

Development Sociology 6340: RISK AND DISASTER

Wednesdays, 10:10am-1:10pm
Warren Hall (Room TBD)

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Contemporary life revolves around risk. Every day individuals, firms, and governments make decisions in conditions of uncertainty. As disastrous events appear to increase in frequency and impact, risk has come to the center of many conversations. In this course, students will gain a grasp of social science perspectives on risk and disaster, with a focus on environmental domains. Questions of risk arise around both acute disruptions (storms, wildfires) and chronic exposures (chemical pollution, physical stress): How likely is a given thing to happen? What will the impact be? How do people's perceptions of risk square with formal evaluations of the probability and intensity of harms? What conditions affect how individuals, groups, and organizations respond to risky situations and disasters? How do aspects of political, social, and economic organization create conditions that intensify risks? How do people manage to know these things, and how does contestation of risk knowledge play out? In this course, we will examine what it means to live in an 'age of risk'. We will work through the ways scholars have worked to understand risk and social responses to it. We will then conceptualize disasters and examine them from a number of perspectives. While centered in the literature in sociology, the course will address interdisciplinary scholarship on risk and disaster, with material from several disciplines, including geography, psychology, anthropology, political science, and economics.

By the time they have completed this course, students will be able to

- Explain key social science concepts surrounding risk and disaster.
- Articulate the key issues in debates surrounding research on risk and disaster and present their own well-reasoned evaluations of these issues.
- Use empirical evidence and theoretical reasoning to account for how risk and disaster unfold differently in specific cases.

Format

This course takes a seminar format that will give us all an occasion to read, discuss, and write. The bulk of each session will be devoted to open discussion of the day's readings. We will begin by setting the agenda, asking each participant to bring up any concepts or issues they want to clarify or discuss. I may spend some time introducing background or context of the debates at hand. Then we will discuss the readings together. I will use varying formats and questions to stimulate our conversations. Each week a different student will facilitate our conversation. I will meet with the facilitator ahead of time to brainstorm and plan.

Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be based on the following: three reflections (33%), a final paper (33%), and class participation (33%).

Reflections

At our second meeting, you will sign up to submit reflections on three occasions during the semester. They are due 48 hours before we meet the week those readings are assigned, so that all participants have a chance to read them before class.

The point of the critiques is to give you a chance to develop your own views on the readings, to communicate those views to the class, and to demonstrate your command of what we've read thus far. The format is simple: Write a critical appraisal of some particular theme in the readings, 2 to 3 pages single-spaced, and submit on Blackboard. Do not submit a sequence of summaries: make each piece's contribution clear as part of a discussion about a theme you find important. The best critiques will be those that a) aptly summarize key points from the readings; and b) develop a coherent argument about their contents. Give your critique a title and list beneath that the works you covered in the piece, much as is done with a "review essay". Each week, everyone will be expected to read the critiques, which we will use to help orient our discussion.

Participation

Your grade for class participation will not be a measure of how loud you were, or of how often you spoke. Rather, it will reflect the extent to which you were "there." I will evaluate your "thereness" based equally on 1) your engagement in class discussions; 2) attendance; 3) your participation in setting the agenda at the beginning of class meetings; and 4) your engagement in discussions of class members' critiques. Showing you are really mentally there means demonstrating mindfulness by listening and responding to colleagues and being thoughtful about your own contributions, being sure not to dominate discussions. I will base grading on the initial assumption that everyone will get full credit, with deductions made for negligent or "unthere" performance, if necessary.

One important part of participation is having completed and reflected on assigned readings. The reading load is substantial but consistent with other graduate seminars. Be sure to read and think about all required readings ahead of class. Recommended readings are, of course, not required, but suggested because I expect many will find them helpful.

The Final Paper

The central written work of the course will be the preparation of a 4000-8000 word (about 16 to 20 double-spaced pages) essay. I am eager that this paper be of use for you beyond the confines of this course. So I will be interested in something that relates to your own research, or something that helps you along in the process of figuring out what that might be. I encourage you to consider targeting your essay for submission to a scholarly journal; we will talk about options in class.

We will peer review our papers, with myself and one of your colleagues reviewing your draft. That means that you must submit a complete, relatively finished draft at the draft due date in order to receive a helpful review.

Please note that a 1-page **topic statement** of your paper is due by class time the sixth week (27 Feb.), and a **revised topic statement and annotated bibliography** are due in the ninth week (20

Mar.). Your completed **full draft** is due 10 Apr. I will provide feedback at each stage. Each student will submit a **peer-review** of a classmate's paper, due 17 Apr. The final draft is due 8 May. Each of these assignments is to be submitted via Blackboard by 11:59pm.

Course Outline

Getting Acquainted

23 January

The Age of Risk? What is Risk?

30 January

Bernstein, Peter L. 1996. *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. Introduction, Ch. 1, p.69-71.

Rosa, Eugene A., Ortwin Renn, and Aaron M. McCright. 2013. *The Risk Society Revisited: Social Theory and Governance*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Introduction, Ch. 1, 2.

Douglas, Mary and Aaron Wildavsky. 1982. *Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technical and Environmental Dangers*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Introduction.

Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications. Introduction, Ch. 1-2.

Coming to Know Risk: Information, Cognition, Trust, and Evaluation

6 February

Meyer, Robert and Howard Kunreuther. 2017. *The Ostrich Paradox: Why We Underprepare for Disasters*. La Vergne: Wharton Digital Press. Pp. 7-76.

Slovic, Paul, Melissa L. Finucane, Ellen Peters, and Donald G. MacGregor. 2004. "Risk as Analysis and Risk as Feelings: Some Thoughts about Affect, Reason, Risk, and Rationality." *Risk Analysis* 24(2):311-22.

Siegrist, Michael and George Cvetkovich. 2000. "Perception of Hazards: The Role of Social Trust and Knowledge." *Risk Analysis* 20(5):713-20.

Freudenburg, William R. 1993. "Risk and Recreancy: Weber, the Division of Labor, and the Rationality of Risk Perceptions." *Social Forces* 71(4):909-932.

Kasperson, Roger E. and Jeanne X. Kasperson. 1996. "The Social Amplification and Attenuation of Risk." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 545(1):95-105.

Recommended:

Wachinger, Gisela, Ortwin Renn, Chloe Begg, and Christian Kuhlicke. 2013. "The Risk Perception Paradox—Implications for Governance and Communication of Natural Hazards." *Risk Analysis* 33(6):1049-65.

Dealing with Risk: Focus on Flooding

13 February

- Ludy, Jessica and G. Matt Kondolf. 2012. "Flood Risk Perception in Lands 'Protected' by 100-Year Levees." *Natural Hazards* 61(2):829–42.
- Haney, Timothy J. 2018. "Move out or Dig in? Risk Awareness and Mobility Plans in Disaster-Affected Communities." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*.
- Lo, Alex Y. 2013. "The Role of Social Norms in Climate Adaptation: Mediating Risk Perception and Flood Insurance Purchase." *Global Environmental Change* 23(5):1249–57.
- Larson, Lincoln R., T. Bruce Lauber, David L. Kay, and Bethany B. Cutts. 2017. "Local Government Capacity to Respond to Environmental Change: Insights from Towns in New York State." *Environmental Management* 60(1):118–35.
- Pralle, Sarah. 2018. "Drawing Lines: FEMA and the Politics of Mapping Flood Zones." *Climatic Change*.

Recommended:

- Birkholz, S., M. Muro, P. Jeffrey, and H. M. Smith. 2014. "Rethinking the Relationship between Flood Risk Perception and Flood Management." *Science of The Total Environment* 478:12–20.

Making and Contesting Risk Knowledge

20 February

- Rosa et al. Ch. 8
- Cordner, Alissa. 2016. *Toxic Safety: Flame Retardants, Chemical Controversies, and Environmental Health*. New York: Columbia University Press. Ch. 1, 3.
- Frickel, Scott and James Elliott. 2018. *Sites Unseen: Uncovering Hidden Hazards in American Cities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Introduction, Ch. 5.
- Schiermeier, Quirin. 2018. "Droughts, Heat Waves and Floods: How to Tell When Climate Change Is to Blame." *Scientific American*, July 30.

Recommended:

- Frickel, Scott et al. 2010. "Undone Science: Charting Social Movement and Civil Society Challenges to Research Agenda Setting." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 35(4):444–73.

Disasters: Natural and Unnatural

27 February

- Oliver-Smith, Anthony. 1999. "What Is a Disaster?: Anthropological Perspectives on a Persistent Question." Pp. 18–34 in *The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspective*, edited by A. Oliver-Smith and S. M. Hoffman. New York: Routledge.

- Quarantelli, E. L. 2000. "Emergencies, Disaster and Catastrophes Are Different Phenomena. University of Delaware Disaster Research Center Preliminary Paper #304.
- Kelman, Ilan. 2018. "Lost for Words Amongst Disaster Risk Science Vocabulary?" *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science* 9(3):281–91.
- Perrow, Charles. 1984. *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies*. New York: Basic Books. Introduction, Ch. 1, 2, 3.
- Pritchard, Sara B. 2012. "An Envirotechnical Disaster: Nature, Technology, and Politics at Fukushima." *Environmental History* 17(2):219–43.

Recommended:

- Murphy, Raymond. 2004. "Disaster or Sustainability: The Dance of Human Agents with Nature's Actants." *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 41(3):249–66.

Axes of Exposure and Vulnerability

6 March

- Turner, B. L., Roger E. Kasperson, Pamela A. Matson, James J. McCarthy, Robert W. Corell, Lindsey Christensen, Noelle Eckley, Jeanne X. Kasperson, Amy Luers, Marybeth L. Martello, Colin Polsky, Alexander Pulsipher, and Andrew Schiller. 2003. "A Framework for Vulnerability Analysis in Sustainability Science." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 100(14):8074–79.
- Cutter, Susan L. 2017. "The Forgotten Casualties Redux: Women, Children, and Disaster Risk." *Global Environmental Change* 42:117–21.
- Rivera, Jason David and DeMond Shondell Miller. 2007. "Continually Neglected: Situating Natural Disasters in the African American Experience." *Journal of Black Studies* 37(4):502–22.
- Gaillard, J. C., Andrew Gorman-Murray, and Maureen Fordham. 2017. "Sexual and Gender Minorities in Disaster." *Gender, Place & Culture* 24(1):18–26.
- Oulahen, Greg, Gordon McBean, Dan Shrubsole, and Stephanie E. Chang. 2018. "Production of Risk: Multiple Interacting Exposures and Unequal Vulnerability in Coastal Communities." *Regional Environmental Change*.

Recommended:

- Furedi, Frank. 2007. "The Changing Meaning of Disaster." *Area* 39(4):482–89.
- Hooks, Gregory and Chad L. Smith. 2004. "The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans." *American Sociological Review* 69(4):558–75.
- Howell, Junia and James R. Elliott. Forthcoming. "Damages Done: The Longitudinal Impacts of Natural Hazards on Wealth Inequality in the United States." *Social Problems*.
- Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Qiang, Yi. 2019. "Disparities of Population Exposed to Flood Hazards in the United States." *Journal of Environmental Management* 232:295–304.
- Taylor, Dorceta E. 2014. *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*. New York: New York University Press.
- Lu, Yuqi. 2017. "Hurricane Flooding and Environmental Inequality: Do Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Have Lower Elevations?" *Socius* 3:2378023117740700.

Disaster Management Practice

13 March

- Tierney, Kathleen. 2012. "Disaster Governance: Social, Political, and Economic Dimensions." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 37(1):341–63.
- Rosa et al. Ch. 9
- The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2015. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*. Geneva: UNISDR.
https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf
- Sovacool, Benjamin K., May Tan-Mullins, and Wokje Abrahamse. 2018. "Bloated Bodies and Broken Bricks: Power, Ecology, and Inequality in the Political Economy of Natural Disaster Recovery." *World Development* 110:243–55.

Recommended:

- UNISDR. 2015. *Making Development Sustainable: The Future of Risk Management. Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

Disaster Solidarities

20 March

- Oliver-Smith, Anthony. 1999. "The Brotherhood of Pain: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives on Post-Disaster Solidarity." Pp. 156–72 in *The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspective*, edited by A. Oliver-Smith and S. M. Hoffman. New York: Routledge.
- Solnit, Rebecca. 2009. *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disasters*. New York: Viking. Prelude, The Mitspah Café, Pauline Jacobson's Joy, William James's Moral Equivalents, Love and Lifeboats, The Beloved Community.
- Xu, Bin. 2017. *The Politics of Compassion: The Sichuan Earthquake and Civic Engagement in China*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. Introduction, Ch. 1, pp. 124-133, Ch. 4.

Trouble, Trauma, and Corrosive Community

27 March

- Erikson, Kai. 1994. *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community*. New York: W.W. Norton. Prologue, Ch. 3, Conclusion. (Ch. 1 recommended.)
- Picou, J. Steven, Brent K. Marshall, and Duane A. Gill. 2004. "Disaster, Litigation, and the Corrosive Community." *Social Forces* 82(4):1493–1522.
- Peek, Lori and Alice Fothergill. 2009. "Displacement, Gender, and the Challenges of Parenting after Hurricane Katrina." *NWSA Journal* 20(3):69–105.
- Jacquet, Jeffrey B. and Richard C. Stedman. 2014. "The Risk of Social-Psychological Disruption as an Impact of Energy Development and Environmental Change." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 57(9):1285–1304.
- Adger, W. Neil, Tara Quinn, Irene Lorenzoni, and Conor Murphy. 2016. "Sharing the Pain: Perceptions of Fairness Affect Private and Public Response to Hazards." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 106(5):1079–96.

Which Way is Out?

10 April

- Sack, Kevin and John Schwartz. 2018. "As Storms Keep Coming, FEMA Spends Billions in 'Cycle' of Damage and Repair." *The New York Times*, October 12.
- Elliott, James R. and Matthew Thomas Clement. 2017. "Natural Hazards and Local Development: The Successive Nature of Landscape Transformation in the United States." *Social Forces* 96(2):851–76.
- Kunreuther, Howard. 2006. "Disaster Mitigation and Insurance: Learning from Katrina." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 604(1):208–27.
- Doberstein, Brent, Joanne Fitzgibbons, and Carrie Mitchell. 2018. "Protect, Accommodate, Retreat or Avoid (PARA): Canadian Community Options for Flood Disaster Risk Reduction and Flood Resilience." *Natural Hazards*.
- Koslov, Liz. 2016. "The Case for Retreat." *Public Culture* 28(2):359–87.

Recommended:

- Lyons, Michal. 2009. "Building Back Better: The Large-Scale Impact of Small-Scale Approaches to Reconstruction." *World Development* 37(2):385–98.
- Geisler, Charles and Ben Currens. 2017. "Impediments to Inland Resettlement under Conditions of Accelerated Sea Level Rise." *Land Use Policy* 66:322–30.

Contesting Vulnerability and Response

17 April

- Carmin, Tierney, Chu, Hunter, Roberts, and Shi. 2015. Adaptation to Climate Change. Chapter 6 in Dunlap, Riley E. and Robert J. Brulle, eds. *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Paprocki, Kasia. 2018. "Threatening Dystopias: Development and Adaptation Regimes in Bangladesh." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108(4):955-73.
- Elliott, Rebecca. 2017. "Who Pays for the Next Wave? The American Welfare State and Responsibility for Flood Risk." *Politics & Society* 45(3):415-40.
- Lidskog, Rolf and Daniel Sjödin. 2018. "Unintended Consequences and Risk(y) Thinking: The Shaping of Consequences and Responsibilities in Relation to Environmental Disasters." *Sustainability* 10(8):2906.

Cultures of Disaster

24 April

- Solnit, Rebecca. 2009. *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disasters*. New York: Viking. Hobbes in Hollywood, or the Few versus the Many.
- Farrell, Justin. 2014. "Moral Outpouring: Shock and Generosity in the Aftermath of the BP Oil Spill." *Social Problems* 61(3):482-506.
- Recuber, Timothy. 2016. *Consuming Catastrophe: Mass Culture in America's Decade of Disaster*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Introduction, Ch. 2.
- Horigan, Kate Parker. 2018. *Consuming Katrina: Public Disaster and Personal Narrative*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi. Introduction.
- Ghosh, Amitav. 2016. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 3-33, 54-63.

Risk Futures

1 May

- Shwom, Rachael and Robert E. Kopp. 2018. *Long Term Risk Governance: When Do Societies Act Before Crisis?* SSRN Scholarly Paper. ID 3230337. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network.
- Rudel, Thomas K. 2013. *Defensive Environmentalists and the Dynamics of Global Reform*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2, 3, 9, 10.
- Clark, Nigel. 2014. "Geo-Politics and the Disaster of the Anthropocene." *The Sociological Review* 62(1_suppl):19-37.
- Buck, Holly Jean. 2015. "On the Possibilities of a Charming Anthropocene." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 105(2):369-77.