GG 406 Natural Hazards: Geoethics and the Layman
T/Th – 12:00 – 1:15, Location POST 723
Syllabus, Spring Semester 2018
Instructor: Dr. Patty Fryer, POST Rm 514, pfryer@hawaii.edu

(Note, topics are subject to change without warning should hazard events occur during the semester. I try to emphasize current events. Appearances by guest speakers are subject to availability.)

(Note, there is no text for this course, but readings from the web and articles posted on Laulima will be assigned.)

Week 1 – Ethical Approaches to decision-making (first writing assignment)
  T Jan 9 Definition of Natural Disaster and an introduction to thinking ethically
  Reading assignment:
  <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/thinking.html>
  Th Jan 11 Risk and natural disasters (what if a tornado strikes an empty field?)

Week 2 – Forecasting Volcanism

Week 3 – The Volcanologist and the public (Santorini)

Week 4 – 2017 hurricane season (Houston, Florida and Puerto Rico, 2017)

Week 5 – Floods (Fargo, ND and New Madrid, MO)

Week 6 - Earthquakes in Hawaii

Week 7 - Politics and earthquake forecasting and risk (L'Aquila, 2009)

Week 8 – Civil authorities and Stakeholders

Week 9 – Tsunamis

Week 10 – “Climategate”

**Week 11 – Spring Break no class Mar. 26-30**

Week 12 – Global warming and climate change

Week 13 - Coastal Zone Management in Hawaii

Week 14 – Atmospheric and oceanic hazards
Week 15 – Wild fires

Week 16 – anthropogenic/natural disasters

Week 17 – Interactions with the media (and class) evaluations

**Final Exam:** Thursday, May 10, 12:00-2:00, POST 723. (see: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/undergrad/schedule/final-exams/spring/>)

**Student learning objectives (all written work will be graded on the basis of these criteria):** The student will be able to:

1. clearly identify the inherent ethical choices and implications involved in the various stakeholder(s) role(s) during given contemporary natural hazard situations.
2. describe the effects of perspective, context, personal views as pertains to natural hazard events.
3. specify the decision-makers and stakeholders involved in hazard situations.
4. integrate clear descriptions of relevant ethical ambiguities/dilemmas into the overall analysis of a given hazard situation.
5. draw upon frameworks and principles of ethics to develop pertinent arguments and/or positions.
6. develop and present alternate arguments/positions.
7. discuss and/or debate ethical issues with sensitivity to others’ perspectives and the context, while also defending one’s own position with logic and fact.
8. make a reasoned judgment that takes into account an array of arguments and perspectives.
9. show evidence of a logical, systematic decision-making process.

**Grading will be based on:**

- Class participation and attendance - 50% of the grade
- Homework (writing assignments) - 30% of the grade
- Mid-term assignment - 10% of the grade
- Final exam – 10% of the grade
- Extra Credit opportunities will occur during the semester (up to 5% of the grade)

**Writing-intensive credit:**

W-credit will be given for successful completion of the writing assignments in this course. Short (1- to 2-page) writing assignments will be given almost every week. These will consist of an assessment of some aspect of a stakeholder's (or stakeholders) actions or decisions during a hazard event. When guest speakers are to visit the class, students are required to write 5 questions as full sentences (one from each of the 5 approaches to ethical decision-making), to be handed in after class. The homework assignment for that day will consist of an assessment (1-2 pages) of the speaker’s answer to your question, or if you don’t get a chance to ask
one you can write an assessment of the speaker’s answer to another student’s question. Writing assignments will be graded 67% on the ethical assessment of the topic and 33% on the quality of the writing.

For each writing assignment you will be given an opportunity to revise your text after receiving feedback in writing from me and from in-class discussion in which students will be asked to suggest improvement to extracted passages from selected papers turned in by your fellow students. Several classes will include grammatical refresher discussion (e.g., every sentence requires a verb!) and stylistic examples of right and wrong usage of select words and phrases. Also you will be given feedback on the mid-term assignment (5-page) paper both from me and from your classmates on extracted passages. You will be given an opportunity to revise the mid-term assignment. Throughout the semester I will show the class the grading spreadsheet so that each student can gauge his or her progress.

The final exam will include an essay question (4 hand-written pages) that will be graded on the basis of the ethical assessment of the chosen topic following a specific format, and on the quality of the writing. **On the final exam text there will NOT be an opportunity for revision, as it will be used as an assessment of both your improvement over the semester and the effectiveness of the course.**

Students with disabilities may contact KOKUA (http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/) for assistance. The KOKUA office provides a variety of types of advice and assistance. All possible accommodations for student needs associated with any type of disability will be provided during this course.

If at any time you have questions or concerns regarding the course please come see me, but it’s best to send an email pfryer@hawaii.edu. I will usually be available prior to class or by appointment via email. (I am very friendly and always have cookies in my office.)