

**DEMS 3707: ETHICS: SOCIETY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND DISASTERS
Fall 2024**

Course Information

Course Instructor: David Etkin
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Phone: N/A
Office Hours & Location: By
appointment. ZOOM or Atkinson 230

Course Time & Days: Fridays 2:30-5:30
Class Location: CFA 312
Course eClass site: TBD

Teaching Team and Tutorials or Labs

N/A

Land Acknowledgment

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken of by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region ([LA&PS Land Acknowledgement](#)).

Course Overview

Course Description

DEMS 3707 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. There is an emphasis on applied ethics, the development of moral competence in response to issues, and implications for 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 Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- State and explain the main ethical theories in the Western tradition.

- Apply those theories to issues related to disaster & emergency management.
- Understand the difference between normative and descriptive ethics, and use both in applied ethical scenarios.
- Identify situations that are ethical dilemmas and apply ethical thinking in order to come up with moral approaches to dealing with them.
- Use critical thinking skills as applied to ethical issues.

Course Format and Organization

This is an in-class course. The course will consist of lectures, discussions, exercises, debates, and the examination of case studies. eClass will be used as a platform to share presentations and other course materials, and for students to upload assignments.

Technical Requirements

Students must have computers capable of accessing eClass, watching videos, and participating in eClass discussions.

Useful Links

Here are some useful links for student computing information, resources, and help:

- [Student Guide to eClass](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU Best Practices](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)
- [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#)
- [Student Guide to eLearning at York University](#)

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as [Speedtest](#), that can be run. If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) web page. For more specific assistance, please write to askit@yorku.ca.

Course Communication Plan and Office Hours

Communication with students will be either in-person during lecture hours, via email, or through eClass. There is a discussion forum on eClass that students can use to post course-related questions or to communicate with each other.

There are no specific office hours. Individual meetings with students are to be arranged via email or during class.

When sending an email to the course director, please use the following format in the subject line: FirstName_LastName_Subject_DEMS3707

Course Expectations

Though there will be some presentations and lectures, this is very much a discussion-based course. It is important that students attend all lectures and participate in class discussions. Class discussions on ethical issues must be conducted in a respectful manner, never denigrating the values, opinions, or customs of others.

All students are expected to do the course readings as assigned.

Course Evaluation

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %	Course Learning Outcome
In-class test	Week 3	15%	Knowledge and application of ethical theories
Mid-Term test	Week 7	25%	Knowledge and application of ethical theories
Final Exam	TBD	33%	Knowledge and application of ethical theories
Participation	N/A	12%	Knowledge and application of ethical theories
Debate	Various	15%	Knowledge and application of ethical theories
Total		100%	

Assessment Descriptions

1. The in-class test and mid-term test will be held during class hours and will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
2. The final exam will be scheduled by the registrar's office and will consist of a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer questions, and one essay question.
3. For each class fully attended, students will receive 1% towards their final grade.
4. Debates: Four students (two teams of two) will engage in a debate on an ethical issue. Each team will have 5-10 minutes to make their case, followed by a 2-

minute rebuttal. The debate will be followed by a class discussion on the topic. You will not be graded on the quality of your speaking or presentation, but only on the content and logic of your arguments. You are required to use a PowerPoint as part of your presentation. Following the debate, you must submit your PowerPoint and a summary of your argument (about 500 words). Students have the option of being graded individually or as a team.

Submitting Assignments and Late Work Policy

All assignments are to be submitted via eClass by the date assigned. If an extension is needed send a detailed email to the course director stating why it is needed, and for how long. Extensions are not granted for workload issues, but only for emergencies or medical reasons. Late assignments are subject to a penalty of 2%/day.

Missed Tests and Exams

If a test or exam is missed, students must contact the course director as soon as possible in order to arrange for a replacement evaluation.

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

GRADE	GRADE POINT	PERCENT RANGE	DESCRIPTION
A+	9	90-100	Exceptional
A	8	80-89	Excellent
B+	7	75-79	Very Good
B	6	70-74	Good
C+	5	65-69	Competent
C	4	60-64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55-59	Passing
D	2	50-54	Marginally Passing
E	1	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

How to Use Citations

Citations are to use the APA system ([APA Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries). Resources available to you are:

- [Drop-in Research Support](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)

Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities

Details will be provided on eClass. The course director may assign other mandatory readings or videos beyond the textbook.

Lecture Topics (subject to change at the instructor's discretion):

- Lectures #1 & 2 (Chapter 1 of course text)
 - Introduction
 - Metaethics, Normative Ethics, Descriptive Ethics
 - Ethical Theories
 - Utilitarianism
 - Duty-Based Ethics
 - Social Contract Theory and Justice
 - Virtue Ethics and Egoism
 - Divine Command and Natural Law
 - Environmental Ethics
 - Corporate Social Responsibility
- Lecture #3: Ethical Dilemmas
- Lecture #4&5: Moral Development, Moral Leadership, and Moral Traps
- Lecture #6: Ethical Risk Assessment (Chapter 3 of course text)
- Lecture #7: The Precautionary Principle (Chapter 4 of course text)
- Lecture #8: Victim Blaming and Duty to Respond (Chapter 5 of course text)
 - Warning: This lecture deals with difficult topics such as rape
- Lecture #9: Land Use Planning (Chapter 7 of course text)
- Lecture #10: Humanitarianism (Chapter 8 of course text)
- Lecture #11: Lifeboat Ethics and The Value of Life (Chapter 9 of course text)
- Lecture #12: TBD

Required Course Materials

The Ethical Emergency Manager: Issues, Morality, and Dilemmas. 4th Edition. An e-copy of the book will be provided to students on eClass. Hardcopies can be ordered via Amazon.

Optional Materials

Other required or optional reading materials or videos will be available via eClass.

Course Policies

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Please also review the following course policies:

Academic Integrity

In this course, we strive to maintain academic honesty to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing [SPARK's Academic Integrity module](#) at the beginning of the course. Breaches of academic honesty range from cheating to plagiarism (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, the use of AI programs to create material represented as yours, etc.). All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate University authorities and can be punishable according to the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

Accessibility

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the University recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. The University encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors through their Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

Please let your instructor know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. Sufficient notice is needed so that reasonable steps for accommodation can be discussed. Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class. If the date falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation for Examination Form](#) at least three (3) weeks before the start of the exam period.

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

Student Conduct in the Learning Environment

York University is committed to fostering teaching and learning environments that are free of disruptive and/or harassing behaviour, are physically safe, and conducive to effective teaching and learning. Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy, civility, and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Individuals who fail to adhere to such standards and who violate University or public law may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

For more information, see the policies on [Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations](#), the [Student Conduct and Responsibilities](#), and the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

Netiquette for eClass and Online Learning

Students and instructors have a joint responsibility to create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Please review and familiarize yourself with behaviours that support "netiquette" in virtual classrooms by consulting the [Guide to Netiquette](#) and [Student Guide to eLearning](#).

Student Notice of Recording for Online Teaching and Learning

Activities for this course may involve recording, in partial fulfillment of the course learning outcomes. Images, audio, text/chat messaging that have been recorded may be used and/or made available by the University to students enrolled in the course and those supporting the course for the purpose of materials review, for assessment, etc. Recordings will be managed according to the University's Common Record Schedule and will be securely destroyed when no longer needed by the University. Your personal information is protected in accordance with York University's [Guidelines on Access of Information and Protection of Privacy](#) and the [Freedom of Information and Protection of](#)

[Privacy Act](#). Access to online materials, including recordings or live meetings, is subject to York University's [Senate Policy on Computing and Information Technology Facilities](#).

The University will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of the recorded information, but cannot provide a guarantee of such due to factors beyond the University's control, such as recordings being forwarded, copied, intercepted, circulated, disclosed, or stored without the University's knowledge or permission, or the introduction of malware into computer system which could potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings. The University is not responsible for connectivity/technical difficulties or loss of data associated with your hardware, software, or Internet connection.

By engaging in course activities that involve recording, you are consenting to the use of your appearance, image, text/chat messaging, and voice and/or likeness in the manner and under the conditions specified herein. In the case of a live stream recording, if you choose not to have your image or audio recorded, you may disable the audio and video functionality. If you choose to participate using a pseudonym instead of your real name, you must disclose the pseudonym to your instructor in advance to facilitate class participation.

You are not permitted to disclose the link to/URL of an event or an event session recording or copies of recording to anyone, for any reason. Recordings are available only to authorized individuals who have been directly provided the above instructions/link for their use. Recordings for personal use, required to facilitate your learning and preparation of personal course/lecture notes, may not be shared with others without the permission of the instructor or event coordinator, and may not be published, posted, linked to, or otherwise made available online, including on social media feeds, even if those feeds are private.

Health and Safety

All York students and instructors share responsibility for the safety and well-being of the community while on York's campuses. Please continue to check [YUBetter Together](#) for the latest information on health and safety.

Hyflex Course Policy

[This section applies only to HYFLX courses.]

Hyflex sessions are digitally transmitted and may be recorded to support teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result, York University may collect your image, voice, name, personal views and opinions, and coursework under the authority of The York University Act, 1965, and for use in related educational purposes.

Note: Students who participate in a Hyflex session are consenting to have their video or image transmitted and/or recorded. If you have concerns with such transmission or recording, sit in the designated seating area which is outside of the camera range. In addition, students who participate orally are consenting to have their voices, personal

views, and opinions transmitted and/or recorded. If you do not consent to the transmission or recording of your voice, please use the text-based chat function to communicate during class.

Students are not permitted to use any third-party software or application to record a transmitted Hyflex session. Additionally, instructors, TA(s), and students may not post, share, or otherwise publish recorded materials outside of the Hyflex course. To do so may result in disclosure of the personal information and intellectual property of students and instructors to others. If you have any questions about the collection or use of your personal information, please contact your instructor or the Privacy Office at info.privacy@yorku.ca.

Recordings of Hyflex course sessions will be retained along with other posted courses materials in accordance with York's Common Record Schedule. Student access will be removed following the end of each term. Recordings that include student images or audio will not be used for a subsequent offering of the course.

Student Support and Resources

To help you succeed academically, York University offers a wide range of resources and services. Everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance is available to fulfill our LA&PS students' needs. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.

- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).