Course Goals: CAT 3B is designed to help you examine the relationships among historical, contemporary and future natural disasters and human thought and activities. We will consider the roles of culture, art and technology in allowing human beings to depict, recall, understand, predict, cope with, prevent, and, bring about natural disasters. In a larger sense, your consideration of the course topics and materials will help you do the following:

- Deepen your understanding what it is to be human, especially in terms of human needs, goals, abilities, and patterns of relationship to the larger world

- understand how we human beings use culture to express ourselves and our being, as well as how we use culture both to solve, and, inadvertently to generate problems concerning our relations to nature and to each other

- understand how culture, art and technology interact and how they both express and effect specific human societies and the larger world

CAT 3A is also intended to help you learn how to take an interdisciplinary approach to complex issues. This includes enabling you to

- Continue to learn that your work is not mainly about memorizing information and giving back pre-formulated answers, but about first crafting and pursuing thoughtful, fruitful questions to see where they might lead, and then seeking out meaningful answers to such questions.

- Learn to examine problems and subjects from more than one disciplinary perspective in order to gain a more complete and deeper understanding of it
• Bring appropriate and critical questions to bear on your own life as well as your own thinking and writing through a process of writing and revision, so that your writing and composition in other media become a means of discovery as well as communication

Finally, CAT 3 is intended to empower you start taking charge of your own education, as well of your own life. It does this by helping you to exercise

• Self-reliance and responsibility
• Reflexivity, so that you learn to apply your questions and what you are learning to yourself and your situation in the world
• Collaboration, in teams and across cultures

Course Requirements:

Short individual project: Preparation and explanation of emergency kit Due first section week 2 April 9 or 10)

Formal Essay: You will write one formal essay of 5-6 pages, examining one or more major themes and problems of the course. Papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com, and it is your responsibility to make a backup copy before uploading paper. First Draft due April 17; final draft due April 27

Term Project part 1: Creation of Public Service Announcement (video, poster set, or comic book), in teams of 3-5 students, with individual essays Review draft due second section Week 6 (May 9 or 10); final draft of paper due in lecture May 15. Presentation of PSA’s in second section week 7 (May 16 or 17th)

Term project part 2: Examination and analysis of local disaster potentials relevant to assigned section of San Diego county. This will combine a visual project and a 5-6 page paper Project Due in lecture May 31. Paper due as take-home final June 13 at 3 pm

Lecture and reading quizzes

Participation will also be a factor in determining your grade. It entails regular, punctual attendance and attention at both lecture and section (see attendance policy below), completion of assignments on time, active, appropriate participation in group class-work and any group projects, timely preparation of readings, papers and projects and thoughtful contributions to class discussions.

Attendance at both lecture and section is required, partly to help ensure that all students are prepared to participate fully in class discussions. Any absences may affect participation grade, but students who miss more than three lectures (one week’s worth) without valid medical excuse will have their final course grades lowered by 1 full grade.

Texts:

Schedule of Assignments

Week 1  April 2-6  Disasters and Contemporary Cultures

Read— for 2nd Section of the week: Vicente article on Human Factor from CAT 1 (This will
be posted on course webct site: please re-read for new perspective); Kolbert (Field Notes)
ch. 10 “Man in the Anthropocene” plus Afterword and chronology; and Indigenous
Environmental Network, “The Bemidji Statement on Seventh Generation Guardianship,” 1-
3; http://www.precaution.org/lib/prn_bemidji_original.060706.htm

Week 2  April 9-13  Witnessing and Responding to Disasters

Due: Emergency kit and written explanation, in first section of the week
First Essay Assigned; draft due April 17 in lecture
Read—
for 1st Section: Davis, Mike, “The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster” in his Ecology of Fear
(New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 6-9 (on the range of disasters in California);
Bradley, Vertna, Hurricane Rita: Reflections of a Generation Witnessing Disaster (New
York: iUniverse, Inc., 2006)xv-xvi; 42-51; 65-68; 123-126; 147-153; 250-254; 295-301; 361-
364; and Murphy, Kate, “In Case of Disaster, Have a Backup Plan for Your PC,” New York
Times, May 14, 2006 [posted on course webct site]

for 2nd Section: Steffen, Alex, “Transforming Disaster Relief, from World: A User’s Guide
Robinson, Forty Signs

Week 3  April 16-20  Earthquakes and Tsunamis: Accounts and Explanations

Th April 19  Earth Week Guest Lecture Kim Stanley Robinson

Read—
For 1st section: Davis, Mike, “The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster” in his Ecology of Fear
Tangshen,’ and “Earthquakes/Kobe” plus “Tsunamis” from their Restless Earth. Nature’s
172-179; Blakeslee, Sandra, “Hopes For Predicting Earthquakes, Once So Bright, Are
Natural Disasters (New York: The Lyons Press, 2001) pp. 52-56

For 2nd Section for 1st Section Baird, Abigail A. “Sifting Myths for Truths About our
World” Science vol. 308 (May 27, 2005) pp. 1261-1262; Barber, Elizabeth Wayland and
Paul T. Barber, When They Severed Earth from Sky, How the Human Mind Shapes Myth
Week 4      April 23-27 Wildfire, Culture and Politics

Due: Final Draft First Essay, in CAT office, Friday April 27, 2pm

Read—

for 2nd Section: Pyne, Steven, “Fire Flume (Australia),” and “Nataraja (India), from his World Fire: The Culture of Fire on Earth, 29-37 and 149-167

Week 5      April 30-May 4 Preventing Disaster: Attempts at Technological Control

Project/Paper Assigned, peer review draft of paper due 2nd section week 6

Read—
for 1st Section: McQuaid, John, and Mark Schleifstein, Path of Destruction: The Devastation of New Orleans and the Coming Age of Superstorms (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 2006), chs. 1-4

for 2nd Section: Tidwell, Mike, Bayou Farewell: The Rich Life and Tragic Death of Louisiana’s Cajun Coast (New York: Vintage Departures, 2003), Prologue, chs 4 and 9; plus McQuaid and Schleifstein, ch. 6

Week 6      May 7-11 Hurricanes and Revelations

Peer Review draft second section

Read—
for 2nd Section: McQuaid and Schleifstein, chs. 11-13

Week 7      May 14-18 Can Technology Support Natural Forces?
Due: Final Draft of PSA project paper due beginning of lecture May 15; PSA Presentations in second section of the week
Attend Thursday Evening Showing of Spike Lee’s film on Katrina

Read—

for 2nd Section: no reading

Week 8 May 21-25 Global Warming: The Politics of Climate Change

Read—


Week 9 May 28-June 1 : Climate Change: Evidence and Effects
Memorial Day Holiday Monday
2nd part of Project Due Thursday at beginning of lecture
Read—

for 2nd Section: Kolbert, chs. 5-7; complete Robinson

Week 10 June 4-8 Climate Change and Cultural Effects
Read—
for 1st Section: Kolbert, ch. 8; Revkin, Andrew C., “Poor Nations Bear Brunt as World Warms,” New York Times, April 1, 2007 [posted on course webct site]

Final Exam: Project paper as take-home exam due June 13, 3 pm.

**Policy on missed exams and late assignments**

- Unexcused late assignments will be docked 1/3 (one-third) of a letter grade for each day late (e.g. A becomes A- the first day late, B+ the second day late, etc.).
- Make-up exams must be arranged as soon as possible after illness, injury, or family emergency.
- The policy on make-up finals follows UCSD policy, since there are strict calendar deadlines established by the University for the submission of grades at the end of a quarter.
- Sudden long-term illness, injury, or family emergency may necessitate an incomplete for the course, or withdrawal from it. Excuses and incompletes (which will be given only for reasons in accord with UCSD policy) must be negotiated with your TA and the course instructor(s) prior to the final exam.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

UCSD has a university-wide Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, published annually in the Catalog (pp. 62-64 for 2002-3), online at [http://registrar.ucsd.edu/records/grdbk3.html](http://registrar.ucsd.edu/records/grdbk3.html). All students must read and be familiar with this Policy.

**Receipt of this syllabus constitutes an acknowledgment that you are responsible for understanding and acting in accordance with UCSD guidelines on academic integrity.**

*Academic stealing* refers to the theft of exams or exam answers, of papers or take-home exams composed by others, and of research notes, computer files, or data collected by others.

*Academic cheating, collusion, and fraud* refer to having others do your schoolwork or allowing them to present your work as their own; using unauthorized materials during exams; inventing data or bibliography to support a paper, project, or exam; purchasing tests, answers, or papers from any source whatsoever; submitting (nearly) identical papers to two classes.

*Plagiarism* refers to the use of another’s work without full acknowledgment, whether by suppressing the reference, neglecting to identify direct quotations, paraphrasing closely or at length without citing sources, spurious identifying quotations or data, or cutting and pasting the work of several (usually unidentified) authors into a single undifferentiated whole.

It is your responsibility to do your own work, to contribute your fair share in assigned team work, and to ensure that you take all necessary steps to distinguish clearly and consistently between your own work, ideas, and wording, on the one hand, and the work, ideas, and wording of any and all others that you decide make use of composing your own work. All ideas, wording and work of others must be credited to them.

**Students with special needs:**

Students with physical or learning disabilities should first work with UCSD’s Office for Students with Disabilities to obtain current documentation, then contact instructor and TA with documentation in hand to arrange appropriate academic accommodations. This should be
accomplished as soon in the quarter as possible. To be fair to all students, no individual accommodations will be made unless the student first presents the proper documentation.

 Reader Bibliography


Davis, Mike, “The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster” in his Ecology of Fear (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 6-9 (on the range of disasters in California)


Murphy, Kate, “In Case of Disaster, Have a Backup Plan for Your PC,” New York Times, May 14, 2006 [posted on course webct site]


Pyne Steven, from his Tending Fire: Coping with America’s Wildland Fires, (Washington:, Island Press, 2004), 1-17; 65-68; 117-131


Pyne, Steven, “Fire Flume (Australia),” and “Nataraja (India), from his World Fire: The Culture of Fire on Earth, 29-37 and 149-167

Revkin, Andrew C., “Poor Nations Bear Brunt as World Warms,” New York Times, April 1, 2007 [posted on course webct site]

