



Disaster Resilience (POLS 5382)

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Office: CHSS #489

Classroom: Online
Time: Online
Office Hours: Mondays 10-12; by appointment

Course Description

This reading seminar introduces students to the concept of disaster resilience, a term that has become ubiquitous amongst those involved in emergency and disaster management activities. This course has two objectives. First, to enable students **to gain factual knowledge** about the terminology, history, methods, and trends related to the concept of disaster resilience. To achieve this objective, this course will introduce students to topics such as disasters and hazards, social and physical vulnerability, resilience, adaptive capacity, coordination, and social capital. Students will also learn about the limitations of resilience as a theoretical concept, and as such, they will be asked to consider the extent to which disaster resilience is a useful guide for the development of public policy. The second objective is to enable students **to apply the course material to improve their thinking** about the concept of disaster resilience by engaging the assigned literature, considering how the literature applies to the real world, and working with their colleges on an end-of-the-semester project. Students not enrolled in the Master of Political Science or Master of Public Administration programs must obtain permission to enroll in this course.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define disasters, vulnerability, and resilience;
2. Identify the social, economic, institutional, organizational, ecological, community capital, and infrastructure components of disaster resilience;
3. Describe how resilience is a set of capacities and a process;
4. Describe the importance of social capital for disaster resilience;
5. Evaluate the vulnerability and resilience of communities of various scales; and
6. Describe the limitations of resilience as a concept and guide for public policy.

Course Textbook

None. Students can access all course readings through the SHSU Library databases.

Course Policies

Communication: Email is the best way to reach me. During the week, I will do my best to respond to email within 24 hours. During the weekend, I will respond to email within 48 hours. Given the nature of this course, all communications exchanged in this class will abide by the principles of professional etiquette. Additional information about email etiquette can be found on Blackboard.

Deliverables: The grade that students will earn in this course will be based upon the following:

Deliverable	Weight
Reading Logs	25%
Learning Journal	25%
Group Project	25%
Final Examination	25%
Total	100%

- **Reading Logs:** Most weeks, students will complete and post a log of the assigned readings by Sunday at 11:59 pm. The reading log is not a form of busy work. Rather, this deliverable will help students to navigate the assigned readings, and equally important, highlight where there are questions about, or misunderstandings of, the substantive materials. Furthermore, the reading log will become a valuable resource for students as they navigate the other course deliverables. As necessary, additional information about the Reading Logs will be posted on Blackboard.

- **Learning Journal:** During the semester, students will complete and post an anonymous learning journal entries (of a minimum of 500 words) by Sunday at 11:59 pm. The purpose of this deliverable is to help students explore the materials through the process of free writing. The professor will provide a list of questions that students may choose from to prompt their exploratory writing. Alternatively, students can choose their own topic, for example, a discussion of the points in the literature that were difficult to understand. The personal journal is not designed to evaluate a student's writing capacity (such as an essay, examination, or a research paper). Rather, students are to use their journal **to reflect on course materials and explore how the materials may apply to their personal or professional contexts**. Like the Reading Logs, the Learning Journal will become a valuable resource for students as they navigate the other course deliverables. As necessary, additional information about the Learning Journals will be posted on Blackboard.

- **Group Project:** The Group Project will enable students to collaborate to develop a comprehensive document (a literature review) that outlines and summarizes the course materials. The Group Project will be a decentralized activity, meaning that other than a minor prompt from the professor, the students will organically determine the scope and focus of their collaborative project. Like the Reading Logs and the Learning Journals, the Group Project will become a valuable resource for students as they prepare for the final examination. As necessary, additional information about the Group Project will be on Blackboard.

- **Final Examination:** Students will complete a final project at the end of the semester. The final examination will be open-resource and comprehensive, meaning students must draw upon all of the course readings and apply their knowledge of disaster resilience to a real-world situation. The professor will not accept final examinations submitted after the posted deadline. As necessary, additional information about the Final Examination will be posted on Blackboard.

Grading Policy: Students must submit all deliverables by the date indicated on the course Blackboard page. Late deliverables will not be accepted except in the event of an emergency or

excused absence, which includes: participation in a university affiliated activity, a religious holiday (and travel related to that holiday), death or major illness in your immediate family, participation in legal proceedings, injury or illness too severe to allow completion, or required participation in military duties. To receive a deadline extension on a deliverable, you should notify me by email prior to the due date, if possible. In cases where advance notification is not feasible, you should provide notification by the end of the second working day after the due date. If needed, you must provide additional documentation substantiating the reason for the missing the due date. Student must complete make-up deliverables by the date agreed upon by the professor.

Grade Scale: This course will be graded on a 100-point scale as follows:

A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	59 and lower

Extra Credit: Extra credit will not be awarded, for any reason, in this class. Students in this class receive every opportunity to succeed during the semester. If you find that you are getting behind, for whatever reason, contact the professor several weeks before the course withdraw deadline.

Student Conduct: Students must honor the principles of academic honesty, as expressed by the Sam Houston State University's *Code of Student Conduct and Discipline*. A copy of the *Code* can be found online at: www.shsu.edu/students/guide.

Citation Guidelines: Students must properly document all sources, including ideas, quotations, and material taken from the internet. This course does not require students to use a particular citation style in their assignments and activities. Students who need help with citations should visit the following website: <http://shslibraryguides.org/citations>.

Course Schedule

Course Schedule: Detailed information about the topics covered during each week of the semester, the flow of weekly activities, and the deliverable deadlines can be found by clicking on the “Weekly Materials” link under the “Course Content” section of Blackboard. A summary of the course schedule can be found at the end of this course syllabus. All course content posted on Blackboard supersedes the content listed in this course syllabus.

Schedule Changes: The professor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule. The professor will post all schedule changes on Blackboard. In the event that schedule changes do occur, the professor will notify the students about the schedule changes via Blackboard announcement and email at least 24 hours prior to the schedule change.

University Policies

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic

work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: [Dean of Student's Office](#).

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the policy, see: www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf

Students with Disabilities Policy: It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **NOTE:** No accommodation can be made until you register. For a complete listing of the university services and policies for students with disabilities, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability>.

Classroom Visitors: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Course Schedule

	TOPIC	READINGS	DELIVERABLES
Week 01:	Course Introduction	1. Course Syllabus 2. Course Blackboard Page	1. Ice Breaker
Week 02:	Disasters Defined	1. Perry 2007 2. Tierney et al 2001, Chapter 1 3. Gregg & Houghton 2006	1. Reading Log 01 2. Learning Journal 01
Week 03:	Resilience Defined	1. Masterson et al Chapters 1 & 2 2. Paton 2006 3. Paton & Johnston 2006	1. Reading Log 02
Week 04:	Resilience and the Disaster Cycle	1. Ross Chapters 1 & 2 2. Masterson et al Chapter 3 3. Norris 2008	1. Reading Log 03
Week 05:	Resilience and Adaptive Capacity	1. Ross Chapter 5 2. Cutter et al 2010 3. Peacock et al 2010	1. Reading Log 04 2. Learning Journal 02
Week 06:	Resilience and Response and Recovery	1. Ross Chapter 6 2. Stewart et al 2009 3. Tierney et al 2001, Chapter 3	1. Reading Log 05
Week 07:	Social Capital	1. Aldrich 2012 2. Carpenter & Montoya 2011 3. Colten et al 2012	1. Reading Log 06
Week 08:	Resilience Axioms	1. Vale & Campanella 2005	1. Reading Log 07 2. Learning Journal 03
Week 09:	Spring Break		
Week 10:	Assessing Hazard Exposure	1. Masterson et al Chapter 4 2. Peducci et al 2009	1. Reading Log 08
Week 11:	Assessing Physical Vulnerability & Resilience	1. Masterson et al Chapter 5 2. Johnston et al 2006	1. Reading Log 09
Week 12:	Assessing Social Vulnerability & Resilience	1. Masterson et al Chapter 6 2. Buckle 2006	1. Reading Log 10
Week 13:	Assessing Hazard Mitigation Plans	1. Masterson et al Chapter 7 2. King 2006	1. Reading Log 11 2. Learning Journal 04
Week 14:	Group Project	None	1. Group Project 01 2. Learning Journal 05
Week 15:	Group Project	None	1. Group Project 02 2. Learning Journal 06
Week 16:	Final Examination	None	1. Final Examination