A. **TITLE:** SOCIOLOGY OF DISASTER

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** SOCI 325

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** No

E. **GER CATEGORY:** None

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall and Spring

G. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The foundational premise of this course is that disasters are social in nature; revealing, or exacerbating, existing social inequalities. Analyzing a series of case studies using methodology from classical and contemporary sociology this course prepares students to better understand, plan for, and respond to disasters. The course uses a problem-based learning model in which students work in small groups to help a particular community prepare for a particular hazard.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:** None

I. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</th>
<th>PSLO</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>ISLO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Identify particular data as essential for policy formation in multiple case studies of disaster.</td>
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<td>2 [IA]</td>
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<td>b. Compare differences in community response to disasters as a correlate of community perception of the disaster’s origin as human vs. non.</td>
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<td>2 [CA]</td>
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<td>c. Compare responses to disaster case studies occurring within US vs. those requiring international response; specifically using Haiti as a case study.</td>
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<td>4 [GL]</td>
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<td>d. Evaluate differential preparation for, and response to, disaster along lines of stratification.</td>
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<td>e. Apply theoretical frames from classical and contemporary sociology to understand disaster from multiple perspectives.</td>
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<td>2 [CA]</td>
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<td>KEY</td>
<td>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes</td>
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<td>ISLO</td>
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<td>Communication Skills</td>
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<td>Oral [O], Written [W]</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Critical Analysis [CA], Inquiry &amp; Analysis [IA], Problem Solving [PS]</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Foundational Skills</td>
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<td>Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit./Reasoning [QTR]</td>
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<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T]</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</td>
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J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT**: No

K. **TEXTS:**


L. **REFERENCES:**


M. **EQUIPMENT:** University Supplied Equipment

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A – F

O. **MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**
Quizzes of essential data, exams of synthetic and summative knowledge, and group discussion and collaboration in a problem-based learning model.

P. **DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

I. Essentials of Sociology
   A. Classical Theories
      a. Marx – Conflict perspective
      b. Durkheim- Structural functionalism
      c. Weber- Bureaucratization
   B. Contemporary Theories
      a. Mead- symbolic interaction
      b. Feminist and intersectional theory

II. Heat Wave
   A. Chicago Case Study
      a. Defining the disaster- methodological difficulties
   B. Methodological Innovations
      a. Establishing a “baseline”
      b. Determining cause of death
   C. Implications of climate change for heat waves
      a. Increasing incidents of heat waves, compare with France 2003 and 2019
   D. Age, Gender, Isolation and Disasters
      a. Explore data of disproportionate older male deaths
      b. Theory of social cohesion and disproportionate Black versus Hispanic

III. Disaster Studies
   A. History of Disaster Research United States
      a. Cold war context
      b. Role of government research
      c. Department of Defense and climate change
   B. Social Construction of Disaster
      a. Media and spectacle theory
      b. Conflict perspective of definitions
   C. Natural vs Non-Natural Disasters
      a. Role of media
      b. Role of government
D. Disaster Response Cycle US Model  
   a. FEMA Training  
   Superstorm Sandy Critique of Response

VI. Hurricane  
A. Puerto Rico 2018  
   a. History of Puerto Rico  
   b. History of dependency  
   c. Role of corruption and failed infrastructure  
   d. National government response  
   e. Mental Health and Disasters  
   f. Political change following Maria response
B. New Orleans 2005  
   a. History of New Orleans  
   b. Basics of race as social construct  
   c. Role of media  
   d. Role of city government  
   e. Role of national government  
   f. Data on poverty and networks  
   g. Disaster as opportunity – the rebuilding of a new city
C. Race and Disaster  
   a. Lessons learned from US disasters  
   b. Lessons learned from international disasters

IV. Earthquake  
A. Haiti 2010 Case Study  
   a. Basics of international development  
   b. Basics of Haitian history  
   c. Role of dependency in disaster preparation  
   d. Role of national government  
   e. Role of international aid  
   f. Problem of competing bureaucracy
B. Competing Bureaucracies and Disaster  
   a. Basics of NGOs and fundraising  
   b. Links to Weberian analysis  
   c. Implications for US context

V. Unnatural Disasters  
A. Nuclear Disaster –  
   a. Chernobyl vs Three Mile Island – Communication and Governance  
   b. Fukushima and Black Swan Concept  
   c. Risk Society

VI. Pandemic  
A. Disease and demography  
   a. Life expectancy and medicine  
   b. Measuring risk  
B. International response to outbreaks  
   a. Strengths and weaknesses of international system.  
   b. 1918 Pandemic and war  
D. COVID 19
VI. A More Dangerous World
   A. Climate Change
      a. Basics of climate change
      b. Threat multiplier concept US national security
      c. Migration and climate change
      d. Drought, famine and disasters
      e. International response
   B. Responding to the Threat
      a. International governance
      b. National governance and preparation
      c. Local governance and preparation

Q. LABORATORY OUTLINE: N/A