

Geography 4451/ ENST 4451

Geography of Risk and Hazard

Winter Term, 2018

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Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1:00 – 2:30 in AT- 2005

Course Description:

An examination of the geographic theories, constructs, frameworks and methods used in the study of risk and hazard. Emphasis is placed upon human-environment interaction in environmental and technological hazards.

The course will attempt to explain the relationship between natural and anthropogenic events leading to what is colloquially referred to as a “disaster” or “catastrophe”. It will also attempt to explain how such events can cascade into other events and build on each other to create maximum detrimental impact on human lives – often leading to extreme situations commonly referred to as humanitarian disaster. Impacts on infrastructure and economy will also be covered. Lectures will be organized around a focus on individual, major or minor, causes of disasters – starting with an explanation of the underlying causes – physical and human. Each lecture will also attempt to explain the way in which humans have dealt with the hazards in the past, the way in which different cultures adapted to the risk inherent in living in dangerous places and the various means of disaster mitigation in Canada and around the world.

Course topics:

Meaning and perception of risk
Earthquakes
Tsunami
Volcanic eruptions
Mass wasting events
Thunderstorms
Tornadoes
Hurricanes
Winter hazards
Flooding
Droughts

Wildfires
Radon
Acid rain
Solid waste storage
Liquid waste disposal
Radioactive waste
Extraterrestrial threats
Subsidence (optional)
Epidemics (optional)

Student Presentations

As part of the course, participants will be expected to present one case study related to a recent catastrophic event. The topic must fall within the themes presented in lectures (see list above) and will need to be approved by the instructor. Depending on class enrollment, presentations will be done individually or in groups. Each presentation will be graded on content (mark shared equally between group members) and presentation quality (each participant will be marked individually).

Textbook: None. Assigned readings only.

Course Grading:

Progress Exam	20 %	(Feb. 6)
Midterm Exam	25 %	(Mar. 15)
Final Exam	35 %	
Student Presentations	20 %	(Mar. 13, Mar. 23, Mar. 24 if necessary)

Course Policies

The following course policies are consistent with those of the Geography Department and Lakehead University.

1. Regular attendance is expected in lectures.
2. Any absence due to illness, disability, or domestic affliction should be reported to the instructor. Absence due to extracurricular activities (e.g. athletics) should be discussed with the instructor **PRIOR** to the absence. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the notes from a classmate. I can provide you with any handouts, but will not provide you a repeat of the lecture or my lecture notes.
3. Students with special needs should talk to me at the beginning of the course and register with the Student Success Centre.
4. Tardiness is frowned upon. Be late at your own risk.
5. Assigned readings, when provided, are to be read prior to the next lecture. This will allow you to get the most out of the lectures and ask informed questions.
6. Questions may be asked **anytime** during lectures. I won't be offended.
7. No make-up exams will be given without a medical excuse backed by a medical certificate. No one will be allowed to write the tests or the final exam **prior** to the scheduled date.
8. In order to obtain an up-to-date grade status you must contact me directly in person or email me from your registered LU account (@lakeheadu.ca domain name).