1. Catalog description
   a) SOC 4240;
   b) Sociology of Disasters;
   c) meeting times and credit: (3-0-3);
   d) term(s) to be offered: (On Demand);
   e) Soc Disasters;
   f) Introduces critical theoretical and methodological approaches in the sociological study of disasters. Examines human preparedness and response to disaster events, issues of social stratification and inequality, and social forces that influence vulnerability and social policy.
   g) Prerequisite: SOC 1838G or permission of the instructor.
   h) Initial term of course offering-Spring 2007

2. Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation
   a) Students in this course will be able to:
      1. Identify the basic sociological terms, concepts and theories for analyzing disaster situations;
      2. Analyze how natural and technological disasters are social events that reflect and contribute to social change;
      3. Evaluate myths about human behavior in disasters; and
      4. Apply a sociological approach to analyzing the unequal social consequences that stem from disasters and examine the relationship between action and policy in all phases of the disaster process
   b) Student performance will be evaluated by:
      A midterm and final exam (50%), homework assignments (15%) quizzes (15%), and a group project and presentation (20%).

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Midterm &amp; Final Exam</th>
<th>Homework Assignments</th>
<th>Classroom Quizzes</th>
<th>Project &amp; Presentation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify terms, concepts &amp; theory</td>
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<td>Knowledge of disasters as social events</td>
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<td>Evaluate myths</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply Sociological Approach</td>
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a) Not applicable: This course is not technology-delivered or technology-enhanced.

b) Not applicable: This course does not qualify for graduate credit.

c) This course is writing-active as students must complete frequent, brief writing activities and assignments. For example, the midterm and final exam are essay format requiring students to draw upon readings, lectures, class discussions, and videos/guest lectures. Secondly, students are required to participate in written classroom exercises that are shared with their colleagues. These exercises are designed to facilitate group sharing and learning as well as communication to prepare students to work on their group projects. Most of these exercises are graded as homework assignments. Finally, students complete a group project where they investigate some sociological disaster case study from a predetermined list, write an accompanying draft and final paper while applying sociological concepts and theory, and briefly present their research to the rest of the class. Each group will consist of approximately five students and they will work with their group both in and out of the classroom.
throughout the course of the semester. The writing assignments in this course are designed primarily to assist students in mastering course content, secondarily to strengthen students' writing skills.

3. Outline of the Course
   a) This course is structured so that it can be taught either on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule or a Tuesday, Thursday format. (Readings and assignments are based on a weekly schedule for a 16 week semester course.)

   **Week 1:**
   What is a disaster? Disaster types and phases. Key topics in the sociology of disasters. Relationships to other branches of sociology. The field of disaster research.
   Readings: Fritz, 1961 “Disaster” & Fischer Chapter 1

   **Week 2:**
   Introduction to social science theories of disaster: From social systems to social vulnerability and social constructionism
   Read Kreps 1984 "Sociological Inquiry and Disaster Research"; "What is a Disaster" article;" Cannon 1994 “Vulnerability Analysis and the Explanation of Natural’ Disasters”

   **Week 3:**
   Theories of disaster (Cont’d.) Hazard perception and risk communication
   Readings: Oliver-Smith “Global Changes and the Definition of Disaster;” Cutter “Scare of the Week: Risk Perception and Behavior;” Flynn, Slovic, and Mertz “Gender, Race, and Perception of Environmental Health Risks”

   **Week 4:**
   Hazard perception and risk communication (Cont’d.)

   **Week 5:**
   Behavioral Response and Myths; Popular Culture of Disasters
   Readings: Fischer Chapter 3; Couch, “The Cultural Scene of Disasters”; Bahk, 2000 “Impact of Movie Depictions of Volcanic Disaster on Risk Perceptions & Judgements”

   **Week 6:**
   Disaster Impacts. Factors affecting social vulnerability to hazards & preparedness.

   **Week 7:**
   Disaster Impacts. Factors affecting social vulnerability to hazards & preparedness (Cont’d.)

   **Week 8:**
   Disaster Impacts. Factors affecting social vulnerability to hazards & preparedness (Cont’d.)

   **Week 9:**
   Individual, household, and organizational response to disasters.
   Readings: Fischer Chapter 4

   **Week 10:**
   Individual, household, and organizational response to disasters (Cont’d).
Week 11:
Individual, household, and organizational response to disasters (Cont’d.)

Week 12:
Individual, household, and organizational response to disasters (Cont’d.)
Readings: Mileti, Cress & Darlington 2002 "Earthquake Culture and Corporate Action;" Hammer 2002 "Response to Warnings during the 3 May 1999 Oklahoma City Tornado"

Week 13:
Disaster recovery; The U. S. hazard policy system

Week 14:
Crises associated with technology. “Natural” and “technological” disasters: How are they similar? How are they different?
Readings: Kroll-Smith and Couch, “What is a Disaster? An Ecological-Symbolic Approach to Resolving the Definitional Debate;” Freudenburg and Jones, “Attitudes and Stress in the Presence of Technological Risk;” Cuthbertson and Nigg, “Technological Disaster and the Non-Therapeutic Community”

Week 15:
Disaster Research in the New Millenium & Group Presentations
Readings: Fischer Chapter 5

4. Rationale
   a) Purpose and Need: Unfortunately, disasters are increasingly common and we are often ill prepared--as individuals, as a community, as a nation. This course examines why natural and technological disasters are social events that are complicated by social stratification and inequality. Also, we examine what constitutes a disaster, various types of disasters and hazards, how communities and individuals typically prepare (or don't prepare) for them, how survivors often respond, how their response patterns often differ from that which is commonly perceived to occur, the media's role, organizational response patterns, and the role of planning and mitigation. This course is necessary as it teaches students how to apply basic sociological theories of social stratification and inequality to examine the social forces and processes that influence how groups of people prepare for and are affected by seemingly natural events that impact their lives, communities and society. Also, students will examine and develop skills to influence social action and policy. Hence, this course teaches students how to critically assess and apply sociological concepts and theory to disaster events and teaches students how they can shape and influence social policy.

   b) Justification of the course level and prerequisites: As a 4000 level course, it is expected that students will have upper division writing capabilities. Also, students with some background in sociology and other disciplines will have adequate knowledge to participate and succeed in this class. The prerequisite for this course is SOC 2710G, Introduction to Sociology (or permission of the instructor) as students are introduced to basic concepts and theories of social stratification and inequality.

   c) Similarity to existing courses: This course has very limited overlap of specific components with any departmental or university course offering. SOC 3820 (Environmental Sociology) examines the relationships between the natural environment, social organization, and social behavior. PSY 4260 (Crisis Intervention) is a survey of psychological intervention theory for a variety of crises. HST 3300 (Principles of Accident Prevention) addresses safety problems of modern life in a variety of settings. GEG 3020 (Natural Disasters: Causes and Effects) is an overview of hazardous environments, natural or partly induced by human activity. PLS 3413 (Introduction to Public Administration) is a study of the growth, principles and problems of public administration and the relationship to public policy. This course offers a unique disciplinary perspective by focusing specifically on the sociological study of disasters.
d) Impact on Program(s):
   (1) This course will be an elective in the Sociology major and Sociology minor. It will count as general elective credit for any student with the appropriate prerequisite course and class standing.

5. Implementation
   a) This course will initially be assigned to Professor Lovekamp, but it may be assigned to any sociology faculty member(s) who have appropriate knowledge in this area.
   b) There will be no additional costs or any technological requirements.
   c) Possible text that may be appropriate for this course:
      *as well as additional articles and supplemental materials provided by the instructor.

6. Community College Transfer
   Not applicable as a community college transfer

7. Date approved by the department or school  12/05/2005

8. Date approved by the college curriculum committee  02/24/2006

9. Date approved by CAA  03/23/2006