

## **Geography 4451: GEOGRAPHY OF RISK AND HAZARD**

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Room: RC 2003  
Time: 2:30pm to 5:30pm (Sept. 13 – Nov. 29)

### **Fall 2012 Course Outline**

Globally, the vulnerability of our communities to the impacts of natural hazards is on the rise, while as a society at large, we have generated the greatest innovation and wealth in our history. We are technologically and scientifically ‘better off’ today, but unfortunately these resources are not transforming into community capacity and resilience to address uncertainty. The global costs of natural hazards and disasters will continue to increase under a ‘dominant view’ of risk management that devotes expert attention to politically ‘relevant’ risks but ignores human vulnerability.

Students will explore an interdisciplinary perspective of environmental risk and hazards that is centered on the geography of disasters. Information on the physical processes and impacts of natural and technological hazards will be essential to our understanding of disaster, however the underlying theory of the course looks at how society lives with risk and responds to disasters and environmental change. Risk and hazards are often viewed as accidents that are separated from normal life, however vulnerability is largely a product of our socio-economic, political and resource relationships that create the conditions for disaster to occur. Physical and social sciences explore natural and technical disasters to provide diverse definitions of risk and hazards; explore diverse risk perceptions and assessments; individual and societal acceptance of the management of risk; human vulnerability; and the social and cultural context of risk.

Course readings provide theoretical implications of natural hazards impacts and human vulnerability (social and environmental justice and security) while the seminars will be a composition of interactive workshops, presentations, and class discussions covering a range of local, regional and international disaster and risk-based case studies. Course participation is a critical element of this fourth year seminar, and complete attendance is expected (within reasonable limitations), as well as the required readings. The course grade will be a product of a student research essay carried out over the entire term, as well as article presentations and participation during each seminar. The research project is broken down into task components designed to develop your topic, writing and research skills as we proceed through the course material.

## Marking Scheme

Article Analysis (2 @ 5%)	10%
Participation	10%
Research Topic Statement	5%
Research Proposal and Outline	15%
Research Essay	40%
Student Presentations	20%

## Seminar Topics:

September 13	<b>Introduction to ‘Risk, Hazards and Vulnerability’</b>
September 20	<b>Geographic Regions of Risk (<i>Group A: Article</i>)</b>
September 27	<b>Natural Disasters and Human Populations (<i>Group B: Article</i>)</b>
October 4	<b>Natural Hazards and Disasters in Canada (<i>Research Topics</i>)</b>
October 11	<b>Technological and Social Hazards (<i>Group A: Article</i>)</b>
October 18	<b>Risk Perception and Communication (<i>Group B: Article</i>)</b>
October 25	<b>Risk Management and Adaptation (<i>Research Proposals Due</i>)</b>
November 1	<b>Community Risk and Resilience</b>
November 8	<b>Urban Hazards Mapping and Emergency Management</b>
November 15	<b>Disaster and Development (<i>Research Papers Due</i>)</b>
November 22	<b>Student Presentations Group A</b>
November 29	<b>Student Presentations Group B</b>