

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**EMA4349 Emergency Management and Social Vulnerability  
Web-Based**

**Instructor:** Dr. Ming Xie (*She | Her | Hers*)

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*NOTE:* I will respond to messages within 24 hours, excluding weekends, holidays, and breaks.

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday 10:00am-3:00pm or by appointment

**Required Text:**

Thomas, D. S. K., Phillips, B. D., Lovekamp, W. E., & Fothergill, A. (2013). *Social vulnerability to disasters*. CRC Press. ISBN: 97801466516373.

Additional Readings will be available on WTCClass under the “Readings” tab/folder.

**Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to the sociological examination of emergency management. In the course, students will learn about vulnerability regarding social, economic, political, geographical and cultural factors. Students will investigate how vulnerable groups are affected and cope before, during and after hazardous events.

Vulnerable populations are at particular risk during emergency situations. Disasters strike those most vulnerable with impressive frequency and devastation. Lives lost, injuries sustained, livelihoods disrupted, and properties damaged disproportionately occur among low-income families, lesser-developed nations, the very young and senior citizens, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic minorities. Yet those same populations contain reservoirs of resilience that remain largely untapped. This course addresses this conundrum and seeks to inspire, from empirical bases of support, to readdress these inequalities. We will learn the common issues these groups face and how those issues may be unique compared to non-vulnerable groups. Why did so many people end up on their roofs after Hurricane Katrina slammed in to the U.S. Gulf Coast? This course will guide us to find answers, to move from personal assumptions regarding how people ended up “there” to the broader social, educational, economic, and even political realities that left few choices among those facing risk.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to:

- Understand and define basic concepts such as social vulnerability, social stratification (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, income, development), resilience, and the disaster life cycle.
- Compare and contrast the dominant paradigm with the vulnerability approach.
- Discuss the role of theory in understanding disasters and impacts generated by social vulnerability.
- Understand why addressing “root causes” for disaster loss reduction results in fewer deaths, injuries, and losses related to livelihoods and properties.
- Explain the concept of sustainable development and its value for reducing vulnerability.
- Define and distinguish between various kinds of communities and the range of ways that communities can (positively and negatively) affect residents within them.
- Be able to conduct a basic community vulnerability assessment.
- Explain and define social change and strategies to empower those at risk in disasters.
- Describe tools, concepts, approaches, and idea that emergency managers can adapt for their community to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience.

### **Program Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how managerial and institutional principles are specially modified for the public-sector and nonprofit environments.
- Students will be able to demonstrate how they define and apply these principles to link emergency management literature.

### **Course Requirements:**

- **Weekly Discussions (60%)**

Students are supposed to read the book chapter before logging on WTClass each week. As a demonstration, students are required to answer discussion questions posted on Discussion Board. Each student will answer the question and then respond to at least 3 posts written by classmates. The discussion posts should

- 1) answer the question
- 2) use arguments/theories in the reading
- 3) be with real-world cases
- 4) be ended with one or two questions for peer students

The first answer is due by **11:59pm on Friday**, while the comments are due the end **following Sunday**. No class discussion will be made up without a prior request approved by the instructor.

- **Exams (40%)**

Two exams are given to determine understanding of the course material. Exams will cover all aspects of the course such as readings, lectures, videos, discussions, and any other course materials uploaded to WTClass. The course exams consist of multiple-choice, true-false and short answer questions. All students must take all course exams in the week it is posted.

**Exam attempts are timed and each student will only get one attempt to complete the exam.** Typically, there is plenty of time built into the exam for the student to complete all questions. No make-up exams are allowed unless prior arrangements are made. These exams will assess the student’s knowledge of textbook and lecture material.

## Evaluation

Students should be aware that the instructor grades assignments according to the description in the WTAMU Catalog. An A is reserved for those students that have excelled or mastered the material or activity. A B is reserved for those students that have met all required areas and went beyond them with, perhaps, a few mistakes. A C is reserved for those students that met the required elements of the assignment with appropriate effort and went no further. A D is reserved for those students that almost met all of the required elements of the assignment, but with additional effort would have met them all. Finally, an F is reserved for those students that did not meet the required elements and, obviously did not put forth the required effort.

Every effort is made to make the grading system and rubrics as transparent and fair as possible. You may contest a grade up to one week after it is returned. If you believe that there has been an error on your assignment or exam, please wait 24 hours after receiving the grade. After that period, please submit a written description of the error you believe occurred along with the assignment or exam to the instructor for re-grading. Clerical errors and outright mistakes will be corrected; decisions about the amount of partial credit to give for an answer will not be revisited. Please note that your grade could increase, decrease, or remain the same upon reconsideration.

- **Grading System**

Task	Points
Discussion Posts (12 x 50 points each)	600
Exams (2 x 200 points)	400 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

- **Grading Scale**

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
90.0 - 100	A
80.0 - 89.9	B
70.0 - 79.9	C
60.0 - 69.9	D
0 - 59.9	F

- **Attendance**

Attendance is important to succeed in this and any course in college. Your attendance is measured by your participation and completion of online activities.

- **Late Work**

Late assignments will automatically be penalized 10% if they are submitted after the due date. Assignments will not be accepted if they are more than 24 hours late without making prior arrangements with the instructor. For example: if an assignment is due on Friday at 11:59 PM turned in on Saturday at 1:00 PM, a B paper would be dropped to a C. If the

student does not submit the paper until Monday at 07:00 AM, no credit will be given for the assignment. Please note: The Late Policy does NOT apply to course exams. There are no make-up exams allowed in this course unless prior arrangements are made.

- **Retakes**

If an assignment is returned to the student to be redone, it will be assessed a 15% penalty each time it must be redone. It is in the student's best interest to read/listen to assignment directions carefully so as to complete the assignment correctly the first time.

**Course Policies and Responsibilities:**

You will be responsible for assigned readings, quizzes, class lectures/discussions, participation in-class and other assignments.

**Academic Integrity**

All work must be completed individually unless otherwise stated. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute scholastic dishonesty: acquiring or providing information for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source; informing any person or persons of the contents of any examination prior to the time the exam is given in any subsequent sections of the course or as a makeup; plagiarism; submission of a paper or project that is substantially the same for two courses unless expressly authorized by the instructor to do so. For more information, see the [Code of Student Life](#).

**Acceptable Student Behavior**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (Code of Student Life). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. Inappropriate behavior may result in disciplinary action or referral to the University's Behavioral Intervention Team. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**ADA Statement**

West Texas A&M University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with [Student Disability Services](#) (SDS) and to contact faculty members in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations. Contact Information: Student Success Center, CC 106; phone (806) 651-2335.

**Title IX Statement**

West Texas A&M University is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of sexual misconduct and discrimination. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race,

national origin, etc. Harassment is not acceptable. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- WTAMU Title IX Coordinator Richard Webb – Old Sub, **or** call 806.651.3199
- WTAMU Counseling Services – Classroom Center 116, **or** call 806.651.2340
- WTAMU Police Department – 806.651.2300, **or** dial 911
- 24-hour Crisis Hotline – 800.273.8255, **or** 806.359.6699, **or** 800.692.4039  
<https://www.notalone.gov/>

For more information, see the Code of Student Life.

### **Evacuation Statement**

If you receive notice to evacuate the building, please evacuate promptly but in an orderly manner. Evacuation routes are posted in various locations indicating all exits, outside assemble area, location of fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull stations and emergency telephone numbers (651-5000 or 911). In the event an evacuation is necessary: evacuate immediately do not use elevators; take all personal belongings with you; report to outside assembly area and wait for further information; students needing assistance in the evacuation process should bring this to the attention of the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

### **SPRING 2022 COURSE CALENDAR**

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

*Week 1, 01/10 - 01/16: Understanding Social Vulnerability & Theoretical Framing of Worldviews, Values, and Structural Dimensions of Disasters*

- Syllabus review: Course objectives and assignments
- Textbook Chapter One & Two
- Self-introduction
- Discussion #1 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 01/14 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 01/16 by 11:59pm

*Week 2, 01/17 - 01/23: The Intrinsic Link of Vulnerability to Sustainable Development; Class*

- Textbook Chapter Three & Four
- Discussion #2 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 01/21 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 01/23 by 11:59pm

*Week 3, 01/24 - 01/30: Race & Ethnicity*

- Textbook Chapter Five
- Discussion #3 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 01/28 by 11:59pm

- Comments due Sunday 01/30 by 11:59pm

*Week 4, 01/31 - 02/06: Gender; Age*

- Textbook Chapter Six & Seven
- Discussion #4 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 02/04 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 02/06 by 11:59pm

*Week 5, 02/07 - 02/13: Disability; Health*

- Textbook Chapter Eight & Nine
- Discussion #5 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 02/11 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 02/13 by 11:59pm

*Week 6, 02/14 - 02/20: Language and Literacy*

- Textbook Chapter Ten
- Discussion #6 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 02/18 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 02/20 by 11:59pm

*Week 7, 02/21 - 02/27: Midterm Exam*

- Complete Midterm Exam (200 points)
  - Due Sunday 02/27 by 11:59pm

*Week 8, 02/28 - 03/06: Households and families; Violence*

- Textbook Chapter Eleven & Twelve
- Discussion #7 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 03/04 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 03/06 by 11:59pm

*Week 9, 03/07 - 03/13: Religion, Faith, and Faith-Based Organizations*

- Textbook Chapter Thirteen
- Discussion #8 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 03/11 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 03/13 by 11:59pm

*Week 10, 03/14 - 03/20: Spring Break No Classes*

*Week 11, 03/21 - 03/27: Animals*

- Textbook Chapter Fourteen
- Discussion #9 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 03/25 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 03/27 by 11:59pm

*Week 12, 03/28 - 04/03: The Nature of Human Communities*

- Textbook Chapter Fifteen
- Discussion #10 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 04/01 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 04/03 by 11:59pm

*Week 13, 04/04 - 04/10: Measuring and Conveying Social Vulnerability*

- Textbook Chapter Sixteen
- Discussion #11 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 04/08 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 04/10 by 11:59pm

*Week 14, 04/11 – 04/17: Social Change and Empowerment; New Ideas for Practitioners*

- Textbook Chapter Seventeen and Eighteen
- Discussion #12 (50 points)
  - Initial post due Friday 04/15 by 11:59pm
  - Comments due Sunday 04/17 by 11:59pm

*Week 15 & 16, 04/18 - 05/01: Review of Final Exam, Final Preparation*

- Complete Final Exam (200 points)
  - Due Sunday 05/01 by 11:59pm