



*GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY*  
*School of Continuing Studies*  
*Emergency and Disaster Management*

## Natural Hazards and Disasters (MPDM-640)

**Dates:** Wednesday, January 11 - Monday, May 8, 2016

**Location:** This course takes place online. Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) uses Canvas as its Learning Management System. This course will be taught entirely through the Canvas platform. To learn more about Canvas, please go through the [Canvas Guide for Students](#).

**Faculty:** Alex Peterson

**Contact Information:** [ap1419@georgetown.edu](mailto:ap1419@georgetown.edu)

**Virtual Office Hours:** By appointment through Canvas Conferences. Contact me by email to set up an appointment.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores natural hazards and the multidimensional aspects surrounding these events that result in disaster. Students will gain an understanding of the underlying physical processes behind hazards, the socioeconomic characteristics that manufacture risk and result in disproportionate impacts on communities, and potential mitigation, response, and recovery strategies. Coincident with case studies and readings on the underlying processes of hazards, the course will explore the topic of societal vulnerability and resilience. Students will learn through case studies, policy readings, and academic literature. Students will apply their knowledge by evaluating best practices and applying the theoretical frameworks covered throughout the course.

# COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

1. Analyze the physical processes and societal impacts of past, current, and future natural hazards
2. Assess various approaches to hazards and risk management to identify best practices, including the application of vulnerability and resilience frameworks
3. Evaluate emergency management literature and planning documents in terms of their quality, authorship, and relevance
4. Craft place-specific hazard profiles and mitigation/recovery approaches and strategies

## REQUIRED READINGS

The following reading is available for purchase at the Georgetown Bookstore and online vendors:

1. Keller, E. A., & DeVecchio, D. E. (2014). Natural hazards: Earth's processes as hazards, disasters, and catastrophes, (4th ed.). Routledge. ISBN 978-0321939968

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Technical Requirements

As an online student your "classroom" experience will be very different than a traditional student. As part of your online experience, you can expect to:

1. Communicate via email including sending attachments
2. Navigate the internet using a Web browser
3. Use office applications such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs to create documents
4. Learn how to submit assignments in Canvas
5. Communicate with peers using discussion boards and other platforms
6. Upload and download saved files
7. Have easy access to the Internet
8. Navigate Canvas, including using the email component within Canvas
9. Use a microphone to record audio through your computer
10. Use an internal or external camera to record video through your computer

In this course we will use Zoom, TurnItIn, VoiceThread, and Collaborations.

- Zoom enables users to conduct synchronous ("real-time") conferences, presentations, lectures, meetings, office hours and group chats via audio, video, text chat and content sharing. [Technical support for Zoom is available on an external website.](#)
- TurnItIn is a writing assessment tool that is used to detect plagiarism and allows teachers to provide assignment feedback to students. [Technical support for TurnItIn is available.](#)

- VoiceThread is a tool that enables teachers and students to upload and asynchronously present images, video, and/or other media and respond to others presentations with audio, video, and/or text comments. [Technical support for VoiceThread is available.](#)
- Collaborations allows you to collaborate with your peers using Google Docs. [Technical support for Collaborations is available through Canvas Support.](#)

## Computer Requirements

Students need to have sufficient technology and Internet access to complete this course. The requirements are listed by [Canvas in the Instructure Guides.](#)

### **Audio and Video Capability**

- You will need an internal or external microphone. Most computers now come with them built in.
- You will need an internal or external camera. Most computers now come with them built in.

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

This course is conducted entirely online, which means students do not have to be on campus to complete any portion of it. Students will participate in the course using Georgetown University's online learning management system called Canvas. Each new module that is released will open on a Tuesday at 11:59 pm (ET), two weeks before the module formally begins. Students are required to move through each module in sequential order. This course consists of 12 modules.

## Student Expectations

At the beginning of each module, preview the module so that you can plan your time accordingly. Take note of the various readings and assignments with their due dates. Notice whether assignments are individual or group assignments so that you allocate time for communication and collaboration. Be aware that many modules end with a substantive assignment.

Participation is essential to your success in this class. You are expected to engage actively in discussion boards, complete all module activities, and collaborate on group and class assignments. The quality of your participation does contribute to your grade in this course.

Present yourself as the professional you are or aspire to be. Do good work, proofread what you write, and communicate respectfully. Remember, your classmates are your future colleagues.

As a Georgetown University graduate student, you are expected to put forth your best efforts in completing the course readings, assignments, and activities.

## Time Expectations

Our online classes are designed to meet the same time requirements as our place-based (face-to-face) courses. For a 3-credit, 15-week course, students should expect to spend approximately 9-12 hours per week participating in the course and completing all course assignments.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Georgetown Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

## Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through [the Gervase Programs](#). If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#).

## COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Each module includes readings and other materials, discussion boards for engaging with your peers around the course content, and assignments that provide an opportunity to apply your newly acquired knowledge and practice important skills.

Students are expected to participate in all course-related activities.

There are four synchronous sessions planned for this course: an orientation session near the beginning of the course, an interview of an emergency manager, a mid-semester check in, and a final project check-in. Additional synchronous sessions may be added to accommodate guest speakers. Synchronous sessions will be recorded, and students who are unable to attend the live

session are required to view the recording. Dates and time of synchronous sessions will be announced through Canvas. Students must notify me in advance if they are unable to attend a synchronous session, and they may be given an alternate required assignment.

Written work is due by the assigned due date on Canvas. You must submit your weekly written assignment online by the time assigned in Canvas; do not send your papers to other personal or professional email addresses. Follow-ups and class participation is contingent on the timely submission of your initial responses.

All written submissions should be Times New Roman 12-point font, double spaced, with one inch margins. Reference lists do not count toward page requirements. All written assignments should conform to APA style guide.

Note that discussions typically have two due dates: a date for the initial post, and a date for replies to classmates. Only the initial post due date is set in Canvas to appear on the calendar. The response due date is included in the discussion board instructions. You are responsible for meeting both due dates.

### **Late Submission Policy:**

Work is due by the due dates set in Canvas.

If you have extenuating circumstances, please speak with me as soon as possible, and always in advance of the deadline. Turning in work late, even with instructor approval, may result in a reduction of your grade.

## **Assignments**

There are a variety of assignments in this course, including reading notes and discussions, hazard mitigation plan evaluations, and papers and written assignments. All of these assignments are explained in detail within the Canvas platform. You will also find the corresponding grading rubric under the assignment instructions; for discussion boards, click on the gear icon to view the rubric.

### **Reaction Notes & Discussion:** (20% of your grade)

Due: Modules 1-8, 10-12

Every module entails a number of readings drawn from the required text, peer reviewed journals, government publications, and more. These readings will help you familiarize yourself with academic writing and the state of knowledge on the various aspects of natural hazards and disasters. These notes and discussions are open-ended, with no required prompt to address. Notes and discussions can be formal or informal write-ups (similar to a short paper or essay) or bulleted points of comments, critiques, criticisms, and questions. After posting your reaction notes and discussions, you are expected to contribute to the discussion by responding to another student's post. Note that you cannot simply summarize the readings.

### **Discussions & Voicethreads:** (20% of your grade)

Due: Modules 1-12

As you can see by their weighting, discussions, which are included in every module, are an integral part of your learning in this course, and your contributions will be assessed carefully. Your participation will be judged by the way in which you contribute to positive, thoughtful class discussion. We will together create a supportive forum for intellectual deliberation with discussions that are respectful and considerate of others' opinions.

**HMPs:** (15% of your grade)

Due: Modules 3-12

These assignments are designed to help you familiarize yourself with hazard and emergency management-related planning documents. By reading and critiquing hazard profiles, you can both grow and apply your knowledge of real-world locations and situations. Similar to the discussion boards, these assignments must be completed following standard grammatical rules.

**Written Assignments:** (30% of your grade)

Due: Modules 1-12

This course includes a number of papers ranging from 3-5 pages to 8-10 pages in length. You will be responding to a specific prompt, often a comparative analysis of two case studies. Following the discussion boards and hazard mitigation plan evaluations, please use proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. Make sure to include both in-text citations and a Works Cited/Bibliography.

**Final Project:** (15% of your grade)

Due: Modules 8, 9, 12

Your final project involves revising hazard profiles from a hazard mitigation plan specific to somewhere in the United States. You will apply the knowledge you gained from your readings, research, and discussions to produce a comprehensive hazard profile that includes a description of the hazard, the exposure and vulnerabilities of populations, structures, and critical facilities, and propose a number of mitigation actions that span structural and non-structural approaches. These hazard profiles will be written in a professional manner appropriate for a real hazard mitigation plan (meaning spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. count!). Make sure to include both in-text citations and a Works Cited/Bibliography.

## Citation Style

This course uses APA style for all writing and research assignments. Resources for this citation style are available through

[Georgetown Library Citation Guide](#)

[APA Style Guidebook](#)

# GRADING

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.**

Please reference the grading scale below:

A: 95-100%

A-: 90-94%

B+: 87-89%

B: 83-86%

B-: 80-82%

C: 70-79%

F: 69% and below

# ACCOMMODATIONS

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equity and access to programs and facilities. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the Academic Resource Center, the office that oversees [disability support services](#), (202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu);) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the [Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website](#).

Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

## Tools Accessibility

A variety of technologies are used in this course. Every effort has been made to make the course accessible to our diverse student body. To access more information about accessibility, please see the following technology pages.

### Canvas

- [Canvas accessibility page](#)

#### TurnItIn

- [TurnItIn accessibility page](#)

#### Voicethread

- [Voicethread accessibility page for the web app](#)
- [Voicethread accessibility page for the mobile app](#)
- Note: Students who are using screen readers may wish to [make Voicethread Universal their default viewer](#)

#### Zoom

- [Zoom accessibility page](#)
- Zoom is used for live video conferences.

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

## Support Services

SCS offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed online, at the School of Continuing Studies downtown location, and on the main Georgetown campus:

- [Academic Resource Center](#)
- 202-687-8354 | [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)
  
- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
- 202-687-6985
  
- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
- (202) 687-4798

## Georgetown Library

Students enrolled in online School of Continuing Studies SCS coursework have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). Students can access these resources through the [Library's Homepage](#) by using their University



username (NetID) and password (this is the same login information used to access email, BlackBoard, etc.). The Library does not mail physical items to students.

SCS students may make an appointment with a librarian to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. Appointments are conducted using Google Hangout (video-conferencing function) through the Georgetown Gmail System or by telephone. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the [Services & Resources Guide for Online Students](#) for additional information.

## Research Guide

The EDM program has an extensive online [Library Research Guide](#) designed for the subject and research specifications of our program. This Guide will give you direct access to the library resources central to your course research work.

## Learning Resources

SCS offers a host of [learning resources](#) to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the [Writing Center](#) and [Refworks](#).

- The [Writing Center](#) offers professional writing support through its online peer tutoring service.
- [Refworks](#) is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

## Technical Support

Click on the Help link (on the bottom-left corner in Canvas) to reach Canvas Support, including the [Canvas Student Guide](#) and 24 hour Canvas Support Hotline at 855-338-2770.

In this course we will use Zoom, VoiceThread, TurnItIn, and Collaborations.

- [Technical support for Zoom is available on an external website.](#)
- [Technical support for VoiceThread is available at the VoiceThread website.](#)
- [Technical support for Turnitin is available at the Turnitin website.](#)
- [Technical support for Collaborations is available through Canvas Support.](#)

# COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

## Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. The topics in this course can be controversial and promote debate. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others' opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on his/her experiences, and we can all learn from each other. Civility is essential.

## Statement of Student Conduct, Civility, and Engagement

The School of Continuing Studies offers students the opportunity to engage with faculty, staff, and peers in ways that foster intellectual growth and development in their chosen field of study. It is important to recognize that each member of our community brings his or her own values, thoughts, perspectives, and experiences into each interaction. We expect students to behave in a manner that is civil and respectful of others, and appreciate the learning opportunities that come from engaging pluralistic perspectives in a dynamic educational environment.

Engagement within the SCS Georgetown community takes place in on-campus meeting spaces and classrooms, and extends to online learning platforms and forums. Students should be particularly mindful that participation in class discussions, group assignments, emails, blogs, and social media reflect upon them personally, academically, and professionally. All viewpoints, editorials, and opinions expressed by students represent those students exclusively – and not the students' instructors, classmates, academic program, School, or University – even in cases when students are using Georgetown-affiliated systems like email, blogs, and online portfolios. The expectations for respect and civility are consistent for on-campus classes and spaces, as well as cyber, virtual, and online environments. Thus, civility and cybercivility are expected of all students, in all campus spaces.

SCS students are expected to adhere to the SCS guidelines for student conduct and the University Code of Student Conduct. In the event that a student's behavior is perceived to fall outside the stated SCS guidelines or may be a violation of the Code of Student Conduct, the matter may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for further review and possible sanctioning. Such instances can include but are not limited to: disruption of official university functions (including teaching,

research, administration), failure to comply with a directive issued by a University official, harassment and bullying, and incivility. For questions regarding the SCS student conduct expectations please review the policy in-full found in the [Graduate Professional Studies Student Handbook](#). For questions about the Code of Student Conduct, please review the information provided by the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

## Communication with Peers (Collaborations)

You will be expected to communicate with your peers via the discussion board. In addition, you will also use Collaborations, a Canvas tool that allows you to collaborate with your peers using Google Docs. Collaborative documents are saved in real-time, meaning a change made by any of its users will be immediately visible to everyone. It is a useful tool for students to work on group projects or papers, take shared notes, etc. Instructors or students can set up group collaborations. Detailed instructions for Collaborations are available for download in the course.

## Notifications

In this course we will use Canvas to send email for private messages. You can either check your messages in the Canvas system or set your notifications to your preferred method of contact. Please check your messages at least once per day. When submitting messages, please do the following:

- Put a subject in the subject box that describes the email content with your name and module.
- Do not send messages asking general information about the class, please post those in the General Questions Discussion Board Forum question forum.

## Questions Forum

In online courses, everyone will likely have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments and course materials. Please post these in the General Questions Discussion Board Forum, which you can access from the landing page. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other.

## Turnaround and Feedback

If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a response within 48 hours. Please allow at least 72 hours for assessment submission feedback.