

Disasters Environment and Development

Final year (cross-listed International Development option
with Geography)

Prof Dom Kniveton

What's the module about?

- Environmental change and disaster risk present fundamental threats to the eradication of poverty. They threaten to roll back decades of development gains.
- The overall aim of this module is provide an exploration of the connections between disasters, the environment and development.
- In particular the module is split into three parts: a part that explores similarities and differences in concepts, frameworks and terminology used in disaster risk, climate change and development; a problem part that looks at the issues of 'Droughts, floods and food security', 'Complex disasters', 'Environmental migration', 'Trapped populations' and 'Resource wars'; and, a 'solution' part that looks at some of the possible avenues that may help address these problems.

Do this module if you've ever wondered:

- What is a disaster? How natural are disasters? Have disasters become more frequent and catastrophic in recent years? Why do they occur where they occur?
- What is the relationship between the state of the environment and human well-being?
- Why do people sometimes decide not to evacuate even though they receive an early warning message? How is power, knowledge and disaster preparedness linked to one and another? What does religion or cultural beliefs have to do with disaster response planning? Are there any dangers in defining someone as vulnerable or resilient?
- What is so special about climate change? If we can barely predict the weather a week in advance how can we predict the climate 30 years in a advance? How do we know humans are responsible for recent climate change (even are they)? What is the climate going to be like around 2030, 2050, 2080?
- Is climate change really just an equality issue? Given the uncertainty in climate model projections can we say anything useful about climate change impacts? What is the difference between climate change adaptation and sustainable development?
- What are the direct and indirect links between climate change and disaster risk? What is vulnerability?
- What influences decision-making in risk situations? How do you make decisions when you have no idea what the outcome might be?
- What solutions are there to reduce disaster risk, to adapt to climate change and sustainably develop?

The module will be assessed through two pieces of work:

- An essay that explores aspects of the intersection of disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and sustainable development including: the impact of environmental change and disasters on migration in the global south; conflict over resources in the global south; and the role of science in humanitarian emergencies and resilience building activities.
- The development and presentation of a serious games (as a group) or a critique of existing serious games and suggestions for its improvement (see <https://vimeo.com/43127251>)

Additional information:

- No pre-requisites for module
- Suitable for students from either a social or more science based background – BA or BSc International Development and Geography – including joint majors.
- One*2 hour lecture a week, One*2 hour seminar a week, 1* 4 hour games workshop
- Convenor: Dom Kniveton
- My research interests include disaster risk, climate change and development (surprise surprise) with a particular focus on decision making under uncertainty and modelling social change. My research is both global and local with a focus on Africa and south Asia.
- Contact: Chichester 1 Room 155
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Lecture/seminar 1

- Introduce DRR – hyogo - <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa>
- Criticism of this and sendaii -<http://gndr.org/news/item/1490-critique-to-sfdr.html>
- http://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf
- [PDF] Disaster risk reduction J Twigg - Good Practice Review, 2004 - alnap.org
- Regions of risk : a geographical introduction to disasters -Kenneth. Hewitt - Harlow : Longman 1997 - Available at Library Main (HF 1400 Hew)
- At risk : natural hazards, people's vulnerability, and disasters by Ben Wisner London ; New York : Routledge c2004 Second edition.. Available at Library Short (HF 1400 AT)