

ANTHROPOLOGY 6391.12 Culture, Risk and Disaster
Fall 2013

Professor: Barbara Miller

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Class meets in 2110 G Street NW (called "HATH"), second floor seminar room
drop-in office hours Th 3:30-5:00pm; or by appointment (please contact me by email for an appointment)

Course Description:

This course provides a perspective from cultural anthropology on culture, risk, and disaster, and – along the way – human security and well-being. We will explore a wide range of related concepts such as disaster, hazard, crisis, risk, vulnerability, resilience, and security, and how cultural anthropologists study these concepts from the perspective of local peoples worldwide as well as how governments and transnational organizations define them. Most of the course readings are by cultural anthropologists who study real people in their everyday lives. Some publications by researchers in other disciplines who use ethnographic methods are included. In the last part of the course, we also read some policy documents by multilateral organizations to learn about their perspectives. In sum, we will focus on the social dimensions of risk, disaster, security, etc., especially as researched by cultural anthropologists.

The potential subject matter is vast—including risks such as climate change, environmental pollution, war and political violence, gender-based violence, landlessness, and unemployment. To get an idea of the breadth of the possible subject matter, consider the contents of the book, *World at Risk: A Global Issues Sourcebook* (2009), contains 32 chapters: on AIDS, Arms Control, Biodiversity, Cultural Preservation, Deforestation, Development Aid, Drug Trafficking, Energy, Epidemics, Ethnic and Regional Conflict, Fragile Ecosystems, Freshwater, Genocide, Global Warming, Health, Human Rights, Human Trafficking, Hunger and Food Security, Income Inequality, International Criminal Justice, International Law, Labor and Employment, Literacy and Educational Access, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding, Pollution, Population, Refugees, Terrorism, Transnational Governance, Urbanization, War Crimes, Women, and World Trade. Even this large volume, however, omits many important topics such as Children, Drugs/Alcohol, Religion, Rites of Passage, Body Modification, Marriage, Sex, and Technology (to name just a few).

The syllabus – designed for a 14-week semester – can provide only a small sample of possible readings and class discussion topics. Student research on their chosen topic will provide the opportunity for in-depth exploration. Frequent class discussions about the projects will enrich our knowledge as a group.

Learning Objectives – Content:

- Understanding of how cultural anthropologists do research on risk, disasters, etc. and the findings they produce
- Awareness of major theoretical perspectives in cultural anthropology such as structural violence versus human agency and how they relate to the course subject matter
- Knowledge of strengths of the anthropological literature as well as gaps
- Critical assessment of the relevance of cultural anthropology research for policy design, programs, and projects that seek to reduce risk, increase security, prevent disasters, and respond to disasters.
- Ability to see how cultural anthropology knowledge complements that of the expertise of other social science disciplines and professional areas such as risk management and emergency response

Learning Objectives – Skills:

- Applying critical thinking to the reading and improving class discussion by using critical thinking concepts
- Gaining practice in taking detailed class notes
- Improving contributions to class through conscious, critical, and informed comments related to class material that raise the level of understanding for the class
- Developing library/Internet research ability through the use of RefWorks
Strengthening ability to discern a viable research topic that will draw on rich resources in the anthropological literature
- Practice in preparing an annotated bibliography and analytical overview essay that assesses a body of published work
- Understanding what are and what are not acceptable sources for the project and how to cite them
Gaining increased awareness of what constitutes excellent analytical social science writing

Requirements and Assessments:

Activities	% of grade
Class attendance, completion of all reading assignments, participation in class discussions and presentations on the readings; this class is not lecture-based but is discussion-based so you must be prepared to participate meaningfully in class about the readings: --Please take notes during class about “who said what about what” and review them before each class. --Each student will be responsible for being “class reporter” once during the semester meaning he/she will report on highlights of the previous class --Attendance: each student may miss one class with no penalty and no need to provide an excuse; a one-page (250 words) summary of the week’s reading is, however, required as make-up work]	25
A take-home mid-term exam that asks you to demonstrate your understanding of the readings	25
An annotated bibliography with an analytical overview essay as the term project; <u>40 percent of final grade</u> . This project is ongoing throughout the semester; guidelines are provided on the last page of the syllabus.	40
.Brief presentation (approximately 8 minutes) to the class described your project's objectives and findings. This presentation is required. All students must attend class on the day of the presentations, listen attentively, and ask questions of the presenters in a professional manner. If a student fails to present to the class and participate in the discussion, then his/her final grade will drop by an entire letter grade; <u>10 percent of final grade</u> .	10
TOTAL	100
Improvement over the semester is important. I will therefore, tilt your final grade upward on the basis of improved participation and an excellent term project.	

Class Policies:

Attendance: attendance is a primary component leading to excellence in this course; work is not a valid excuse for absence.

Religious holidays: the University's Religious Holiday Calendar is posted on Blackboard under "Announcements." If you intend to be absent from class because of religious observance, you must inform the professor of the date(s) **in writing no later than Friday, September 9.**

Deadlines: The only valid excuse for missing an exam or being late on other assignments is a personal medical or family emergency. Students must present an excuse **in writing from a professional** in order to be allowed to make up work and avoid penalties. Computer failure, travel plans, and work are not acceptable excuses.

In case of a flu epidemic or other emergency situation, we will adhere to GW guidelines.

Academic Integrity:

Honesty and original work on all exams and assignments are absolutely essential. Unless an assignment is clearly defined by the professor as "group work," then the expectation is that a student works entirely on his/her own. This course follows the standards set forth in the GW Code of Academic Integrity: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

GW Support for Students:

Disability Support Services (DSS): Marvin Center 242, telephone 994-8250; <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss>
University Counselling Center (UCC), 202-994-5300; <http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/Counseling> Services

Emergency Evacuation Plans: We will discuss in class.

Readings:

Assigned readings include books, scholarly journal articles, policy documents, and some miscellaneous pieces. All assigned journal articles (*) are available through Gelman Library's electronic holdings. Policy documents (**), such as the World Bank's World Development Review 2014, are available online.

Required Books (all ordered in the GW Bookstore and on 2-hour, in-library reserve in Gelman Library (listed in order of assignment in our class):

Susanna M. Hoffman and Anthony Oliver-Smith, eds, *Catastrophe and Culture: The Anthropology of Disaster*. Santa Fe: School of American Research. 2002

Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*. Pantheon Books. 2008

Beatriz Manz, *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2005

Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013

Michael Peel, *A Swamp Full of Dollars: Pipelines and Paramilitaries at Nigeria's Oil Frontier*. New York: I.B. Tauris. 2009

Paul Farmer, ed., *Haiti: After the Earthquake*. New York: Public Affairs. 2011

Part I: INTRODUCTION TO: CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY and RISK, DISASTER, CRISIS, SECURITY, etc.

Week 1. August 28: Introduction to the Course and the Students

Familiarize yourself with GW library resources including electronic databases. Scan recent (past 2 years) issues of the journal *Disasters* (topics, disciplinary expertise of authors, etc).

Do reading for Week 2

Start thinking about your bibliography topic

Week 2. September 4: Considering Key Concepts: Disaster, Catastrophe, Crisis, Hazards, Risk, Vulnerability, Security and More

Chapters in Hoffman and Oliver-Smith, *Catastrophe and Culture*:

--Chapter 1 Introduction (required)

--Chapter 2 Theorizing Disasters (required)

And: at least three of the following chapters (your choice): Chapter 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11

Keep thinking about your bibliography topic

Week 3. September 11: Risk Perception and How to Study It

Chapter 4 in Hoffman and Oliver-Smith

*Peter Phillimore and Patricia Bell, Trust and Risk in a German Chemical Town. *Ethnos* 70(3):311-334. 2005.

*Judith Bush, Peter Phillimore, Tanja Pless-Mullooli and Christine Thompson, Carcass Disposal and Siting Controversy: Risk, Dialogue and Confrontation in the 2001 Foot-and-Mouth Outbreak. *Local Environment* 10(6):649-664. 2004.

*Neeraj Vedwan, Pesticides in Coca-Cola and Pepsi: Consumerism, Brand-Image, and Public Interest in a Globalizing India. *Cultural Anthropology* 22:659-684, 2007.

*Amber Wutich and Kathleen Ragsdale, Water Insecurity and Emotional Distress: Coping with Supply, Access, and Seasonal Variability of Water in a Bolivian Squatter Settlement. *Social Science and Medicine* 67:2116-2125, 2008.

Keep thinking about your bibliography topic

Part II: EXPLORING SOCIAL/STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF DISASTER AND LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

Week 4. September 18: Land Claims, Resources, and Power: Darfur

Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*. Pantheon Books. 2008

BIBLIOGRAPHY SCOPE NOTE DUE in class, hard copy, by 4:10pm. Description on last page of the syllabus.

Week 5. September 25: Land Claims, Resources, and Power: Guatemala

Beatriz Manz, *Paradise in Ashes: A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror, and Hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 2005

ANNOTATIONS #1 DUE on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class (between 4-6 references)

Week 6. October 2: Corporate Interests, Migrant Labor, and Health: California

Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013

ANNOTATIONS #2 DUE on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class (between 5-10 more references)

Week 7. October 9: Corporate Interests, Rights, and Environment: Nigeria

Michael Peel, *A Swamp Full of Dollars: Pipelines and Paramilitaries at Nigeria's Oil Frontier*. New York:

I.B. Tauris. 2009

*Journal article: M. Cepek, The Loss of Oil: Constituting Disaster in Amazonian Ecuador. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 17(3):393-412, 2012.

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED: covers readings Weeks 1-7 (week 8 optional) and class discussion

Week 8. October 16: Special Groups at Risk

**Journal articles: (optional for including on the take-home mid-term)*

Elaine Gerber, Describing Tragedy: The Information Access Needs of Blind People in Emergency-related Circumstances. *Human Organization* 68(1):73-81, 2009.

A.M. Lovell, Debating Life after Disaster: Charity Hospital Babies and Bioscientific Futures in Post-Katrina New Orleans. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 25(2):254-277, 2011.

Eric Jones, S.N. Gupta, Arthur Murphy, and Fran Norris, Inequality, Socioeconomic Status, and Social Support

in Post- Disaster Mental Health in Mexico. *Human Organization* 70(1):33-43. 2011

Lindsay Stark and Alastair Ager, A Systematic Review of Prevalence Studies of Gender-Based Violence in Complex Emergencies. *Trauma, Violence, And Abuse* 12(3):127-134 [pdf on Blackboard]

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS, hard copy only (4:10pm)

Week 9. October 23: What the World Bank Has to Say about Risk and Development Part I [short class due to guest lecture at 5pm by Barbara Rose Johnson on hydrodevelopment projects]

***World Development Report 2014*

REVISED AND MERGED ANNOTATIONS (#1 AND #2) posted on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class

Part III: SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR INCREASING SECURITY AND REDUCING RISK

Week 10. October 30: Writing about Suffering, Disaster, and Resilience

Paul Farmer, *Haiti after the Earthquake*. New York: Public Affairs, 2011 (read Farmer's section, pp1-245 and one selection from the subsequent essays).

ANNOTATIONS #3 DUE on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class

*Students should post one article/chapter from their project on Blackboard no later than November 4 for class discussion on Nov 13

Possible web viewing in class: Kibera community resilience projects

Week 11. November 6: More on Resilience

** Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. United Nations, International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. (23pp. UNISDR-07-2007, Geneva)

**Christopher Béné et al., Resilience: New Utopia or New Tyranny? IDS Working Paper 2012 Number 405.

*Journal articles:

Samantha Jones, Local-level Governance of Risk and Resilience in Nepal. *Disasters* 37(3):442-467. 2013.

Sharon Danes et al., Determinants of Family Business Resilience after a Natural Disaster by Gender of Business Owner. *Journal of Development Entrepreneurship* 14(4):333-354, 2009 [BDM has request from ILL; BDM will post pdf on Blackboard].

Annemarie Samuels, Aceh Thanks the World. *Anthropology Today* 29(4):8-11. 2013.

MERGED ANNOTATIONS, revised from 1, 2 & 3 (and any additional) and DRAFT OVERVIEW; due on Blackboard by 4:10pm and hard copy in class by 4:10pm for full credit

Week 12. November 13: Reading Round-Up and Taking Stock of Our Class Projects

Student-posted readings: students should be prepared to discuss five articles; skim all

Discussion of the Bibliography projects thus far

Week 13. November 20: Looking Forward: Risks, Rights, and Lessons

*Journal articles:

Heather Lazarus, Sea Change: Island Communities and Climate Change, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41:285-301.

*Clifford E. Trafzer, Willard Sakiestewa Gilbert, and Anthony Madrigal. Integrating Native Science into a Tribal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). *American Behavioral Scientist* 51:1844-1866, 2008.

*Stuart Kirsch, Anthropology and Advocacy: A Case Study of the Campaign against the Ok Tedi Mine. *Critique of Anthropology* 22(2):175-200, 2002.

Possible web viewing in class: TBA

Week 14. December 4: Oral Presentations and Final Discussion

Each student will discuss his/her bibliography research project. Questions from the class and discussion among members are expected.

☺*FINAL VERSION OF BIBLIOGRAPHY and OVERVIEW PAPER due; posted on BB by 4:10pm and hard copy in class*

THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

This project allows students to choose a topic and pursue library/Internet research related to culture, risk, disaster, security, etc. Instead of producing the typical term paper, though, students will compile an annotated bibliography of around 18-20 references (mostly by anthropologists) and write a brief analytical overview

(700-750 words) of major themes and gaps in the sources and relevance to the study of culture, risk, disaster, etc., reducing risk, and increasing security.

During the semester, we will discuss format, length of annotations, and writing style. Students will receive a copy of the professor's "20+" Writing Tips" (also posted on Blackboard) and we will go through the tips in class. Students should follow the advice carefully.

The project has several stages:

1. Scope Note: At the top of the page you should provide your name and a topically informative title for your annotated sources. Then, in about 40-50 words, describe the topic of choice and make clear how it relates to culture in the anthropological sense. Include 2-3 references.

NOTE: It is possible that your topic may shift somewhat as you continue to conduct research and reorient your thinking. That is fine. If the focus changes substantially, however, from that described in your Scope Note, please talk to the professor sooner rather than later.

2. Partial bibliographies.

3. The merged bibliographies with additions and revisions.

4. Draft overview statement.

5. The final, revised version of your annotated bibliography and final overview paper.

6. Oral presentation.

GENERAL NOTES ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

► Citations should follow the AAA format (guidelines on www.aaanet.org), or close to this style. If you store most of your sources in Refworks, then you can ask it to format them in AAA style; it may need a little tweaking.

► Proofread all entries in the bibliography with care.

► Examples of past projects will be posted on Blackboard; for others go the "Resources" pages of the CIGA website in the Elliott School. Your bibliographies will generally follow this format, but my expectations in Fall 2013 are for a somewhat longer bibliography and cover essay. One stylistic note: please use complete sentences in your annotations.

► Plan your time in order to avoid missing the several deadlines. Only serious health/personal problems are acceptable for lateness, and documentation in writing by a certified professional is required.

► Problems with computers are never a valid excuse for lateness. The penalty for late submission of written work (mid-term, partial bibliographies, final bibliography, overview paper) is one fraction of a grade for every day (24 hours) late. For example, a submission that is one day late will receive an "A-" instead of an "A."