

CONF 665: Conflict Resolution in Complex Humanitarian Crises

Dr. Mazur

Syllabus

An Experiential Learning Class (Field Training Exercise or FTX)

School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

George Mason University

Arlington, VA

Spring Semester 2013 3 credits

Course Description: This unique, hands-on class is designed to simulate a humanitarian crisis and create the learning environment where participants experience and demonstrate the skills needed to lead through a crisis. Students will deploy to a fictional, worn-torn country. Through a series of roles and responsibilities, students together seek to formulate and implement strategies and interventions for managing a disaster in a “lived” scenario. Common obstacles, disputes, and challenges are presented to be proactively addressed and resolved as the exercise unfolds.

Learning Objectives: Students will

- learn the skills and expertise needed to work with and serve others under emergency conditions.
- come to understand the real world of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.
- practice how to prevent or alleviate human suffering through the simulation of all facets of disaster operations.
- learn to analyze a multitude of interests, political concerns, and international and domestic issues. Students will understand and practice the skills of negotiating, mediating, and organizing and providing disaster relief services.
- come to understand the origins of humanitarian crisis, and design the elements of strategic planning for bringing violence and conflict under control.

Class Meeting Times and Readings

1. Friday February 15, 2013 7-9:30 pm **Introduction & Anatomy of a Crisis: Narratives, Framing & Meaning Making**

Read before Class: Boin, Arjen et al. The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership Under Pressure, pp. 69-88

Button, Gregory. Disaster Culture: Knowledge and Uncertainty in the Wake of Human and Environmental Catastrophe, pp. 11-18; 71-88; 149-166

Forage, Paul, and Kristen Johnson, eds. Humanitarian Operations A Field Guide

Perrow, Charles. Normal Accidents, pp. 3-31; 62-100; 256-303

Watch before class: Lee, Spike. When the Levees Broke - A Requiem In Four Acts

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2. Friday March 8, 2013 7-9:30 pm **Who Should Intervene and How?**
Read before class: Anderson, Mary B. Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War
Curle, Adam. Tools for Transformation: A Personal Study
Diamond, Louise and John McDonald. Multi-Track Diplomacy: a Systems Approach to Peace
Watch before class: Reticker, Gini. Pray the Devil Back to Hell
3. **Field Training Exercise** March 14-17, 2013 Indian River State College, Fort Pierce, Florida
4. Friday March 22, 2013 7-9:30 pm **How Do We Measure Resiliency & How Do We Capture Learning from the Last Disaster?**
Read before class: Klein, Naomi. The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism, first two chapters
Ripley, Amanda. The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes - and Why, pp. 163-178
5. Friday April 12, 2013 7-9:30 pm **Final Presentations & Wrap Up**

Grading: Your grade in this class will be determined as follows:

Class Participation:	20%
Field Experience Participation:	40%
Oral Presentation:	20%
Final Paper:	20%

Class Participation/Attendance Policy

Because of the nature of this course, it is vital that you come regularly and are well prepared for class. The success of the class depends largely on your active participation. Sixty percent (60%) of your grade will be based on class and field experience participation. Excessive absences will lower your participation grade. The best class participation will reflect thoughtful reaction to the reading, as well as to classmates' comments.

Final Paper

By March 19, please submit a short statement of your thesis or topic. Your paper must reflect your own thoughts and analysis; you may not simply summarize the work of others. Most papers will be around 10-15 pages long (double spaced). **Paper Deadline: Your final paper is due by noon on April 12, 2012.**

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Class Presentation

Students will present an abstract of their paper during a class period. Each presentation should be about 10 minutes. Please schedule a time with Dr. Mazur to discuss your topic: 202.646.4094 or cindy.mazur@dhs.gov.

George Mason Plagiarism Policy

George Mason takes plagiarism very seriously. Although great ideas are advanced through collaboration, please be very careful in your work for this class to ensure proper attribution of sources.

Bibliography

Anderson, Mary B. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War*. Lynne Rienner Pub,

1999. Print.

Boin, Arjen et al. *The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership Under Pressure*.

Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2005. Print.

Button, Gregory. *Disaster Culture: Knowledge and Uncertainty in the Wake of Human and Environmental Catastrophe*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010. Print.

Curle, Adam. *Tools for Transformation: A Personal Study*. Hawthorn Press Ltd, 1990. Print.

Diamond, Louise. *Multi-track Diplomacy: a Systems Approach to Peace*. 3rd ed. West Hartford, Conn: Kumarian Press, 1996. Print. Kumarian Press Books for a World That Works.

Forage, Paul, and Kristen Johnson, eds. *Humanitarian Operations A Field Guide*. Consortium for Humanitarian Service and Education and the Humanitarian Training Initiative, Spring 2012.

Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. 1st ed. New York: Picador, 2008. Print.

Lee, Spike. *When the Levees Broke - A Requiem In Four Acts*. HBO Documentary Films, 2006. Film.

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Perrow, Charles. *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999. Print. Princeton Paperbacks.

Reticker, Gini. *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*. Passion River Films, 2009. Film.

Ripley, Amanda. *The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes - and Why*. New York: Crown, 2008. Print.