Mission of the Course
This course focuses on the management of humanitarian operations and intends to provide students with an opportunity to explore critical and current issues in humanitarian aid. It gives students the chance to understand current debates in the humanitarian system; to develop a framework of analysis that they can use in headquarters and the field; and to acquire a toolkit to help them succeed as aid workers. The course is focused on humanitarian operations from the perspective of an aid worker in the field. The course would therefore be of interest to those wishing to work with an aid agency, directly or indirectly with populations affected by disasters or those who just want to better understand the humanitarian aid system and the opportunities and challenges that humanitarian leaders face.

Using case studies and simulation exercises from real responses in countries such as Somalia, Afghanistan and Philippines, students will be given the chance to experience some of the tasks and challenges involved in managing emergency response in an internationals setting.

If you have questions about the appropriateness of your background for succeeding in the course, please see one of the instructors during the first week of class.

Course Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this course, you should be able to accomplish the following activities:
1. Develop persuasive arguments that include claims, counter-claims, and evidence.
2. Assess the strengths and weakness of arguments.
3. Communicate arguments in both written and oral forms.
4. Critically assess humanitarian emergency response policies and programs.
5. Understand the historical evolution of humanitarian aid, in the global context
6. Identify and explain key concepts and activities within the field of humanitarian emergencies, including principles, the humanitarian system and community, program quality support and leadership.
7. Work effectively in teams to find answers to questions, develop solutions for complex challenges, and present persuasive arguments in relation to critical issues in international humanitarian response.

Instructional Strategy
The course will be a team-based learning course in which the students will work in teams during class to answer questions on quizzes and produce arguments for policy debates. With an estimated
enrollment of forty to forty-five students, the class will be divided into approximately eight teams with five to six students on each team. The teams will be permanent. The philosophy behind team-based learning is that students learn best from actively engaging in small groups and applying knowledge to real world problems. Team-based learning will reduce the amount of passive lecturing in the classroom by the instructor and increase the amount of student-to-student engagement. Team-based learning shifts significant responsibility for learning to the students and requires teams to arrive in class well prepared for applying knowledge from assigning readings and films.

If you are interested in learning more about team-based learning, you can visit Dr. Larry Michaelsen's web site devoted to the topic at teambasedlearning.apsc.ubc.ca.

Course Format
The course will be taught once a week in the evening during a three hour block (5:45-8:35). In most weeks, the three hour block will be divided into three sequential parts. Depending on the week, each of these three blocks will be made up of individual and team Readiness Assessment Tests (RATs), lecture, guest speaker(s), activities, and debates. For example, during the weeks in which RATs are utilized, the standard class would be divided as follows. Part I (the first hour of the class meeting) will focus on individual and team RATs. Part II (the second hour of the class) will involve a lecture. Finally, Part III (the third hour of class) will focus on a team-based activity. In weeks without RATs, class will generally proceed as follows: Part I will involve lecture, Part II a debate, and Part III an activity.

Requirements of the Course
Students' final grades will be based on the following assignments:
   1) Individual Readiness Assessment Tests (15%),
   2) Team Readiness Assessment Tests (15%),
   3) Team Debate and other graded team work (15%),
   4) Short papers and assignments (10%),
   5) Midterm Exam (20%), and
   6) Final Exam (25%).

First, in five of our class meetings (see schedule) students will complete an "individual Readiness Assessment Test" (iRATs) during the first 20 minutes of class. These assessments will be multiple choice quizzes based on the week’s required readings and videos (or the relationship between the week’s readings and prior weeks activities). The objective of the iRAT is to ensure that students have mastered the required materials (i.e., capable of understanding, summarizing, critiquing, connecting, and applying the readings and videos). After half the class has turned in their assessment, the remaining students will be given 5 minutes to complete the quiz. The iRAT typically takes about 15 minutes to complete. **There will be no makeup iRATs.**

Second, immediately after students complete the iRAT, they will complete a "team Individual Readiness Assessment Test" (tRAT) as a group during the remainder of the first hour of the class. The iRAT and tRAT will have identical questions. The purpose of the tRAT is to foster student discussion on the best answer for each question. Experience with the method has shown that students learn by attempting to persuade others through argumentation. The tRAT will be graded immediately; student groups may create a written appeal for any question that they received an incorrect grade. All students on the team will receive the same grade for the team test. **There will be no makeup tRATs.**
Third, student teams will participate in one policy debate. Developing the ability to express ideas and persuade others in an oral argument is essential to any career. In fact, whether you are an investment banker on Wall Street or a legislative aid on Capitol Hill, many if not most of your arguments will be oral rather than written. Given that there will be eight teams in the class, there will be four policy debates (with two teams in each debate). During the first two weeks of class, teams will select a debate topic. Each team will prepare a 20-30 page briefing book that will include arguments in favor of the proposition, arguments against the proposition, refutations to these arguments, and counter-refutations to the refutations. On the day of the debate, a coin toss will determine which side of the proposition each team will defend. The debates will be video taped and placed on the class web page for viewing by students in the future.

Fourth, students will be required to complete two short (3-5 page) papers over the course of the semester. The paper will respond to a proposition and students may argue for or against the proposition. A variety of paper topics will be listed on the course Blackboard website. The first paper is due before the midterm (3/7) and the second to be completed after the midterm. Each assignment will be graded by the rubric provided and be worth 5% of your total grade each.

Finally, there will be an in-class midterm and final exams. The exams will be 40% short answer and 60% essay in which students will argue in favor or opposition to a proposition. The examinations will be cumulative. Make-up exams are only available to students providing documentation signed by a doctor of an emergency medical situation (i.e., common colds and dentist appointments do not count). Students that feel their exams have been graded incorrectly should follow a three-step procedure. First, the student should carefully read the exam or assignment and identify the precise problem with the grading. Second, the student must send a written appeal explaining why their answer was appropriate to the instructor. Third, the instructor will meet with the student to discuss the appeal and resolve the conflict.

Evaluation of Team Members: Twice during the semester students will rate the performance of their fellow teammates. Based on these evaluations, the team portion of the grade (i.e., tRATs and the Debate) will be adjusted to account for an overall assessment of superior and inferior teamwork. This provision is designed to minimize free riding in teams.

Attendance and Participation: At the college level of education, the expectation is that students will attend every class session and actively participate in class every discussion each week. We expect students to have read and thought about the material assigned for that week. If language or some other barrier inhibits you from participating actively, you should meet with one of the instructors during the first two weeks of class to devise a solution. Attendance is not participation. Students missing a class session without prior approval of the instructor (or documentation of an emergency medical situation) will be penalized a third of a letter grade per missed class. Remember iRATs and tRATs will have no make-ups.

Learning Disabilities: Students with learning disabilities must notify the instructor within the first two weeks of the course in order to make suitable arrangements.

Course Websites
   Required readings will be posted on a Blackboard page which can be accessed at:
   https://blackboard.albany.edu/

E-mail Contact
   All students are required to update the Blackboard preferences with an email address that redirects all course email to their primary email account. This will ensure that they get all emails
from the instructor and group members in a timely fashion. This must be done by the end of the first week of class.

**Plagiarism and Cheating**

The emergence of the internet has changed our world forever. The amount of information at our fingertips has increased geometrically over the last decade. Library searches which took hours to complete in the past can be done in a matter of minutes today. Public and private documents that were difficult, if not impossible, to gain access to in the past are now a mouse click away. While this technological revolution has enhanced the learning process in many ways, it has also increased the amount of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional use of another’s words or ideas without giving credit to that person. While this includes copying text word for word without the use of quotation marks, it also includes paraphrasing another person’s work without proper citation. Intellectual honesty is a core value of university and the foundation of faculty and student development. Plagiarism, therefore, undermines the entire university community.

In the past couple of years, a number of students have been caught plagiarizing from internet sources. The punishments have ranged from failing the assignment to failing the course to suspension from the university. This has been a painful and time consuming experience for everyone involved. In order to eliminate this problem, all students will be required to submit their written assignments electronically via the Blackboard website prior to handing in hard copies at the start of class. All paper submissions will be checked for plagiarism using the Turnitin software program (or a similar program). Your written assignments will also be placed in a database with past submissions. This database will also be searched for plagiarized material. Students guilty of plagiarizing any material will receive a failing grade for the course and the evidence will be automatically turned over to the Office of Conflict Resolution and Civic Responsibility (i.e., judicial affairs).

All students must complete the UAlbany Library’s tutorial on plagiarism entitled "Plagiarism 101" (http://library.albany.edu/infolit/plagiarism1) by the third week of class.

**Required Readings and Videos**

There is one required book for this class. The book is available from the University at Albany Book Store on the Uptown Campus.

**James, Eric. Managing Humanitarian Relief- An Operational Guide for NGOs**


The required readings will be available via Blackboard and linked directly in the syllabus where publically available. Immediately after the required readings, several suggested readings are listed for each topic. The suggested readings can be accessed via Minerva, databases, e-journals, or are openly available on the Internet.

The course workload is based on the assumption that you will devote at least seven hours per week engaging this class (with three hours of participation during class meetings and four hours of work outside of class). I assume that the average student can read 30 pages per hour and write original essays at a rate of approximately 300 words (or one single-spaced page) per hour (including draft, revision, and final proofreading). Thus, a combination of outside work in a week might involve one hour of streamed video, sixty pages of reading, and remaining time dedicated toward writing a paper or research for debates. Please budget your time accordingly.
Summary Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>RATS</th>
<th>Debates &amp; Exams</th>
<th>Paper Topic</th>
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<td>RAT #1</td>
<td>GC Download</td>
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<td>Faculty Debate</td>
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<td>Response Planning &amp; Strategy</td>
<td>RAT #2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Resource Mobilization &amp; Management</td>
<td>Debate #1</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM</td>
<td>MIDTERM</td>
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<td>Leading Humanitarian Operations</td>
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<td>Modalities of Delivery</td>
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<td>Humanitarian work within the Development Framework</td>
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<td>GC Download#2</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>The Future of Humanitarian Action</td>
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Outline of Classes and Required Readings

**Week 1 (1/25): Introduction to Course**

This class will be devoted to an overview of the class and course mechanics. By the end of this informational class, you should be able to determine if it suits your needs and interests. Students will be introduced to each other and the concepts of the course. Students should be prepared to introduce themselves, including their interest in emergency response work, any experience they may already have in the field and their expectations for the course.

*Assessments and Assignments Due:*

1. **Demonstration/Practice RAT (in class, ungraded)**

*Discussion Topics:*

- Pre-Class Survey & Discussion
- Review of syllabus and course goals
- What is an emergency? What are the different types of emergency?
- What is humanitarian aid?

*Required Reading:*

1. Managing Humanitarian Relief. Pp. 1-20; 89-104


**Week 2 (2/1): Humanitarian History, Principles and Code of Conduct**

**Assessments and Assignments Due:**

1. **RAT #1 (in class)**

**Discussion Topics:**

- Explain the history of the humanitarian system.
- What are the humanitarian principles? What are the pros and cons of such principles
- Constructing an argument that includes claims, counter-claims, and evidence.

**Objectives**

- To familiarize students with the main tenets of humanitarian principles and codes of conduct;
- To introduce issues around Quality & Accountability;
- To investigate tensions between purist humanitarian and multi-mandate approaches

**Required Readings:**

- Managing Humanitarian Relief. NGO Code of Conduct, pp. 381 – 383
- Palmieri, Daniel “An Institution Standing the Test of Time”
- The Good Enough Guide, pages 1-27

**Required Video:**

- History and Humanitarianism: Understanding Humanitarian Action https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp7K0KWUeVw
- HAP. Introduction to Humanitarian Accountability. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvUur1NKtQ
- TEDxRC2 - Fiona Terry - The Paradox of Humanitarian Aid. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J45cWdDEbm0

**Recommended Further Readings:**

Week 3 (2/8): The Humanitarian Community, Structures and System
Assessments and Assignments Due:

2. Faculty Debate: Proposition: Is ‘ending need’ a humanitarian goal?
3. PAPER TOPIC #1: Proposition: Why are humanitarian principles important? Are they always necessary?

Discussion Topics:
• How is the international humanitarian system structured?
• What types of emergency are there?
• What are the clusters and life-saving sectors?
• What is the role of state and local governments?
• What challenges exist in humanitarian coordination?

Objectives:
• To introduce the humanitarian coordination system and main bodies involved in coordination
• To explore the issue of humanitarian leadership
• To understand emergency typologies and the management implications of emergency declarations

Required Readings:
• Managing Humanitarian Emergencies pp. 351 -367.
• IASC Guidance on Provider of Last Resort pp1-2
• OCHA on Message: The Cluster Approach Pp1-2
• Emergency Typology – Summary from Four INGOs  Pp1-6

Required Video:


Recommended Further Readings:

• Interagency Standing Committee Terms of Reference, February 2014.

Week 4 (2/15): Program Quality and Standards
Assessments and Assignments Due:
1. PAPER TOPIC #2: What are the key strengths and weaknesses of SPHERE standards?

Discussion Topics:
• What are cross cutting issues and what challenges do they present?
• What are the challenges in achieving program quality standards?
• How do SPHERE and CHS standards compliment or contradict each other?

Objectives:
• To understand how the humanitarian community breaks down program sectors and cross-cutting issues
• To introduce how to apply standards and guidelines in emergency settings and to understand the complexities of standards across multiple contexts
• To understand the challenges of program quality in challenging working environments

Required Reading:
• Managing Humanitarian Relief. Pp. 21-87
• Core Humanitarian Standards on Quality and Accountability pp1-27

Recommended Further Readings:

Week 5 (2/22): Response Planning and Strategy
Assessments and Assignments Due:
1. RAT #2 (in class)
2. PAPER TOPIC #3:

Discussion Topics:
• What, how and when do assessments occur?
• What is the importance of real time evaluation?
• What challenges exist in collecting evidence?

Objectives:
• To introduce the components of the project cycle
• To understand the criticality of assessment and new technologies used in assessment
• To have a framework for monitoring and evaluation approaches
• To understand program vs. project approaches

Required Reading:

Required Video:
• This is Disaster Needs Analysis. ACAPS. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CG6qCNTV0Zw.

Recommended Further Reading:
Week 6 (2/29): Resource Mobilization & Management

Assessments and Assignments Due:
1. **Debate #1**: Each debate team will be assigned 1 Humanitarian Principle. Defend the proposition: This principle takes priority over all others.
2. **PAPER TOPIC #4**: Review the Typhoon Haiyan MIRA. Based on the findings of the MIRA use the DFID RRF template to propose a rapid response to the MIRA findings

Discussion Topics:
- What is a logical framework?
- Who are the key donors?
- What are the key components of a grant proposal?

Required Readings:

Objectives:
- To have an overview of the different types of humanitarian donors and shifting areas of resource mobilization (institutional, foundation, private, OECD-DAC vs non-DAC donors)
- To understand the basics of grant management & donor relationship management
- To be able to work with logical framework analysis (case study and practical example)

Required Reading:
- Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship
- DFID Humanitarian Response Guidelines Pp1-33

Recommended Further Reading:

Week 7 (3/7): MIDTERM EXAMINATION

NO CLASS 3/14: SPRING BREAK

Week 8 (3/21): Operating in Challenging Environments

Assessments and Assignments Due:
1. **RAT #3 (in class)**
2. **PAPER TOPIC #5**: What are the most significant safety and security risks to humanitarian workers. How best can these be mitigated?

Discussion Topics:
- To understand the basic precepts and paradigms of humanitarian security theory and management
- To understand the concepts of humanitarian access and humanitarian space
To explore emerging trends of how agencies are managing work in high-risk environments, particularly issues around working in countries beset by the war

**Required Reading:**
- Managing Humanitarian Relief, pp. 325-344.
- Belliveau, Joe – Red Lines and Al Shabaab; negotiating humanitarian access in Somalia

**Required Video:**

**Recommended Further Reading:**
- ECHO. “Instruction note for ECHO staff on remote management.” 2013.

**Week 9 (3/28): Program Operational Support – Human Resources**

**Assessments and Assignments Due:**
- **Debate #2:** Proposition: SHERE is the right tool

  **Discussion Topics:**
  - What is duty of care?
  - How do the roles of international and local staff differ? What challenges does this present?
  - What are the challenges of scaling up in a response?

  **Objectives:**
• To introduce the basic concepts of humanitarian human resource management
• To explore the challenges of working cross-culturally
• To understand how to recognize stress and burn-out, as well as approaches to managing wellness

Required Reading:

• Managing Humanitarian Relief. Pp 89-102 (if you did not read during week 1); 159 – 182; 199 – 209.

Required Video:


Recommended Further Readings:

• Porter, Benjamin and Ben Emmens. Approaches to Staff Care in International NGOs. Interhealth and people in Aid. September 2009.
• OCHA Factsheet – safety and Security for National Humanitarian Workers

Additional Resource for Online Training:

• The Headington Institute free online training courses pm stress, resilience and humanitarian work. http://www.headington-institute.org/overview

Week 10 (4/4): Program Operational Support – Logistics and Finance
Assignments Due:
1. RAT #4 (in class)
2. PAPER TOPIC #7: TO BE DETERMINED

Discussion Topics:
• To recognize the centrality of the logistics function in humanitarian operations
• To understand basic approaches to and requirements of financial management

Required Readings:


Week 11 (4/11): Leading Humanitarian Operations
Assignments and Assignments Due:
1. **Debate #3:** Proposition:

2. **PAPER TOPIC #8:** Proposition:

**Discussion Topics:**

**Required Readings:**

- What makes a high performing team?
- To explore the challenges of making decisions with imperfect information
- To develop an analytical framework for identification of decision-making process best suited in a given situation
- To explore different leadership styles and their impacts

**Required Reading:**


### Week 12 (4/18): Emergency Preparedness & Contingency Planning

**Assignments Due:**

1. **RAT #5** (in class)
2. **PAPER TOPIC #9**:

**Objectives:**

- To understand how and when to use preparedness plans and contingency plans
- To explore how agencies prepare to be able to respond to emergencies when needed (funds, people, supplies)

**Required Reading:**

- Knight, Kyle. “Imagining a major quake in Kathmandu.” IRIN. 26 April, 2013.
- Plan Philippines DRR Assessment Yolanda Brief

**Recommended Further Reading:**

Week 13 (4/25): Modalities of Delivery

Assessments and Assignments Due:

1. Debate #4: Proposition:
2. PAPER TOPIC #10:

Objectives:
- To explore the current debate on partnership models vs. direct implementation of humanitarian assistance
- To introduce the “remote management” approach and explore its implications
- To develop an analytical framework for making decisions about modality of implementation

Required Reading:
- Managing Humanitarian Relief, pp. 287-298

Week 14 (5/2) Humanitarian Work within the Development Framework

Assessments and Assignments Due:

Objectives:
- To examine the differences between program and project approaches and how these are linked to theories of change in dual-mandate organizations
- To explore the tensions arising in multi-mandate agencies between development and humanitarian branches
- To introduce and discuss concepts around rights-based approaches, advocacy, and humanitarian protection

Required Reading:
- DFID Defining Disaster Resilience
- Plan International Resilience Discussion Paper – Jacobo Ocharan and Alison Wright

Recommended Further Reading:

**Week 15 – May 4 – The Future of Humanitarian Action**

**Objectives:**
- To review the challenges in the humanitarian system as well as plans for improvements
- To review and consolidate learning from the semester

**Required Readings:**


**FINAL EXAM** (To be determined, during finals week 5/6-5/13)