HS 303f Disaster Management and Risk Reduction
Strategic Planning and Engagement in Humanitarian Response

Class Time
Spring Term 2019, Second Module
Thursdays, 2:00pm - 4:50pm
Location: Schneider & Family Building, Room G3

Co-Instructors

Anaïde Nahikian leads the Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action (ATHA) at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. Through field-based research and engagement with humanitarian practitioners, Anaïde focuses on developing responsive research and professional tools to enhance the capacity of professionals in humanitarian environments, on issues such as frontline humanitarian negotiation, response to forced migration, and communities of practice. She leads field research and implements projects across the Middle East / North Africa, East Africa, Southeast Asia, and Europe. She was recently head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Collaborative Platform, fostering relationships between the ICRC and academic centers in the Boston area. Since 2008, she has been co-leading the case research and curriculum design of an annual intensive, field-based course on strategic planning in humanitarian action with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Harvard Kennedy School. She is also an Adjunct Lecturer at the Heller School.

Rob Grace is a Senior Associate at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, where he leads research projects on the politics of humanitarian action. Between 2011-2014, he served as the lead researcher on a project focused on the practices of monitoring, reporting, and fact-finding missions mandated to examine alleged violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. The project culminated with the publication by Cambridge University Press of the HPCR Practitioner's Handbook on Monitoring, Reporting, and Fact-Finding. His current research focuses on humanitarian negotiation practices. He is also a researcher and affiliated fellow at the Humanitarian Innovation Initiative, based at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. In this role, he is undertaking a research project examining contemporary challenges of civil-military coordination in humanitarian response. His writing has been published by the Journal of Conflict & Security Law, World Health & Population, the European Society of International Law, Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection, the Foreign Policy Association, and Foreign Policy in Focus.

Office Hours
By appointment. Please email:
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Rob Grace (rgrace@hsph.harvard.edu)

Format
Readings, lectures, guest experts, group discussions, case studies, simulations, working groups, and presentations.

Targeted Audience
Heller students interested in humanitarian response, development, and disaster management.
Course Description
Complex humanitarian emergencies cause significant and rapid loss of life and enduring damage to the fabric of communities, infrastructure, and national economies. The impact of such disasters is further exacerbated by global trends such as population growth and movement patterns, urbanization, food insecurity, and climate change, leading to large-scale scarcity and forced displacement. Humanitarian response in these settings aims to provide immediate life-saving assistance, and to ensure protection for some of the most vulnerable communities. The protection of populations during natural disasters, armed conflict, and complex humanitarian emergencies requires an interdisciplinary and strategic approach to addressing the various sources of vulnerabilities affecting populations, whether through prevention, mitigation, or corrective response. In recent decades there has also been growing attention focused on the need to systematically understand and manage risk, while mitigating the vulnerabilities of communities to disasters. In light of these dynamics, we seek to explore some key questions: how have links between humanitarian and development assistance evolved? What are the professional and technical approaches needed in humanitarian response?

In this context, humanitarian professionals must engage in multifaceted programming addressing the legal, political, and social dimensions of a crisis, in addition to planning and implementing operations in remote and hazardous contexts, emphasizing the importance of the strategic thinking, context analysis, engagement with key actors, and negotiation skills.

While this course aims to contribute to the development of students’ capacity to think critically and strategically about current challenges and approaches in strategic planning in humanitarian and disaster management, it recognizes the rich experience of the students and strongly encourages peer dialogue and group sharing.

Course Objectives
Through readings, expert presentations, case studies, and group work, the purpose of this course is to offer graduate students legal, policy, and operational response frameworks for understanding and engaging in humanitarian response, while being aware of the multitude of challenges and dilemmas that such operations entail. In particular, the course aims to:

- Develop students’ capacity to undertake sound policy analysis and suggest practical recommendations on measures to promote the protection of vulnerable groups;
- Provide a comprehensive overview of international humanitarian law and human rights applicable in humanitarian environments;
- Review the current challenges and dilemmas of humanitarian action, with particular attention to the evolution of roles of governments, militaries, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations;
- Highlight recent emblematic cases of humanitarian response to illustrate the intersection of theory and practice in the field;
- Engage with guest practitioners and experts from the operational, NGO, policy, and academic communities on the challenges of these new crises environments.

Disability
If you have a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and require accommodations, please bring it to the instructor’s attention prior to the second meeting of the class. If you have any questions about this process, contact Marc Kiredjian, at mkiredjian@brandeis.edu.
Course Requirements
Students are expected to cover required readings and to participate actively in class discussions.

- 1/ Students will be responsible to document their completion of the preliminary course work for the case study due by 5pm on 10 April entitled: “Cyclones of Bangladesh: Preparedness, Population, and Climate Change”. Details will be shared in class.

- 2/ In the mid-term, students will be responsible for the development of a group-created case study exploring a key operational challenge, dilemma, or question in a particular context – due by 5pm on 18 April 2018. Submissions will be made via Google Drive. Details will be shared in class.

- 3/ As the final project, students will work in their groups to build upon their case studies to explore and design a program proposal, policy intervention, or alternative, creative output. These will be presented in class, along with an accompanying (maximum 8 pages) group-authored background document – in class presentations will take place on Thursday 2 May 2018; proposal materials and background document are due by 5pm on 9 May 2018. Submissions will be made via Google Drive. Details will be shared in class.

Cases and topics can be drawn from the student’s own experiences, from the readings, or from questions raised in class. The breakdown for student evaluation will be as follows:

- Bangladesh Case Study preliminary work: 10%
- Mid-term group case study: 30%
- Final group paper and policy project: 40%
- Participation in class: 20% - come prepared and open to exchanging!

If you cannot meet the deadline for an assignment for a reason outside of your control, please get in touch as early as possible and before the assignment deadline.

Attendance, Punctuality, and Active Participation
You are required to attend every class barring documented illness. Please also arrive on time at the beginning of class. If you know you will be absent or late for a legitimate reason, make sure to let the instructors know. Should you miss more than two classes, unfortunately, you will not qualify for credit. Attendance is more than just coming to class. You are expected to actively participate.

Assignments and Readings
Readings and links assigned are meant to enhance your learning and guide you in the practicum process. Please be sure to read them. In order to ensure active participation and discussion, make sure you complete the assignments listed below in advance of each class. From time to time, you will be called upon to discuss readings in class and to participate in individual or group presentations. Therefore, please come to class prepared to engage in well-informed discussions. You will of course enjoy complete academic freedom in the classroom, within the limits defined by mutual respect.

Writing Requirements and Academic Integrity
The writing requirements listed below are intended to encourage you to approach reading materials critically, to foster improved research and writing skills, and to serve as a basis for contributing to class discussion and a diversity of ideas and opinions. You are expected to devote careful attention to the technical quality of your written work, as well as its substance. Honesty matters in all academic work, and is strictly enforced by the instructor. (See: http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srscs/corevalues.html) All written work for this course must include appropriate citation of the sources used.
• See section 56c (“Avoid Plagiarism”) of the *Concise English Handbook*.
• See http://www.brandeis.edu/stUDENTaffAIRS/sdc/ai/index.html: ‘Truth even unto its Innermost Part’ and in particular the section dealing with citations. http://guides.library.brandeis.edu/coex

The university policy on academic honesty is distributed annually, as section 5 of the *Rights and Responsibilities* handbook. Academic integrity is critical in all that you write and say, and transgressions are treated severely. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the university. If you have any questions about this, do not hesitate to talk to your instructor, and to seek guidance.

**Relevant reference sources you can use throughout the course**

**Annual Synthesis Report on progress since the World Humanitarian Summit**
www.agendaforhumanity.org/report2017

*This report is based on the voluntary self-reports of 142 Member States, humanitarian and development organizations, the private sector and others who provided inputs on how they are taking forward their commitments at the WHS. The Executive Summary provides a cross-cutting overview of emerging trends in progress and gaps that need to be addressed.*

**The World Disasters Report**

*The World Disasters Report is about people and disasters. It is about those vulnerable people who are most likely to be affected by disasters and the local institutions which provide the mainstay of disaster prevention, preparedness and relief. The first edition appeared in 1993. (Resilience: Saving lives today, investing for tomorrow, 2016):*

** Forced Migration Review** http://www.fmreview.org

*Forced Migration Review is the most widely read publication on forced migration – available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, and free of charge in print and online. It is published by the Refugee Studies Centre in the Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford. Through FMR, authors from around the world analyse the causes and impacts of displacement; debate policies and programmes; share research findings; reflect the lived experience of displacement; and present examples of good practice and recommendations for policy and action.*


**UN OCHA: What is the cluster approach?**
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/aboutclusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach

**United Nations: What we do: deliver humanitarian aid.**
Explore the agencies listed here and their operational mandates.

**InterAction (2016): Foreign Assistance Briefing Book**
https://www.interaction.org/FABB2016

**Jamie McGoldrick. Guiding Humanitarian Principles in Disaster Work and the Role of UN OCHA.**
Course Agenda

Session 1: 14 March 2019
Course overview; conceptual overview

- Course introductions, objectives, and requirements
- Peer sharing on experiences, challenges, and contexts
- The strategic logic of humanitarian action

Course Materials

No required reading for this session.

Additional References

Session 2: 21 March 2019
Humanitarian negotiation for access and protection

- Operationalizing humanitarian principles
- Exploring challenges, principles, and skills of humanitarian coordination and negotiation
- Simulation

Course Materials

Additional References

Session 3: 28 March 2019
Legal and Policy Frameworks in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies and Response

- Framework: Typology of Strategic Approaches to Humanitarian Response
- International law, human rights law, disaster law, and refugee law
- Monitoring, reporting, and fact-finding
- Guest Expert: Adrienne Fricke, Senior Fellow, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
Course Materials

Additional References

Session 4: 4 April 2019
Convergence of Crises: Climate, Conflict, and Famine
- Role of humanitarian and development organizations in adapting to the challenges posed by the intersection of climate change, conflict, and food insecurity
- “Perfect storm” of famine: practitioner reflections on South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Nigeria
- Framework: Stakeholder Mapping and in class exercise

Course Materials

Session 5: 11 April 2019 – Bangladesh case preparation due prior to class
Disaster preparedness and response
Military engagement in disaster management
- Understanding the role of humanitarian and development organizations in disaster preparedness and response
- Case Study: “Cyclones of Bangladesh: Preparedness, Population, and Climate Change”
- Understanding the growing importance of militaries in humanitarian response and the challenges these present.
- Exploring the roles and responsibilities of civilian and military actors in disaster response, and the engagement between them.
- Guest expert: Dr. Birthe Anders, Senior Fellow, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative; PhD in War Studies from the Department of War Studies, King's College London

Course Materials
- "Cyclones of Bangladesh: Preparedness, Population, and Climate Change," by Dr. Jennifer Leaning and Rob Grace. This on-line case study examines issues of disaster preparedness by focusing on how governmental and non-governmental actors have addressed cyclone preparedness and response in Bangladesh. The case study introduces students to the core elements of disaster preparedness, examines the political importance of preparedness policies, and delves into particular long-term dilemmas of preparedness the stem from climate change. The case study
concludes with a policy analysis exercise in which students grapple directly with the key disaster preparedness issues faced in Bangladesh today. **Students are required to complete the preliminary materials online prior to the simulation exercise in class on 11 April.**

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**No Class: 18 April 2019** — mid-term case studies due by 5:00pm  
Alternate class date: 2 May  

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**Session 6: 2 May 2019** — make-up class  
Group presentations and course conclusions  
Faculty support for final projects  

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**Finals Week: 9 May 2019** — No class, but final projects due by 5pm.