DISASTERS: GEOLOGY VS. HOLLYWOOD

CRN: 3654
Level: Counts toward General Education Sciences/Tech. or Core 'SB' requirement
Course Number: Geology 0836
Section Number: 002
Credit Hours: 3.0
Location: Barton Hall, Room 307A, Main Campus
Times: Tues, Thurs: 2:00 PM – 3:20 PM

CLASS DESCRIPTION:
Clips from Hollywood disaster movies will drive our inquiry into geologic phenomena. Can you really drive over a lava flow in a jeep? (Dante's Peak) Are we foolish not to prepare for a major earthquake in New York City? (Aftershock) Could global warming melt the polar ice caps turning "dry land" into a myth? (Waterworld) Would the impact of an asteroid the "size of Texas" kill half the Earth by heat and freeze the remainder in a nuclear winter? (Armageddon) Learn the fundamentals of plate tectonics, how petrologic properties control volcanic explosivity, how to calculate earthquake locations from seismic data, and prepare a disaster readiness plan for a major U.S. city. By the end of the semester you should have acquired the background to understand the story behind disasters in the news and the role of the science in shaping disaster planning policy.

PREREQUISITES: Undeniable weakness for B movies

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: Natural Hazards
Natural Hazards by Kellar and Devecchio (custom TempleEdition, EES 0836)

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Jonathan E. Nyquist
Room: 319 Beury Hall
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Email: nyq@temple.edu
Office Hours: 3:30-4:30 T,Th or by appointment

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Glenn Havelock, glenn.havelock@temple.edu
Room: 355 Beury Hall
Office Hours: T1:00-2:00 -11:30 & Th 11:00-12:00.

CLASS WEB SITE:
This class has a Blackboard web site accessible through TUPortal. Your Temple login and password should allow you to access. Grades, assignments, readings, web links, announcements, etc., will be posted on this site throughout the semester. You need to be able to access Blackboard, so double check ASAP.
ATTENDANCE:
Class attendance is important! There will be in-class activities that will be graded. Besides, you don’t want to miss all the cheesy movies! (Yes, you may bring popcorn.)

GRADING:
Quizzes (five of them) 30%
In-class Activities and Microquizzes 25%
Take-home Assignments 25%
Final Project 20%

You have only one week in which to make up missed assignments. After a week, forget it. The final project cannot be late because student grades cannot be turned in late to the administration. Microquizzes are one-question quizzes at the start of class to see if you’ve done the reading. A list of possible questions will be provided in advance. Regular quizzes are a mixture of true/false, multiple choice, and short essay. Make-up quizzes are all essay and are only offered if you have a valid excuse.

WORKING WITH ANOTHER STUDENT
Yes, you may work with another student on the in-class activities and many of the take-home activities are group projects. Cooperative learning is encouraged, but be certain that you learn the material because if you have been sponging off of another student you will fail the quizzes. The final project can be a group or individual project. For a group project you will all receive the same grade and the expectation rises in proportion to the size of the group.

FINAL PROJECT
• Topic related to natural or man-made disasters of interest to you
• Topic that might share interest with your major
• Can be small (max 3 people) group project
• Group projects should be larger in scope – an individual project worth an A will not receive an A for the group
• Be careful whom you team with – make sure they will share the workload.
• Be imaginative in coming up with your topic
• DO NOT produce:
  Board games; a good looking game is not necessarily a good game
  Power Point presentations; we don’t want a list of facts
  General papers – if you write a paper, make it more specific (focused).
• We encourage:
  Case studies – an analysis of a particular topic.
  Use your talents in other fields; if you’re a writer think about short stories, screen plays, etc.

Education majors: Lesson plans aimed at training teachers & implementation (e.g. an in-class exercise that discusses what causes flooding). Make sure your plan reflects a scientific reality. A lesson plan for grade school students is too elementary.
Business majors: the vulnerability of specific industries to natural disasters Videos – good information content, and fun. Again, try to be focused. We can try to help you to get access to the facilities you need.
SCHEDULE: The daily schedule will undoubtedly change. Reading assignments will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.
KEY DATES
First class: Tuesday, August 26th.
Last day to drop (tuition refund available): Monday, September 9th.
Last day to withdraw (no refund): Tuesday, October 22nd.
Thanksgiving recess: No class on Thursday, Nov. 28th.
Last Class: Tuesday, December 3rd.
Final Projects Due: by noon on Tuesday, December 10th. DO NOT BE LATE!

NOTE:
Students who have previously withdrawn from the same course, or who have already withdrawn from 5 courses since September 2003 may not withdraw.

TEMPLE POLICIES

Disability Accommodations and Services

Any student who has a need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 at 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty and Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.

DISCLAIMER:

This syllabus provides a tentative class schedule and a summary of my expectations, but it does not constitute a contract with students or supersede any University policy. It may be necessary to revise the syllabus during the semester.