

Department of Anthropology
ANTHRO 2277B-001: Anthropology of Disaster
BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2026

Date: June 16, 2025

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Greg Beckett

Method of delivery: In person

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: None.

Please ensure you have the correct requisites by checking [the Academic Calendar](#).

Course Description:

Most social science begins with the presumption of order and continuity, which makes disruption, disorder, and other kinds of social breakdown appear “abnormal.” How else might we think about crisis, disaster, and emergency? In this course, we will explore cross-cultural and historical perspectives on disaster, broadly conceived, by considering the various meanings that communities and individuals give to crises, disasters, and emergencies. In particular, we will look at the following topics: the human experience of disaster; risk and preparedness; insecurity and trauma; the spread of emergencies across borders and the expanding field of international humanitarian intervention; and the ways that individuals and communities try to live through crises and thrive after emergencies.

Alongside weekly quizzes and short assignments based on the required readings, students will work collaboratively on a group research project and present their results. Each student will also write an individual analysis paper based on their group research project. Students will also write a cumulative final exam. More information on all assignments will be available on the course site. A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s Brightspace site before the first day of class.

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Course Materials:

No textbook

Required readings will be available through the Course Readings tool on the course site

Evaluation:

Provisional – check with final version of the syllabus before the course begins

Grades will be based on weekly quizzes, online assignments, a group presentation, a short analysis paper, and a final exam, as follows:

Weekly Quizzes – 10%

There will be short quizzes each week on the assigned readings. Quizzes are to be completed in OWL before each weekly class meeting. Quizzes will focus on the main ideas in the required readings. They are intended to help motivate you to complete the reading before coming to class and to help you identify key points from the readings. There will be no make-up quizzes, but I will drop the lowest two quiz grades.

Online Assignments – 15%

Most weeks, students will complete short online assignments in OWL. These may involve reading/viewing some additional material such as short readings or videos that supplement the week's lecture. After reading/viewing, you will be asked to answer questions based on those materials. Assignments will typically feature multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. There will be no make-up assignments, but I will drop the lowest two grades.

Group Case Study (Research Project) – 20%

Students will work in groups to complete a short research project on an assigned case. The research for case studies will be presented as a power-point (similar format) by the group and will provide the basis for individual short analysis papers (see below). Group presentations of cases will take place during October class meetings.

Individual Write-up – 25%

Each student will *individually* write a short report (750 words) on their assigned group case study. You can use the research from your group as the starting point for your paper. Analytic papers give students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply key terms and concepts used in class to their own case study.

Final Exam – 30%

There will be a cumulative final exam that explores key themes of the course material. More details about the format of the final exam will be discussed in class and posted on Brightspace. The final exam will be held during the exam period, on a date to be assigned by the Registrar's Office.

More information on writing assignments, including due dates, will be made available to students on the course site.

Weekly Quizzes	10%
Online Assignments	15%
Group Assignment	20%
Case Report	25%
Final Exam	30%

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