent various stages on the disaster and emergency continuum.

The structure of this course consists of online/remote instruction, including both asynchronous and synchronous learning. Asynchronous content will be released on Moodle on Sundays, in advance of the following week’s learning activities. Synchronous learning sessions will be scheduled throughout the term to be held during the course’s designated day and time (Tuesday’s between 7-10pm).

*\* A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s Moodle site before the first day of class.*

## Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

* Define fundamental terminology/concepts, theories and frameworks associated with ethics and ethical decision-making applied during the experience and management of disasters and emergencies;
* Demonstrate a broad (holistic) understanding of the interconnections between ethics and social, historical, economic, political and cultural dimensions in the context of disaster experience and management;
* Develop skills in thinking about and making ethical arguments;
* Examine critically the ethical assumptions we hold regarding disaster experience and management and engage with the ethical positions of others;
* Formulate well organized written arguments and analysis that are grounded in supporting evidence; and
* Apply ethical perspectives to disasters and emergencies with special attention to building professional ethics in the context of research design.

**Course Materials:**

Zack, Naomi (2009) *Ethics for Disaster*. New York, UK: Rowman & Littlefield

Publishers, Inc.

This textbook is available on the York University Libraries website (<https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/>) as an e-book. Once you have signed-in to your York University Library account, follow this pathway to access assigned chapters: Type “Ethics for Disaster” in the search space and press enter >> Select “Ethics for Disaster” >> Select the “Available online” option >> Select “View full text”.

During many weeks throughout the term, short article readings, blog posts and videos will be assigned. These additional materials will be made available for download. Registered students will be able to access information about these additional course readings through the course’s on-line Moodle site before the first day of class.

**Evaluation**

Weekly Quizzes (12 quizzes, drop lowest 2, each quiz 1.5 points) = 15%

Written Discussion Activities (3 x 10%) = 30%

Participation = 20%

* Synchronous Sessions- Group Breakouts- 3 x 5%= 15%
* VoiceThread Introduction, Polls and other activities- 1 x 5% = 5%

Assignment 1 = 15%

Assignment 2 = 20%

Total = 100%

*Quizzes– 20%*

There will be twelve quizzes throughout the course (one each week, with the exception of Fall Reading Week). Quizzes will be released at 11pm EST on Thursdays of each week. Each quiz will have between 8-10 questions. All quizzes will be multiple choice format. You will take each quiz online and *you will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz once you begin the assessment*. Each quiz must be completed *within 24 hours (by Friday of each week at 11pm EST)*. Quizzes will focus on the main ideas in the week’s readings. They are meant to motivate you to complete all of the assigned readings. There will be no make-up quizzes but the two quizzes with the lowest grade will be dropped. Each quiz will be worth 1.5 points for a total of 15% of your final grade.

Reminder: You have 30 minutes to complete each quiz. Each quiz will only be open for a 24-hour time period. If you miss a quiz deadline, you will not be able to complete that quiz. However, the two quizzes that receive the lowest mark will be dropped from the overall grade calculation for the course.

*Written Discussion Activities- 30%*

There will be three Discussion Activities (approximately 500 words; worth 10% each) to complete during this course. Written Discussion activities provide you with opportunities to engage with course content, critically reflect on the concepts learned, contribute your own questions, or ideas, and present evidence from independent research on the web. Additional details for each Discussion Activity will be posted on Moodle.

Discussion Activities are due in Weeks 3, 8 and 12.

Note: Unless a student receives accommodation for illness through Academic Counselling, late Discussion Activities will be penalized at the rate of 5%/day late for up to a total of 5 days (including weekends) following the due date. Late Discussion Activities will not be accepted after 5 days.

*Participation- Synchronous Sessions- Group Breakouts- 15%*

There will be three synchronous sessions set to the eastern time zone throughout the term where the session will be broken down in the following way:

* 7:00pm-7:30pm we will meet as a single, larger group and you will have an opportunity to ask questions about course content and to give feedback.
* 7:30pm-8:30pm students will breakout into groups of 6 to complete an experiment or exercise related to the course materials presented that week (with the exception of synchronous session 3, where you will complete an exercise related to the previous week). Participation in these breakouts will be monitored and you will earn up to 5% of your grade in each, depending on the level and quality of the engagement you have with your peers.
* 8:30pm-9:00pm we will reconvene as a single, larger group and discuss the exercise.

Note: Synchronous sessions will be held on the following Tuesdays: October 6, October 27 and December 1. If you are unable to join a synchronous session you will have an opportunity to review the session at a later date since each session will be recorded. Also, if you are unable to join a synchronous session you will have an opportunity to make-up your participation marks, however, **you must contact me in advance** so that we can work together to create a solution that is equitable for both you and I. Additional details for each synchronous session/breakout exercise will be posted and available on Moodle.

*Participation- Voice Thread Introduction, Polls and other activities 5%*

There will be a handful of activities throughout the term such as: the Voice Thread introduction, various polls I assign and others, where you will have the opportunity to earn up to 5% in participation toward your final participation grade.

*Assignment 1- 15%*

The first of two assignments in this course will be a written ethical analysis (750 words) regarding a disaster of your choice based upon the concepts, frameworks and theories discussed during weeks 1-4. Assignment 1 is due Friday, October 23 (the week following Fall Reading Week). Additional details for Assignment 1 will be posted and available on Moodle.

Note: Unless a student receives accommodation for illness through Academic Counselling, late Assignments will be penalized at the rate of 5%/day late for up to a total of 5 days (including weekends) following the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted after 5 days.

*Assignment 2- 20%*

The second of two assignments in this course will be a combination of registering and completing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Procedures and Extreme Events Research Training module through CONVERGE\*. Completion of the training module (certificate) will earn you 5%. Using the CONVERGE Research Design Table\*\* (Peek 2020) and the concepts, frameworks and theories discussed throughout the term, you will choose a disaster you would like to research and then prepare a 750-word proposal that focuses on/addresses *four columns in the table*: Research Question, Who, Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Process and Ethical Considerations, and Researcher/Research Team (15%). Assignment 2 is due Friday, November 27. Additional details for Assignment 2 will be posted and available on Moodle.

Note: Unless a student receives accommodation for illness through Academic Counselling, late Assignments will be penalized at the rate of 5%/day late for up to a total of 5 days (including weekends) following the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted after 5 days.

\* CONVERGE is a [**National Science Foundation**](https://nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=1841338&HistoricalAwards=false)-funded initiative headquartered at the [**Natural Hazards Center**](https://hazards.colorado.edu) at the [**University of Colorado Boulder**](https://www.colorado.edu). CONVERGE advances social science, engineering, and interdisciplinary research and establishes and strengthens networks between disciplinary communities.

\*\*<https://converge.colorado.edu/v1/uploads/images/converge_research_design_table-1595429085833.pdf>

**COURSE SPECIFIC STATEMENTS AND POLICIES**

*Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:*

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment’s due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

*Statement on Plagiarism:*

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

*Statement on Engaging in the Online Learning Environment*

This course relies on the Moodle site to connect you with the syllabus, assignment outlines, content, and other course material. Here, you will engage with me and your peers as we progress through the course. Please keep track of weekly tasks and contribute respectfully to online activities.

*Statement on Email*

You may contact me by email, but it may take up to 24 hours for a response. If the matter is something we cannot address by email, we can coordinate a time to meet virtually through skype or zoom. Please ensure that your emails are worded professionally and include the course number (DEMS3707) in the subject line.

*Statement on Student Success*

If you need support with your academic writing skills, please visit the Writing Centre at York (for more info visit: <https://writing-centre.writ.laps.yorku.ca>).

The staff at Learning Skills Services (<https://lss.info.yorku.ca>) support your development as an excellent student by answering your questions and providing advice on how to succeed in your studies at York. They can help you to develop new skills or strengthen existing academic skills. Information on important learning skills topics is also available online.

Visit Mental Health and Wellness at York (<https://mhw.info.yorku.ca>) if you need support in navigating any kind of mental health issue (e.g., anxiety, stress, etc.). This centre provides free assistance in connecting you with wellness services and resources on and off campus.

**RELEVANT UNIVERSITY/LA&PS/SCHOOL REGULATIONS**

**Applicable to all ADMS and DEMS courses**

**Deferred Final 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://sas-app.laps.yorku.ca**](http://sas-app.laps.yorku.ca)

Followed by handing in a completed original Deferred Standing Agreement (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.  **During this time of remote learning, you will be required to submit the forms via email to** [**apsas@yorku.ca**](mailto:apsas@yorku.ca)**.**  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. **Deferred exams might take place during the regular exams period or in subsequent weeks depending on the course**; precise dates are known when the Office of the Registrar publishes the final exam schedule of the term. 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.

**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-accomodations/>

**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/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

**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 Student Accessibility Services (formerly known as Counselling and Disability Services) website at [https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca](https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/)

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.