

Research Seminar in Disaster and Emergency

York University, School of Administrative Studies

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Course Outline

Course Details

Course Code: DEMS 4708 W 2025 (Blended)
Prerequisites: DEMS 3702
Location: SLH 107 / Online
Class Times: Fridays 11.30am-2.30pm

Instructor Details

Office: Atkinson Building, Room 246
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Office hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

AP/DEMS 4708 examines selected theories and practices in Disaster and Emergency Management, with a key focus on the development of research skills and familiarity with the research process. Students will be exposed to different research methodologies and approaches employed by researchers in disaster studies, as well as efforts that are made to ensure that research makes practical impacts. This research seminar will enhance appreciation of the discipline's complexity. Topics vary and may include: the complex dynamic between hazards, people, and the environment; disaster risk and resilience; climate change impacts; the sustainability of systems; humanitarian assistance and refugee issues; disaster recovery; continuity of critical functions during emergencies; health hazards; disaster economics; and community participation for resilience building.

The course trains and prepares students to:

- Appreciate the value of research through exploring existing works and identifying current and future needs
- Critically analyze issues from multiple perspectives before deliberating solutions, strategies, policy, etc.
- Develop original ideas and thoughts by engaging in meaningful discussions and debates
- Develop the ability to apply theoretical concepts to the real world
- Improve communication, presentation, and writing skills
- Design, develop, explore, and carry out independent research

READINGS

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

TEACHING METHODS

This course applies a blended learning approach. Blended learning combines face-to-face classroom methods (human interaction) with computer-mediated activities (electronic learning) to form an integrated instructional approach. Students should consult the course outline for which classes will be held in-person, and which will be held online. All online sessions will be synchronous at the scheduled

class time of Fridays between 11.30am-2.30pm, and shall be conducted on zoom. The link to the zoom class will be posted on the eClass website.

During class, a seminar-based, participatory approach to teaching is used to encourage discussion around the topics presented, share knowledge, challenge assumptions, and affirm best practices. 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, as well as to participate in online polls.
- *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 individually, or in groups.

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 @ 10%) | 15% |
| Forum Posts (Four posts throughout semester @ 5% each) | 20% |
| Statement of Interest (Due February 27, 11.59pm) | 25% |
| Group ‘Literature Review’ Presentation (In-person, March 21 or March 28) | 25% |
| Course Interview (April 4, online) | 15% |
| Total | 100% |
| <i>Bonus:</i> CONVERGE Training (2 training certificates and associated posts, at 2% each by March 13, 11.59pm) | Up to 4% |

(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 10% 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) Statement of Interest

Students will prepare a Statement of Interest as part of their application for a Master's program. They will need to identify the specific Master's program and university they are applying to, and explain why they are interested in applying to this program and how it aligns with their interests, work experience, or educational background, as well as their aspirations. As part of the Statement of Interest, students should identify potential academics at the university who could serve as their supervisor, and propose an area of research they would like to pursue with that individual.

The Statement of Interest should be a maximum of three pages double-spaced, or one and a half pages single-spaced.

(4) Group 'Literature Review' Presentation: March 21 or March 28 in class

In groups of 2, students are responsible for conducting a seminar of at least 45 minutes where they will present a literature review of research on their assigned topic, as well as field questions from the instructor and fellow students on their chosen topic. Allocation of topics and formation of groups will be finalized during Weeks 1-3. More details to follow.

(5) Course Interview: April 4

Students will be required to complete a one-on-one interview with the course instructor on the last day of class. The interview will be held virtually and will last approximately 10-15 minutes. The interview is aimed at encouraging students to reflect on the various discussions held in class, as well as to expound on areas of future research that they are inspired to engage in after having gone through the course. More details to follow.

Bonus Marks:

CONVERGE Training: Due March 13

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 up to 2 trainings from the following list if they wish to receive bonus marks: <https://converge.colorado.edu/resources/training-modules/>

- Broader Ethical Considerations for Hazards and Disaster Researchers
- Collecting and Sharing Perishable Data
- Conducting Emotionally Challenging Research
- Cultural Competence in Hazards and Disaster Research
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) Procedures and Extreme Events Research
- Positionality in Hazards and Disaster Research and Practice
- Public Health Implications of Hazards and Disaster Research
- Reciprocity in Hazards and Disaster Research
- Understanding and Ending Gender-Based Violence in Fieldwork

Completion of up to 2 CONVERGE Training Courses is required by March 13 (upload 3 certificates of completion, for 1% each). For the remaining 1% for each training completed, students are to submit an online post. Your online post should adopt 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 March 13 at 11.59pm to receive the bonus marks.

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to change)

| | Date | Topics Covered | In-person or Online? |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1 | January 10 | Course Orientation & Introduction Structure of Academic Research | In-person |
| 2 | January 17 | Research Design & Procedures Library Research <i>The Art of Crafting a compelling Literature Review: Searching and Mapping what you Discover</i> Guest Speaker: Maura Alicia Matesic, Senior Librarian York University | Online |
| 3 | January 24 | Theoretical Framing Methodologies <i>Using Covidence for Comprehensive Literature Reviews</i> Guest Speaker: Dr. Mac Osazuwa-Peters, Post-Doctoral Fellow | In-person |
| 4 | January 31 | Qualitative DEM Research Research Mobilization <i>Making Research Accessible Useful: Introduction to Knowledge Mobilization</i> Guest Speaker: Connie Tang, M.Sc., Director, Strategy & Business Development Research Impact Canada | In-person |
| 5 | February 7 | Quantitative DEM Research Guest Speaker: Dr. Cary Wu, Associate Professor and York Research Chair, Department of Sociology | In-person |
| 6 | February 14 | Exploring Modeling, Simulation and GIS in Emergency Management: A Dive into Software and Programs Guest Lecturer: Professor Ali Asgary, Disaster & Emergency Management York University | In-person (ADERSIM, Schulich, N004) |
| February 21 READING WEEK | | | |
| 7 | February 28 | Disaster Research & Policy Impacts Data Tools in Emergency Management: A Virtual | Online |

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|-----------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| | | Demonstration Guest Speaker: Christopher Leite, <i>Halton Region Emergency Manager</i> | |
| 8 | March 7 | Statement of Interest Discussion Time-Series Prediction: Building Early Warning Systems for Emerging and Re-emerging Diseases Guest Speaker: Dr. Zahra Movahedi Nia, <i>Postdoctoral Researcher at York University (ACADIC)</i> | Online |
| 9 | March 14 | FORIN Methodology and Approaches to DEM Research CONVERGE Training Discussion | In-person |
| 10 | March 21 | Group Presentations I | In-person |
| 11 | March 28 | Group Presentations II | In-person |
| 12 | April 4 | Course Wrap Up & Interviews | Online |

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.
- Group presentations not made on the assigned date (either March 21 or March 28) will result in a mark of zero for all students in the group. No exceptions to this policy will be made.
 - o *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 group presentation assignment 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 March 13 at 11.59pm, will result in zero bonus marks.
- Students that miss the final day of class wherein the one-on-one interview is to be held must get in touch the instructor with the instructor within 48 hours of the class to schedule an alternate interview day/time. Students that do not show up to this second interview will be assigned a mark of zero for this component of the course.
- 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](#).