Social Issues in Disaster Management
York University, School of Administrative Studies

Aaida A. Mamuji, Ph.D.

Course Outline

Course Details	Instructor Details
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Course Code: DEMS 3708 W 2025	Office: Atkinson Building, Room 246
Prerequisites: DEMS 2700 and DEMS 3701	E-Mail: amamuji@yorku.ca
Location: DB 0005	Office hours: By appointment
Class Times: Wednesdays 11.30am-2.30pm	

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course offers analysis into the ways in which social and cultural processes shape our experience and understanding of disasters. We explore the impact of multiple characteristics such as gender, class, power, ethnicity, age, indigeneity, etc. on vulnerability and outcomes; the role and impact of larger political and economic systems in disaster management; and the relationship of disasters to social change. We also explore the inherent capacity and capability in groups often deemed 'vulnerable'. During the course we delved into international humanitarian assistance and UN frameworks applicable throughout the EM cycle, and become familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals. Case studies of disasters will be used to illustrate the material discussed.

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:
- Discuss varying perspectives and paradigms to understand disasters.
- Describe and apply a social vulnerability lens to analyzing social issues.
- Investigate social inequities and how they relate to disaster vulnerability.
- Discuss the importance of strengthening communities and fostering resilience in the face of disasters.
- Characterize social capability in a disaster setting and identify mechanisms to enable this capability.
- Explain the basic elements of sustainable development and why it makes sense to integrate disaster planning/emergency management with this framework.
- Conduct a basic community vulnerability assessment and develop a grant proposal.

READINGS

There are no required textbooks for the course. However, readings **will be assigned each week**, and shall be made available on eClass or will be accessible on the Internet and/or available for download through York University's Library eBooks or eJournals. Students are expected to read all required material ahead of each class.

Recommended textbook (available through the library): Thomas, Deborah SK, Brenda D. Phillips, William E. Lovekamp, and Alice Fothergill, eds. *social vulnerability to disasters*. CRC Press, 2013. ISBN 9781466516403

TEACHING METHODS

This course incorporates the following teaching methods and use of technology:

- *eClass* – This course has an eClass page. All students who register for the course should be able to access the course at: eclass.yorku.ca using their York Passport IDs and Passwords.
- *Slide shows* – Lectures will serve to enrich, clarify, and illustrate critical content in assigned readings.
- *Guest speakers* – Talks by academics and practitioners directly involved in the topics and contexts under discussion.
- *Open discussion* – Stimulating group discussions will serve to enhance student ability to articulate and defend positions. and to consider different points of view.
- *Online participation* – Students will engage in discussions with peers on online forums where opinions and research can be shared in written posts.
- *Group work* – activities and assignments will be conducted in groups of varying sizes in order to enhance student retention and encourage development of teamwork skills.
- *Student presentations* – students will present their work to the class.

COURSE EVALUATION

The final grade for the course will be based on the following items weighted as indicated:

A description of course evaluation criteria is as follows:

Evaluation Item	Marks
Attendance & Participation (Attendance @ 5% and Participation @ 5%)	10%
Forum Posts (Four posts @ 5% each)	20%
Grant Proposal Outline (Due **Feb 11**)	20%
In-Class Exam (**March 19**)	30%
Grant Proposal Presentation (In-Class Presentation, **April 2**)	20%
Total	**100%**
Bonus Marks ***CONVERGE Training on Social Vulnerability*** *(Due January 23)*	2%

(1) Attendance & Participation: Weekly

Student participation in weekly discussions, both in person and online, is an important component of the course and should be taken seriously. To receive adequate participation marks for this component, in-class attendance is mandatory, and makes up 5% of your final mark.

Students are expected to prepare for each class by doing all required readings and to review class notes. During the class, participation in discussions and activities is required, and makes up 5% of your final mark. Students are also able to engage in participation online, particularly if they miss a lecture, by engaging in discussions on online forums.

(2) Forum Posts

Over the course of the semester, students are required to submit at least four forum posts on our eClass page to share their thoughts on the material discussed in lecture, during guest presentations, and/or in assigned readings for that week. Online posts must be submitted within one week of the class they are discussing in order to be marked, i.e. submit the post **before class** the following Wednesday.

Forum posts should adopt a **3-for-3 approach**, i.e. describe three important things learned during the lecture/presentation/reading, and three questions that came to mind while reflecting on the material. Each post is worth 5% and should be roughly 250 words in length. Students are able to submit more than four posts, but the cumulative mark for this component will consist of marks for only the top four posts.   At minimum, 2 posts are required to be submitted during the first half of the course (i.e. during Reading Week), and 2 additional posts before the last class.

(3) Grant Proposal Outline (Individual): February 11

Students are to develop a grant proposal for a community project that aims to build the capability of a socially vulnerable group in any phase of the comprehensive emergency management cycle. An outline of the grant proposal is due on February 11 at 11.59pm, worth 20%. This outline is to be completed individually. More details to follow.

Detailed feedback will be provided on this outline. Students will then be put into groups of 4-5 and expected to further develop one selected proposal for presentation during the last day of class. See details on Grant Proposal Presentation below.

(4) **In-Class Exam**: March 19

Students will be given an in-class exam on March 19. The exam will be cumulative and designed to assess student comprehension of the topics covered in class, as well as to encourage active learning of course content. The exam will be comprised of multiple choice and short/long answer questions.

(5) Grant Proposal Presentation (Group): April 2

Students will be put into groups of 4-5. Collectively, students are to select one grant proposal outline to further develop as a team. Teams will pitch their proposals to a panel during *Disaster Den,* scheduled to be held in class on April 2. Judges must receive documents that the groups want to provide to the panel a week prior, by March 26, in order to help the judges make their decision.

(6) Bonus Marks

CONVERGE Training: Due January 21

CONVERGE is a National Science Foundation-funded initiative headquartered at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder. CONVERGE Training Modules incorporate an all-hazards approach grounded in cutting edge research from the social sciences,

public health, engineering, and other disciplines. Each training module features learning objectives, lesson plans, written content, and disaster-focused case study vignettes from the U.S. and across the globe.

Students are to complete the "Social Vulnerability and Disasters" training found here: https://converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules/

Completion of the CONVERGE Training Courses is required by January 21 (upload the certificate of completion). Uploading the certificate alone grants you 1%. For the remaining 1%, students are to submit an online post adopting a **3-for-3 approach**, i.e. describe three important things learned during the training, and three questions that came to your mind as you went through the training. Students are to make the posts by January 21 at 11.59pm.

DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE (subject to change)

	Date	Topics Covered	Notes
1	**January 8**	Course Orientation & Introduction Disaster Paradigms	
2	**January 15**	Theoretical Framing of Worldviews, Values, and Structural Dimensions of Disasters Resilience Grant Writing	
3	**January 22**	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in DEM Sustainable Development ***Guest Lecture*** • Ben Gallagher, Manager, Office of Emergency Management and Larissa Parekh, Emergency Management Specialist, City of Mississauga • ***Enhancing Community Resilience: Engagement and the Built Environment***	CONVERGE Training Due (for bonus marks)

4	**January 29**	Humanitarian Assistance & Coordination *Guest Lecture* • Diego Otegui, Ph.D, Head of Strategy, Imara-IHG • ***Applying Institutional Logics to Improve Coordination between Global North and South in the Humanitarian Context***	
5	**February 5**	Response Generated Demands Refugee Resettlement *Guest Lecture* • Dr. Yvonne Su, Assistant Professor in the Department of Equity Studies • ***Canada's Refugee Resettlement Policies***	
6	**February 12**	Ethnic Minorities Gender *Guest Lecture* • Gurneet Bhela, Program Manager, Free Periods Canada • ***Menstruation in Emergencies***	Grant Proposal Outline Due
**February 19** READING WEEK		
7	**February 26**	Disability *Guest Lecture:* • **Dr. Jack Rozdilsky**, Associate Professor, York University • ***Mass Violence Events: Those Left Behind***	At least two forum posts required for online participation Groups for grant proposal presentation assigned
8	**March 5**	Indigenous Communities	
9	**March 12**	Stigma Informed Emergency Management Religious Minorities	
10	**March 19**	**In-Class Exam**	
11	**March 26**	Social Change and Empowerment Civility Discourse	Written materials from Grant Presentations to be submitted to judges
12	April 2	**Disaster Den** • Grant Proposal Group Presentations	Grant Presentations At least two forum posts required for online participation

COURSE EVALUATION POLICIES

Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received/completed in the time frame specified.

- Please note that there will be no make-up for missed participation during any given week, whether in person or online.

- Forum Posts on any given week must be submitted on eClass before the start of class the following week. No late submissions will be accepted.

  - Grant proposal outlines submitted after the due date of February 11 will be subject to a 5% reduction of the final mark for each day late, including weekends. Submission of an outline 10 days after the due date will result in a mark of zero for this component of the course.

- The final exam is to be held in class on March 19. If you miss your exam for a legitimate reason based on university policies, please get in touch with the instructor within 48 hours of the exam to set up an alternate time to write the exam. There will only be one opportunity for all students who missed the exam to write the make-up. If the make-up is also missed, the student will receive a mark of 0 for this component of the course.

- Grant proposal group presentations not made on the assigned date will result in a mark of zero for all students in the group. No exceptions to this policy will be made.
  - *Please note that students will be given an opportunity to inform the instructor about group members that did not participate equally, cordially, and/or fairly during the course of the semester in preparation for the final presentation. The instructor reserves the right to adjust marks for individual students for the grant proposal presentation based on feedback received.*

- No late CONVERGE training completion accepted. Submission of your training certificate and the associated 3-for-3 online post, after the assigned due date of January 21 at 11.59pm, will result in zero bonus marks.

- Final course grades may be adjusted to conform to Program or Faculty grade distribution profiles.

RELEVANT UNIVERSITY 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
As a student at York University, you have a responsibility to both understand and uphold the integrity of the academic experience. The Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies supports the International Center for Academic Integrity's definition of academic integrity. That is, you will be committed to acting in all academic matters, even in the face of adversity, with honesty, trust, fairness, courage, respect and responsibility. Here is how you can demonstrate academic integrity in the completion of this course:

- **Respect the ideas of others**: Your course work should represent your own knowledge and ideas. You should not falsely claim credit for ideas that are not your own, by presenting another's work

as yours. If you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing another person's work in order to support your own ideas, identify the work and the author through proper citation practices. For more information about how to cite properly, use the Student Papers and Academic Research Kit (SPARK). You can improve your writing, research, and personal learning abilities through the Learning Commons, or by visiting the Writing Centre or ESL Open Learning Centre.

- **Respect your peers**: Know when you are allowed to collaborate. Ask your instructor about what group work entails when it comes to the sharing of work. In test situations and assignments, don't steal or give answers to your peers, whether in-person or online (e.g., in group chats and/or on third-party content-sharing websites, such as Chegg, Course Hero, etc.). Both cheating and aiding in a breach of academic honesty are violations of York University's academic honesty policy.

- **Respect your course instructor(s)**: Understand what your instructors are asking of you in class, as well as on assignments, tests and/or exams. If you are unsure, ask your professor or teaching assistant. They are committed to making you feel supported and want to assess you fairly and with integrity. Please do not submit the same piece of work for more than one course without your instructor's permission. That can be considered an act of cheating.

- **Respect yourself**: When you act with integrity, you know that your work is yours and yours alone. You do not allow others to take tests for you. You do not buy or otherwise obtain term papers or assignments. You do the work. As a result, you know that you *earned* the grades that you receive, so you can be proud of your York degree. By acting with integrity in your course work, you are also practicing a valuable professional skill that is important in all workplaces.

- **Take responsibility**: If you have acted in an academically dishonest way, you can demonstrate courage and take responsibility for your mistake. You can admit your mistake to your course instructor as soon as possible.

Students who engage in academic dishonesty can be subject to disciplinary action under the *Senate Policy on Academic Honesty*. Your lack of familiarity with the Senate Policy does not constitute a defense against its application. Some academic offences can also constitute offences under the Criminal Code of Canada, which means that you may also be subject to criminal charges.

Using Generative Artificial Intelligence in this Course
Unless stated otherwise by the instructor in class, students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course when submitting any final written work, including assignments or online posts. Submitting any work created through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's *Senate Policy on Academic Honesty*. If you do not know whether an online resource or tool can be used in this course, please contact your instructor for guidance. For more information, please review AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students.

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 and Student Conduct and Responsibilities, as well as 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 Student Guide to eLearning.

Student Notice of Recording for Online Teaching and Learning
Activities for this course 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 to Student Records 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.

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.