

Sociology of Disasters Homework Assignments

During the semester, you are to complete two of the three homework assignments listed below. You are to provide a two-page, double-spaced response with a separate title page and references page. You are to reflect on readings, lecture, video materials and other course content to complete the assignments.

Homework Assignment 1 (DUE Feb 11):

Select and view a relevant disaster film, recent media coverage or a disaster documentary (do be approved by the instructor before you complete the assignment).

- a. Summarize the film, media coverage or documentary.
- b. Next, and most importantly, apply sociological knowledge, course concepts, etc., to explaining and critiquing how people were portrayed in the film, media coverage or documentary and whether that perpetuates the 'disaster myths' that Fischer discusses?
- c. Which myths (as discussed by Fischer) were perpetuated and why?
- d. Which myths were not perpetuated and why?

Homework Assignment 2 (DUE March 17):

Examine your level of vulnerability by thinking about your social position (race, class, gender, age) and how your social position affects your vulnerability.

- a. Describe your social position and discuss some of the challenges you face or benefits you receive on a daily basis.
- b. Address Race, Class, Gender and Age and how each affects your vulnerability to disasters in general (or a specific hazard if it is easier-based upon either where you live now as a student or your place of origin).
- c. What challenges might you face or privilege might you receive?
- d. Conclude your paper with specific suggestions as to how your vulnerability can be reduced.

Homework Assignment 3 (DUE March 31) ****only if you did not complete both homework assignments 1 and 2:**

Imagine that a 6.5 magnitude earthquake has impacted the midwest that has caused a breach in local dams and threaten to flood the area OR a tornado outbreak has devastated 50% of residences and businesses in Charleston/Mattoon? Also, your home has sustained moderate to severe damage. Your job now is to find out how to apply for individual disaster assistance.

Do the following in your paper:

- a. Describe the overall process and how an area is declared an official 'disaster area'?
- b. What are the 3 general categories of assistance.
- c. Have there been any disaster declarations made in the states of Illinois, Indiana or Missouri in 2006. If so, what have these been and provide the declaration number.
- d. What challenges might you face in receiving aid?
- e. What type of assistance might be available to rebuild a community infrastructure and specifically your home?
- f. What services might the Red Cross be able to provide that the DHS or FEMA might not be able to supply to you? To the community?