

University of Toronto Mississauga – Sociology  
 SOC463H5S LEC0101  
 The Sociology of Disasters  
 Fridays 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM, DH2070

Instructor:	Professor Steve G. Hoffman
Office location:	Maanjiwe nendamowinan, Room 6210
Office Phone #:	905-828-5395 (Sociology office)
Email address:	<a href="mailto:steve.hoffman@utoronto.ca">steve.hoffman@utoronto.ca</a> (preferred)
Office hours:	Fridays, 11:00 – 1:00 PM
Teaching Assistant:	Noam Keren
TA email:	noam.keren@mail.utoronto.ca
TA Office Hours:	By appointment via email
Blackboard/Course web site:	<a href="https://q.utoronto.ca">https://q.utoronto.ca</a>

### **Course Description**

The modern world leans heavily on the assumption that organizations run smoothly. But often they do not and sometimes the consequences are disastrous. Consider the global financial crisis of 2008, the nuclear reactor meltdown in Fukushima, Japan, or the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. When organizational and technological systems fail, many can suffer and much can be lost.

What is a disaster? How and why do they occur? What are their social, economic, and community consequences? What can we do to minimize their repercussions? As we grapple with these questions, we will also pursue topics that turn out to be central not just to understanding disasters but also for our sociological understanding of contemporary societies more generally. This will include coverage of broad themes like the historical process of rationalization and the perils of its excess, problems related to high risk endeavors and technologies, dilemmas of organizational identity, culture, and misconduct, and the dynamics of community and isolation. As we explore these issues, our cases take us through corporate boardrooms, NASA headquarters, indigenous communities in coastal Louisiana, and more. These cases enable us to confront many of the most entrenched social problems of our times, such as corruption, coercion, and the injustices rooted in racialization, gender, class, and other inequalities.

### **Prerequisites, Exclusions, CSL Group**

*Prerequisite:* SOC205H5/SOC231H5, SOC221H5, SOC222H5, 1.0 SOC credit at the 300 level

*Exclusion:* SOC444H5 (Advanced Topics in Sociology: Sociology of Disasters (20169/20171))

*Distribution Requirement:* SSc

It is your responsibility to ensure that the prerequisites for this course have been met. Students without the prerequisites can be removed at any time. No waivers will be granted.

### **Class/Seminar Format**

A typical class will involve an interactive lecture with slides, occasional audio/visual material, questions and answers, class discussion, and occasional individual or group exercises. Participation and active listening are rewarded. I consider *attentive listening* a form of participation. Taking notes, making eye contact with the lecturer or discussion panel participants,

and in general looking alert are ways to signal to me that you are engaged. If you look bored, distracted, or fall asleep, I can only assume you are not participating.

Your participation does not require you to be correct. Learning involves making mistakes. As economist Kenneth Boulding once said, “Nothing fails like success because we don't learn from it. We learn only from failure.” Unfortunately, too much of the educational system is oriented to memorization. Although recall is a key part of learning, it is a fairly superficial one. Rather than “learning all the facts,” in this class we will try to use facts to build up portable insights that help make sense of our social worlds. Building anew sometimes involves making mistakes along the way, but it forges critical thinking skills that will remain with you a lifetime.

### **Learning Outcomes**

This course is focused on teaching important content by investigating numerous cases of large scale and high consequence disaster. However, you should also leave this course with a set of critical thinking skills that should remain useful to you long after your memory for the details of these cases fade. In that spirit, by the end of this course you should be able to understand key sociological and transdisciplinary theories about how and why disasters occur, how different forms of data can be brought to bear on these theories, the range of types of disasters that regularly occur, and the consequences of disasters for individuals, neighborhoods, communities, societies, and ecosystems. You will also learn about how we might prevent or mitigate disasters and their unintended consequences. In addition to honing your critical capacities for investigating disasters, you will develop an understanding for how and why formal organizations have become so central under modernity and why informal social organization remains such a critical and vital component of all modern societies. Finally, by working with peers in small groups you will learn critical skills of collaboration, consensus, and formal presentation of ideas.

### **Textbooks and Other Materials**

Articles, essays, book chapters, and other readings can be found on Blackboard or through the UTM Library. The assigned book is available for purchase at UTM Bookstore, <http://uoftbookstore.com>, located on the first floor of the Davis Building, 905-828-5272:

- Maldonado, J.K., 2018. *Seeking Justice in an Energy Sacrifice Zone: Standing on Vanishing Land in Coastal Louisiana*. New York City, NY: Routledge.

### Evaluation Components and Grading Policies

Type	Description	Due	Weight
Class Participation	Engage with course content, class exercises, group discussions, and active listening.	ongoing	6%
Discussion Board	Post a question OR answer another student's question on the week's reading.	ongoing	6%
Memo 1: Case Study Idea(s)	Short description of your idea or ideas for a case study of disaster.	1/24/20, 11:59 PM	6%
Memo 2: Revised Summary and Annotated Bibliography	Edited short summary and annotated bibliography for case study of disaster.	2/28/20, 11:59 PM	12%
Case Study of Disaster	Final research paper that provides a sociological case study of a major disaster	3/27/20, 11:59 PM	20%
Group Presentation	Small group presentation.	3/13/20 or 3/20/20	10%
Test 1	Short answer and multiple choice test.	2/7/20	20%
Test 2	Short answer and multiple choice test.	4/3/20	20%
			Total = 100%

### Grading

Class Participation - Each class will allow time for questions and discussion. I highly value your input and feedback, and provide rewards for it. See the section on "Class Format" for notes on attentive listening as a form of participation. Many classes will involve small group or individual in-class exercises. Your completion of these exercises will be counted toward the participation grade. Everyone is required to participate equally in class exercises that involve group work.

The overall participation points will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- 6** Student is always present in class and regularly comments or asks questions of her fellow classmates, engages respectfully with the material, listens attentively, and contributes to discussions.
- 4-5** Student typically attends lectures and discussion panels, and makes a good effort to engage with fellow students through in-class discussion and discussion boards. Student listens attentively.
- 2-3** Student sporadically present in class. Modest effort is made to engage when present.

- 1 Student attendance and participation is marginal.
- 0 Student attendance and participation in the class is inadequate.

Discussion Board – Before we meet, you will post a discussion question based on the assigned reading for that week OR post an answer to someone else’s question. Submit the question or answer under “Discussion” on the course web site. There are seven (7) classes in which you have an opportunity to post a question and answer. You only need to post six (6) times to get full credit for this assignment across the semester. That means you can miss one week of discussion board posting at no penalty. Post your question by *Thursday, 11:59 PM, each week*. I highly recommend that you post early. Feel free to post weeks in advance. Anything posted after the deadline each week will not count. You cannot make up posts later. You can receive one point for either a question or an answer (i.e. you can’t get extra points for additional posts).

Questions and answers are an opportunity to demonstrate that you read and thoughtfully considered the material. They are also an opportunity to ask questions you are unclear on from the reading or to grapple with challenging theoretical implications. I will try to incorporate some of the topics you discuss on the discussion board into the class, but unfortunately will not be able to address all of them in any single class. Do not copy your questions or answers from another student or the assigned readings. You should always double-check that your submission posted successfully. We also recommend that you maintain a backup of your posts in case there are any technical problems. If you are unsure or unable to post before the deadline, send your question or answer to the TA as soon as possible. If your Internet connection is not working, bring a print copy of your question or answer to class in order to receive credit.

Memo 1: Case Study Idea(s) - In your first memo of approximately 1 to 2 paragraphs, propose the case of disaster you would like to write about. The case you choose is up to you but it should not be a case of disaster we are covering in class. If you want, you can propose more than one idea to get my feedback on which one seems like it will work the best. You should mention what type of disaster it is (i.e. what is this case a case of?), why it is important and to whom, and how you plan to collect source material on it. Full credit will be given to projects that exhibit clarity of thought, analytic rigor, and a systematic approach to your case.

Memo 2: Revised Summary and Annotated Bibliography – In your second memo, you will provide a revised description of your case study idea along with an annotated bibliography of three or more scholarly references related to your case study. The revised description of your case study idea should include 1-3 research questions that will guide your collection of relevant literature and final analysis. The annotated bibliography then provides short summaries of relevant research literature on your case study idea. Although you should ultimately draw on relevant course readings in the final paper, do not use assigned reading material in your annotated bibliography. The references should be a mixture of scholarship that is focused on your particular empirical case of disaster and work that is thematically related to the type of disaster you are studying. For example, if you are going to write about the BP oil spill, you should include one or two references to research on this particular oil spill and work that is thematically related, such as Chip Clarke’s work on the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Your annotated bibliography will be evaluated for how comprehensive it is, the rigor of the emerging analysis of your case, and the strength of the annotations in terms of your ability to relate them to your

empirical and thematic case of disaster. There is a good set of guidelines provided by the University of Toronto for putting together an annotated bibliography:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography>

Case study of disaster – A sociological analysis of a major socio-technical disaster. The final report should be between 2,600-4,000 words in length and include scholarly sources. The references and title page do not count toward the word count for the paper. Please use Times New Roman font. The report will be graded on originality, analytic rigor, how systematic or comprehensive your analysis is, and the overall quality of your writing and exposition. Additional details of this assignment, and advice for getting an excellent mark on it, will be discussed in class.

Tests – There will be two in-class tests in this class. Both will involve short-answer and multiple-choice questions. The tests evaluate your critical and creative thinking skills along with your overall comprehension of the assigned readings, lectures, audio-video material, and class discussion topics.

Group Presentation – We will all collaborate on an in-depth investigation of the impact of rapid environmental change in coastal Louisiana, USA. The core text for this section of the class will be *Seeking Justice in an Energy Sacrifice Zone* by Julie K. Maldonado. With a small group, you will select a chapter from this book and prepare an in-class presentation based upon it. You will be evaluated by the clarity of your presentation, the rigor with which you present your case, and your group's ability to engage the core issues raised by the chapter. Everyone will be evaluated individually and in terms of the group as a whole. Each of you will have an opportunity to provide anonymous evaluation of your group members as well, which I will consider when allocating points for this assignment. More details on these presentations will be discussed in class.

## Course Schedule

*Notes: A/V material will be presented throughout the semester but are not listed below. If you miss any of this material, it is your responsibility to view them outside of class. Some of the readings are hyperlinked directly and can be clicked on to access through the UTM Library. All others (except the Katrina book) can be found under "Readings" on blackboard.*

### 1/10 Introductions

- Watch "Made in Bangladesh" - <http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/episodes/2013-2014/made-in-bangladesh>

### 1/17 The Social Production of Risk and Disaster

- Tierney, Kathleen. 2014. "Ch. 1: Risking More, Losing More" and "Ch. 3: A Different Perspective: The Social Production of Risk." in *The Social Roots of Risk: Producing Disasters, Promoting Resilience*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ch. 1: The Management of Disasters (pgs. 12-18) from Coppola, Damon P. 2015. *Introduction to International Disaster Management. Third Edition*. Butterworth-Heinemann.
- OPTIONAL: Ulrich Beck. 2006. "[Living in the World Risk Society](#)." *Economy and Society*. 35, 3: 329-345.

### 1/24 Entrenched Interests and Disaster Capitalism

- Scott, James C. 1999. "Geographies of trust, geographies of hierarchy." Pp. 273-289 in [Democracy and Trust](#), edited by M. E. Warren: Cambridge University Press.
- John Bellamy Foster. 2017. "[Trump and Climate Catastrophe](#)." *Monthly Review*. 68, 9: 1-19.
- [Elizabeth Kolbert, 2016. "Fort McMurray and the Fires of Climate Change." \*The New Yorker\*](#).
- Powys Whyte, Kyle 2018. "Climate Change: An Unprecedentedly Old Catastrophe." [Grafting: The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge](#)." 1 (June): 8-9.
- MEMO 1 DUE

### 1/31 Normal Accidents Theory

- Marc Gerstein. 2008. "Ch. 1: The Bystanders Among Us," from [Flirting With Disaster: Why Accidents Are Rarely Accidental](#)
- Vaughan, Diane. 2003. "Rational choice, situated action, and the social control of organizations." Pp. 443-456 in *The Sociology of Organizations*. Edited by Michael Handel.

### 2/7 Test #1

### 2/14 Slow Disaster

- Beamish, Thomas D. 2000. "[Accumulating trouble: Complex organization, a culture of silence, and a secret spill](#)." *Social Problems*: 473-498.

- Frickel, Scott and James R. Elliott, 2018. "What lies beneath: To manage toxic contamination in cities, study their industrial histories." *The Conversation*. December 20: <https://theconversation.com/what-lies-beneath-to-manage-toxic-contamination-in-cities-study-their-industrial-histories-104897>

2/21 FALL READING WEEK, NO CLASS

2/28 Community After Disaster: Fragmentation or Cooperation?

- Kai Erickson, 1998. "[Trauma at Buffalo Creek](#)." *Society*. 35: 153-161.
- Klinnenberg, Eric, 1999. "[Denaturalizing disaster: a social autopsy of the 1995 Chicago heat wave](#)." *Theory and Society* 28.2: 239-295.
- MEMO 2 DUE

3/6 Inequality, Vulnerability, and Disaster

- Hollie Nyseth Brehm and David Pellow. 2013. "Environmental Inequalities." *The Society Pages*. <https://thesocietypages.org/papers/environmental-inequalities/>
- Christine A. Bevc, Kieth Nicholls, and J. Steven Picou. 2010. "Community Recovery from Hurricane Katrina: Storm Experiences, Property Damage, and the Human Condition." Pgs. 135-156 in *The Sociology of Katrina: Perspectives on a Modern Catastrophe, Second Edition*. Toronto, Ontario: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers.

3/13 Inequality, Vulnerability, and Disaster

- Chs. 1-4 in Maldonado, Julie K., 2018. *Seeking Justice in an Energy Sacrifice Zone: Standing on Vanishing Land in Coastal Louisiana*. New York City, NY: Routledge.
- GROUP PRESENTATIONS

3/20 Inequality, Vulnerability, and Disaster

- Chs. 5-8 in Maldonado, Julie K., 2018. *Seeking Justice in an Energy Sacrifice Zone: Standing on Vanishing Land in Coastal Louisiana*. New York City, NY: Routledge.
- GROUP PRESENTATIONS

3/27 Positive Reasons for Thinking Negatively

- Karen Cerulo, 2008. "The Breadth and Scope of Positive Asymmetry," from [Never Saw It Coming: Cultural Challenges to Envisioning the Worst](#).
- CASE STUDY DUE

4/3 Test #2

Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

## Procedures and Rules

### Missed Tests/Quizzes or Late Assignments

Students who miss a term test or submit an assignment after the deadline will be assigned a mark of zero for the test, or will lose a percentage of the assignment mark for each late day.

However, students may request special consideration from the department (not the instructor)\* for missed tests/quizzes or late assignments late due to reasons beyond the student's control, including:

- Illness or injury
- Disability
- [Religious observances](#) (i.e., holy days)
- Other unplanned circumstances entirely beyond the student's control (e.g., a court subpoena, a funeral, a car accident).

Reasons such as holidays, pre-purchased plane tickets, family plans (unless critical, such as death of an immediate family member), attending a wedding, lack of preparation, technology failure, or too many commitments are not considered to be beyond a student's control and will not be accommodated.

#### \*Please note:

- **You may not submit a special consideration request to re-write a test/quiz once the test has begun. If you are feeling ill, you must leave the room before starting your test/quiz and seek medical attention immediately.**
- **If you miss an item of term work and do not complete the missed item or any make-up by the examination period, you must submit a petition for an extension of time beyond end of term through the Office of the Registrar: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/current-students/petitions>.**

### Missed Test Special Consideration Process

If you miss a test due to circumstances beyond your control, please complete the following steps in order to be considered for academic accommodation:

1. Submit an online special consideration request form within three (3) days (including weekends and holidays) of the missed test date via <https://app.utm.utoronto.ca/SpecialRequest/>.
2. Submit appropriate supporting documentation within three (3) days (including weekends and holidays) of the missed test date via email to [socscr.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:socscr.utm@utoronto.ca) or the dropbox for supporting documentation located in the Department of Sociology. All documentation must be in its original form. If you submit documentation electronically (as a PDF or JPEG attachment ONLY), ensure it is legible and retain the original copy in case you are asked to present it later.
  1. If illness/injury is cited as the reason for the missed test, you must submit a [U of T Verification of Student Illness or Injury form](#) (VOI) stating you were examined and diagnosed on the day of the test or immediately after (i.e., the next day), and indicating a serious degree of incapacitation on academic functioning (e.g., unable to complete an assignment, unable to write a test/examination). The VOI must also include a statement by the physician that explicitly notes you are unable to write the test on the date concerned. A statement from a physician that merely confirms a report (after the fact) of illness/injury made by the student is not acceptable.
  2. If you missed a test for a reason connected to your registered disability, the department can only accept documentation provided by Accessibility Services.
  3. Other documentation can include, but is not limited to: a [U of T Verification of Extenuating Circumstances form](#); automobile collision or police reports; a death certificate; and supporting documentation from employers, lawyers and other professional persons. When in doubt, consult the [sociology academic counsellor](#) regarding appropriate supporting documentation for your special consideration request.
  4. The department may request additional documentation in order to assess your case fully.

**The department evaluates special consideration requests carefully and approval is not guaranteed.**

- **If there is concern about your special consideration request(s), your request may be refused and/or you may be asked to meet with an Associate Chair.**



- If you have multiple special consideration requests (excluding requests pertaining to a documented disability with appropriate supporting documentation), your request may be refused.
- If you do not comply with the above instructions and timelines, or if your special consideration request is deemed unacceptable, your request will be denied and you will receive a grade of zero for the item you missed.
- If the department approves your special consideration request, the instructor will determine whether you will be required to complete an oral test, an extended assignment or an alternative online test in lieu of the original test; the instructor's determination is non-negotiable.
- If you do not complete the make-up as and when required, you will receive a grade of zero for the original missed test; further special consideration is not permitted.

The department (not the instructor) will inform you of the decision on your special consideration request via email to your U of T email account typically within one (1) week. However, you must be prepared for a make-up at any point after your original missed test.

Please note:

- Make-up tests may be scheduled during study break
- Make-up tests may be scheduled during reading week, only if mutually agreed upon by instructor and student
- Make-up tests are not held during the examination periods

*False statements and/or documentation will be treated as academic offences and handled accordingly.*

#### Extension of Time Special Consideration Process

If you are registered with Accessibility Services and want to request an extension of time for an assignment in advance of the due date (based on an accommodation letter already provided to your instructor), please email **both** your instructor **and** your Accessibility Advisor directly in order to obtain approval.

**In all other cases**, if you miss an assignment deadline due to circumstances beyond your control and seek an extension of time beyond the due date, please complete the following steps in order to be considered for academic accommodation:

1. Submit an online special consideration request form within three (3) days (including weekends and holidays) of the assignment due date via <https://app.utm.utoronto.ca/SpecialRequest/>.
2. Submit appropriate supporting documentation within three (3) days (including weekends and holidays) of the assignment due date via email to [socscr.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:socscr.utm@utoronto.ca) or the dropbox for supporting documentation located in the Department of Sociology. All documentation must be in its original form. If you submit documentation electronically (as a PDF or JPEG attachment ONLY), ensure it is legible and retain the original copy in case you are asked to present it later.
  1. If illness/injury is cited as the reason for the missed deadline, you must submit a [U of T Verification of Student Illness or Injury form](#) (VOI) stating you were examined and diagnosed on the day of the missed deadline or immediately after (i.e., the next day), and indicating a serious degree of incapacitation on academic functioning (e.g. unable to complete an assignment, unable to write a test/examination). The VOI must include a statement by the physician that notes the precise period that you are unable to complete your assignment. A statement from a physician that merely confirms a report (after the fact) of illness/injury made by the student is not acceptable. If you need additional extensions for the same assignment, you must follow the aforementioned procedures with the same physician.
  2. If you missed a deadline for a reason connected to your registered disability (and your instructor did not grant approval in advance based your accommodation letter), the department can only accept documentation provided by Accessibility Services.
  3. Other documentation can include, but is not limited to: a [U of T Verification of Extenuating Circumstances form](#); automobile collision or police reports; a death certificate; and supporting documentation from employers, lawyers and other professional persons. When in doubt, consult the [sociology academic counsellor](#) regarding appropriate supporting documentation for your special consideration request.
  4. For an extension, supporting documentation must specify the exact period that you were unable to complete your assignment. The department will then determine if any extension is merited and if so, the period of extension approved. For extensions of time beyond the examination period, you must submit a [petition for an extension of time beyond end of term through the Office of the Registrar](#).
  5. The department may request additional documentation in order to assess your case fully.

The department evaluates special consideration requests carefully and approval is not guaranteed.

- If there is concern about your special consideration request(s), your request may be refused and/or you may be asked to meet with an Associate Chair.
- If you have multiple special consideration requests (excluding requests pertaining to a documented disability with appropriate supporting documentation), your request may be refused.
- If you do not comply with the above instructions and timelines, or if or if your special consideration request is deemed unacceptable, your request will be denied and you will receive a grade of zero for the item you missed.
- If the department approves your special consideration request, you will be notified of the period of extension permitted.

The department (not the instructor) will inform you of the decision on your special consideration request via email to your U of T email account typically within one (1) week. However, you must submit your assignment per the instructions below as soon as you are able to do so; do NOT wait for the outcome of your special consideration request.

Late assignments must be submitted to the instructor via Quercus.

*False statements and/or documentation will be treated as academic offences and handled accordingly.*

#### Late Assignments

- In order not to be considered late, assignments must be submitted by the due date listed on the syllabus via Quercus and/or Turnitin.com. *You are expected to keep a back-up, hard copy of your assignment in case it is lost.*
- Late assignments for reasons that are within your control will be penalized 5% marks per day. The penalty will run from the day the assignment was due until the day it is submitted to the instructor via Quercus and/or Turnitin.com.
- The penalty period includes weekends and holidays.
- Assignments that are more than seven (7) days late will not be accepted.
- Given multiple opportunities to submit the weekly assignments and that they are worth less than 5% each, such as discussion board posts or in-class exercises, late assignments will not be accepted even for a reason beyond your control. You can miss one discussion post without penalty.

Late assignments must be submitted in accordance with the instructions above; other faculty and staff within the department cannot and will not accept late assignments

#### Re-marking Pieces of Term Work

##### General

A student who believes that their written term work has a substantive error in grading may ask the person who marked the work for re-evaluation. Students have up to one month from the date of return of an item of term work or from the date the mark was made available to inquire about the mark and file an appeal. For example, should the work be returned or the mark be made available on March 3rd, the student has until April 3rd to inquire in writing and start the remarking process. Instructors must acknowledge receipt of a student request for remarking within **3-working days**, and decisions should be provided in a timely fashion.

If an academic misconduct case is in progress for the piece of term work in question, a student may not appeal until the matter is resolved.

##### Details

**Regrade requests for term work worth less than 20%** of the final mark may be submitted to the person who marked the work for re-evaluation. The student must submit (1) the original piece of work and (2) a written explanation detailing why they believe the work was unfairly/incorrectly marked. If the student is not satisfied with this re-evaluation, he or she may appeal to the instructor in charge of the course if the work was not marked by the instructor (e.g., was marked by a TA). In those instances where the instructor was not the one who marked the work, the student must now submit to the instructor (1) the original piece of work, (2) the written reasons as to why they believe the work was unfairly/incorrectly marked, and (3) communications from the original marker as to why no change in mark was made. If a remarking is granted by an instructor, the student must accept the

resulting mark as the new mark, whether it goes up or down or remains the same. Continuing with the remark or the appeal means the student accepts this condition. Instructors and TAs should ensure all communication with the student is in writing (e.g. follow-up email) and keep a copy for later reference.

**Only term work worth at least 20%** of the course mark may be appealed beyond the instructor. Such appeals must first follow the same guidelines as those mentioned directly above for work worth less than 20%. To escalate an appeal beyond the instructor, the student must submit to the [academic counsellor](#) (1) all previous communications between the student, original marker, and the instructor (2) the detailed reason(s) documenting why the mark for the work was inappropriate and (3) the original piece of work. If the department believes that re-marking is justified, the department shall select an independent reader. The student must agree in writing to be bound by the results of the re-reading process or abandon the appeal. Again, the student must accept that the mark resulting from the appeal may be higher or lower or the same as the original mark.

Where possible, the independent reader should be given a clean, anonymous copy of the work. Without knowing the original assigned mark, the reader shall determine a mark for the work. The marking of the work should be considered within the context of the course of instruction for which it was submitted. If the new mark differs substantially from the original mark, the department shall determine a final mark taking into account both available marks.

The final level of appeal is to the [Dean's Office](#). Appeals must already have been considered at the two previous levels (Instructor followed by Department), with the decision reviewed by the head of the academic unit, before they will be considered by the [Dean's Office](#). **Appeals must be submitted in writing, and include all previous correspondence, as soon as possible after the student receives the final response from the academic unit, but no later than one month after.** Appeals to the [Dean's Office](#) about the marking of term work will be reviewed to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed in earlier appeals, that the student has been treated fairly, and that the standards applied have been consistent with those applied to other students doing the assignment. Any mark resulting from such an appeal will become the new mark, whether it is higher or lower or the same as the previous one.

This process applies only to term work; appeals for re-reads of final examinations are handled directly by the [Office of the Registrar](#).

### **Grade Appeals**

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the teaching assistant of the error.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:

1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader's comments.
3. Students have up to one month from the date of return of an item of term work or from the date the mark was made available to inquire about the mark and file for an appeal. For example, should the work be returned or the mark be made available on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the student has until April 3<sup>rd</sup> to inquire in writing and start the re-marking process.

If you wish to appeal:

A. You must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note statements such as "I need a higher grade to apply to X" are not compelling. Also, please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.

B. Attach the original assignment (with marker's comments) to your written explanation. Submit a hardcopy of the package to the instructor either during office hours or in class.

### Electronic Communication and Electronic Learning Technology

Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient—and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules. **Note: Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

- Assignments must be submitted to the instructor via Quercus and/or Turnitin.com.
- Assignments will not be accepted via email. See above for how to submit them.
- All course communication should be conducted through Quercus or your U of T email account.
- All emails must include the course code and name (e.g., SOC463 Disasters) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Emails from students will generally be answered within 24 hours (or 1 working day) of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication. Proofread. Use appropriate language.
- Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., “how much is assignment X worth”) will not receive a response.
- All general questions about the course that are NOT addressed on the syllabus and course website should be posted to the ‘general inquiries’ section of the Quercus Discussions.

### Classroom Etiquette

Students are expected to arrive at class on time.

Students are expected to come to class prepared by having read the assigned readings and ready to engage in discussion about them. If and when (at the instructor's discretion) laptop usage is allowed in class, they should be used for notes only. Other uses (e.g., emailing, web surfing) will result in the student being required to turn off the laptop and it may affect their participation mark.

Videotaping and recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.

### Academic Integrity

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication and punishment. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties.

Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See these links for department citation formats and tips for how to use sources well:

- <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/sociology/resources/resources-students>
- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters ([www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm)) and Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/studentc.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

### Student Services and Resources

#### Accessibility

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code, including those who have a physical, sensory, or learning disability, mental health condition, acquired brain injury, or chronic health condition, be it visible or hidden.

If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please approach Accessibility Services as soon as possible. The Accessibility staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

To register with Accessibility, please call the centre at 905-569-4699 or e-mail [access.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:access.utm@utoronto.ca).  
<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/access>

### **Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre**

The centre offers wide-ranging support to help students identify and develop the academic skills they need for success in their studies, including: understanding learning styles; essay and report writing; time management; lecture-listening; note-taking; and studying for tests and exams. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc>

### **UTM Library (Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre)**

The UTM library provides access to a vast collection of online and print resources to faculty, staff, and students. Various services are available to students, including borrowing, interlibrary loans, online references, research help, laptop loans and the RBC Learning Commons.  
<http://library.utm.utoronto.ca>

A variety of **other student support services and resources** can be found at <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/current-students>, including academics, health, wellness and student services

### **Equity & Diversity**

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the UTM Equity and Diversity officer at [edo.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:edo.utm@utoronto.ca) or the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union Vice President Equity at [vpequity@utmsu.ca](mailto:vpequity@utmsu.ca).