Introduction: Welcome to ES 130A! This is the first course of a three-quarter sequence that examines the human dimensions of disasters from an interdisciplinary perspective. The primary goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding of different approaches to and meanings of disasters, risk, vulnerability, and resilience and how people have faced these challenges in practical ways in a range of social, cultural, and environmental contexts. The course is designed to develop both critical analytical skills and hands-on problem solving skills.

We will employ a variety of learning methods using an interdisciplinary skill set: gather evidence, look for patterns or discontinuities through case studies, develop explanations about context, causes, and consequences, write and revise our ideas, engage others, and refine our arguments – although not necessarily in that order. One of this course’s main goals is for you to develop and practice these skills by participating in class and completing the required readings and assignments. At the end of the course, you should walk out of the classroom ready to explain how and why disasters develop and how to design, implement, and evaluate strategies to tackle those problems.

The course goals include:
1. Develop an understanding of the relationship between people and the environment over time, including the social construction of disasters; different ways of knowing, understanding, and responding to disasters; and the significance of this relationship in the context of a changing climate;
2. Practice critical thinking and problem-solving skills – reading, writing, talking, listening, reflecting, seeing through other people’s eyes, leading, and working in a community;
3. Recognize the complexity of disasters, risk, vulnerability, and resilience; and
4. Assess strategies and actions to manage and recovery from disasters and reduce disaster risks.

Readings: You should complete all of the assigned readings before each class meeting as indicated in the course outline below. Please bring that day’s reading and notes to class, so that we can discuss the text together. All articles are available on GauchoSpace. The assigned books are available at the UCSB bookstore.

Required Texts

Assignments and Grades:
Participation: 35%
Reflections: 20%
Op-ed: 10%
Final project: 25% (paper); 10% (project presentation)

***For every 24 hours that any assignment is late, the grade will drop by one letter. That means, for example, an A paper turned in 2 days late will become a C paper.***
Participation
(1) Class Discussion (10%) The success of this course depends on your participation. This means coming to every class prepared to contribute. You are expected to have read all assignments before coming to class. Classes will have a mixture of lectures, discussions, group activities, and guest speakers, so there will be a number of different ways for you to participate.

(2) In-class writing assignments (15%) There will be six in-class writing assignments, which will include writing a short response on the readings, class discussions, and/or field experiences.

(3) Attendance (10%) If you need to miss a class for a personal, medical, or religious reason, you must notify the instructor in advance.

Reflections
(1) Reflection on “Unnatural” Natural Disaster (10%)
   By 5pm, Monday, October 10: Post on GS Discussion Forum “‘Unnatural’ Natural Disaster” a 3-4 paragraph reflection on the meaning of “unnatural” natural disaster. Draw from material covered in Part 1 of the course, and cite references at the end of your post.
   By 5pm, Tuesday, October 11: Post a response (~2 paragraphs) to another student’s original post.

(2) Reflection on Field Trips – Refugio Oil Spill or Lake Cachuma (10%)
Reflect on what you learned during either the Refugio Oil Spill field trip or Lake Cachuma field trip, as it relates to understanding the social construction of disasters. Your reflection can be captured creatively, through a poem, a short video, a poster, a brochure, a written prose, a song, etc. Post your reflection (or web-link if it’s a video) on GS Discussion Forum “Reflection on Field Trip.”
   By 5pm, Wednesday, November 16: Post your reflection on field trip.
   By 5pm, Thursday, November 17: Post a response (~2 paragraphs) to another student’s post.

Opinion/Editorial Paper (10%)
Write a 500-word (maximum) opinion/editorial paper related to issues covered in either Heat Wave or Fierce Climate, Sacred Ground. The paper should be in the form of a letter to the editor of a specific newspaper or to a specific institution. Instructions for writing an op-ed will be posted on GS. Submit a hard copy of your op-ed in class on Monday, October 31.

Final Project
(1) Research Paper (25%) Select a specific disaster case study. By 5pm, Monday, November 14, post your chosen case study on GS forum. Your research paper will be a reflection on what you learned throughout the entire course. The paper should include: (a) an introduction to the disaster context; (b) the impacts of the disaster and who was most affected; (c) a brief historical context and root causes of what shaped the vulnerability of the people most affected; (d) how the media (including newspapers, magazines, television, film, journalist blogs), government, scholars, and/or corporations framed the disaster; (e) scholarly literature on the disaster and any limitations in the studies conducted; (f) recommendations for future research to better understand the disaster, decrease vulnerability, and enhance preparedness in the specific geographic and social context; (g) proposed solutions for disaster risk reduction; and (h) a conclusion that brings the different parts of the essay together. You are expected to conduct original library research. Include list of references from academic research, as well as drawing from class material, at the end of the paper. Print out your typed, paginated, 12-point font, double-spaced essay (10-12 pages, including references) and bring to class on Wednesday, November 30.

(2) Project presentation (10%) Create a project related to your chosen disaster. The project could be a poster, poem, brochure, advertisement, video, etc. that reflects your paper topic. Projects will be presented in class Monday, November 28 and Wednesday, November 30.
Other policies

Electronic devices: Please do not use your electronic devices during class. No computers in class! If you have questions or concerns about this, please come talk to me.

Equal Access for All Students: If you have any learning or medical condition that requires accommodation to complete the course work, please ensure that the Disabled Students Program (DSP) is aware of your disability and that you are familiar with your DSP responsibilities. See http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/Index.aspx. I will work with you and DSP to find the appropriate accommodation.

Gender and Sex Discrimination Policy and Student Support: Under Title IX, university students are protected from harassment and discrimination based on gender and sex. If a student feels uncomfortable or in need of support at any time related to their gender, sex, and/or sexual orientation, please contact your TA and/or course instructor immediately. UCSB's Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity is also available to advocate and be of and support to students.

Plagiarism: UCSB takes plagiarism and other academic misconduct very seriously. If you turn in any work that fails to acknowledge the contributions of others, it may result in failure of the assignment or the course itself. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please ask.

Incomplete Grades: Incompletes will not be given for this class, except in the most extreme circumstances, such as a debilitating illness.

Copyright: All of the materials you receive through this course are subject to federal copyright laws and university policies. Distribution of these materials, such as posting them online or selling them to third party businesses, are strictly prohibited.

Respectful behavior in the classroom is required: Respect your instructor and fellow classmates when they are asking questions or speaking to the class. Be open to others with different experiences and opinions, as well as to the cultures and lifeways we are studying. Be prompt for class meetings and do not interrupt the class by leaving unless it is an emergency. Be part of creating a positive learning environment.

Part 1: “Unnatural” Natural Disasters
M, Sept 26: Introductions

W, Sept 28: What is a Disaster?
In class: Web of vulnerability
Reading:

M, Oct 3: Framing
Reading:
W, Oct 5: Disaster capitalism
Reading:

Part 2: Case Studies – Unnatural Natural Disasters
M, Oct 10: Chicago Heat Wave
In class: Role playing - court case
Reading:
• Klinenberg, Eric. Heat Wave, p. 1-128

Assignment due:
• By 5pm, Monday, October 10, post on GS forum your reflection on ‘Unnatural’ Natural Disaster
• By 5pm, Tuesday, October 11, post on GS forum your response to someone else’s reflection on ‘Unnatural’ Natural Disaster

W, Oct 12: Chicago Heat Wave
In class: Role playing - court case
Reading:
• Klinenberg, Eric. Heat Wave, p. 129-242

M, Oct 17: Disasters and Mapping Vulnerability
In class: EJ Screen, Measures of America

W, Oct 19: Climate change and Shishmaref, AK
Reading:
• Marino, Elizabeth. Fierce Climate, Sacred Ground, Ch. 1, p. 1-18; Chs. 3-4, p. 31-60.

M, Oct 24: Climate change and Shishmaref, AK
Guest speaker: Dr. Elizabeth Marino, Oregon State University-Cascades
Reading:
• Marino, Elizabeth. Fierce Climate, Sacred Ground, Chapters 5-7, p. 61-100.

Part 3: Disasters of the Anthropocene/Technological Disasters
W, Oct 26: Field Trip: Refugio Oil Spill. Depart from campus, 12pm. Return to campus, 2:30pm.
Rebecca Claassen, Food and Water Watch
Reading:

M, Oct 31: Oil Disasters
Reading:

Assignment due: Op-ed (submit hard copy at start of class, Monday, October 31)
Part 4: Management, Recovery, and Risk Reduction

W, Nov 2: Recovery
Guest speaker: Dr. Laura Olson, United Nations Development Programme, Technical Expert
Reading:
- National Disaster Recovery Framework

M, Nov 7: Improving responses to extreme weather through diverse ways of knowing
Guest speaker: Dr. Heather Lazrus, NCAR
Reading:

W, Nov 9: Emergency Management
Guest speaker: Cathy Taylor, Water System Manager, City of Santa Barbara
Reading:
- Governor Brown’s Proclamation of State of Emergency

M, Nov 14: Field Trip: Lake Cachuma
Depart from campus, 8am. Return to campus, 11:30am.
Tim Robinson, Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board

By 5pm, Monday, November 14, post chosen disaster case study on GS forum

Part 5: Strategies and Actions

W, Nov 16: Preventive, community-led relocation
In class: Film - Can’t Stop the Water
Guest speaker: Rebecca Ferris, filmmaker
Reading:

Assignment due:
- By 5pm, Wednesday, November 16, post on GS forum your field trip reflection.
- By 5pm, Thursday, November 17, post on GS forum your response to someone else’s field trip reflection.
M, Nov 21: Preventing Disaster
   In class: Film – Nerve
   Guest speaker: Heather Warman

W, Nov 23: Movement building and collaborations
   In class: Web of actions and solutions
   Reading:

M, Nov 28: Share final projects

W, Nov 30: Share final projects; Course wrap-up

   Assignment due: Final Paper (submit hard copy of essay at start of class, Wednesday, Nov. 30)