Course Description
When did humans first experience disaster? Since their earliest manifestations, towns and cities have suffered dramatic events such as super storms, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes - which often led to their abandonment. Slower disasters, such as droughts and plagues, caused groups to reorganize in response to loss of resources, including their most vulnerable community members. Natural processes become cultural disasters when people get caught in them, and have to make decisions about risks to lives, livelihoods, and property. Newer forms of cultural disasters include nuclear events, sunken ships, and crashed planes, but these too can be studied through archaeology. Disasters have their own histories as they are often the result of processes set in motion long before there is a clear toll. Despite their cause, disasters often leave us wondering why the event happened and how we can better prepare against future threats. Archaeological methods allow us to learn from what remains, to piece together the events that led up to a disaster, the events that unfolded during it, and the decisions that were made after it. This course surveys the archaeological record of cultural and environmental threats, including El Niños, volcanic eruptions, and the release of nuclear radiation.

Course Objectives
1. Contextualize recent disasters within a long history of unexpected and unwanted events
2. Explore how knowledge of past crises can help us prepare for future ones
3. Develop expertise in one type or disaster and gain experience speaking and writing about it in a professional (non-sensational) way

A Note About Studying Disasters
This course contains material that is emotional charged. Please respect each other and the victims of the disasters that we study. The intent here is neither to glorify nor dehumanize disasters, it is to learn from the past so we may help to minimize the human impact of future disasters. If any of the course content makes you personally uncomfortable it is your responsibility to speak with me before the class in which we will cover it. Please come to my office hours or make an appointment to see me in person.

Course Readings
All textbooks are available in the Vassar library reserves (Reference Room 123) for 4-hour use.

Dawdy, Shannon Lee

De León, Jason

Gould, Richard
Additional readings (PDFs on Moodle)

Andrus, C. Fred T., Daniel H. Sandweiss, and Elizabeth J. Reitz

Bernardi, Patricia

Cooper, Jago

Crossland, Zoë

Dawdy, Shannon Lee


Elson, Mark D., Michael H. Ort, Kirk A. Anderson, and James M. Heidke

Ferllini, Roxana

Gamble, Lynn H.

Gore, Rick and Louis O. Mazzatenta

Harrod, Ryan P. and Debra Martin

Hodges, Glenn

Lowe, John et al. (more than 10 authors)

Moshenska, Gabriel
2008 Ethics and Ethical Critique in the Archaeology of Modern Conflict. Norwegian Archaeological Review 41(2):159-175.

Nelson, Margaret C. et al. (more than 10 authors)

Petryna, Adriana
Rico, Trinidad

Ryzewski, Krysta and John F. Cherry

Samuels, Kathryn Lafrenz

Sandweiss, Daniel H. and Alice R. Kelley

Sandweiss, Daniel H. and Jeffrey Quilter

Schlanger, Nathan, Laurent Nespoulous, and Jean-Paul Demoule

Sheets, Payson and Jago Cooper

Swenson, Edward R.

Thompson, Andrew R., Kristin M. Hedman and Philip A. Slater

Torrence, Robin and Trudy Doelman

van Buren, Mary

van de Noort, Robert
Course Grading

Discussion participation = 25%
Discussion participation points can only be earned by being active in class discussion each and every week. This does not mean dominating the discussion so that others do not get a chance to speak and it does not mean simply saying that you agree or disagree with others. Active participation in class discussion means that you add to the discussion by linking together otherwise disparate ideas, ASK and answer questions, challenge or defend positions, and generally help move the entire class towards new levels of understanding. Your overall course participation will receive a single grade of: more than two absences regardless of participation (100 pts), regularly present but often passive (150 pts), regularly present and occasionally active (200 pts), or regularly present, engaged, and insightful (250 pts). My definition of insightful is going beyond the basic textbook answers and linking together multiple readings or topics to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

Policy Statement = 20%
A 700-800 word policy statement on the disaster type of your choice is due via Moodle by 3:10pm. See the Surviving Sudden Change ebook and Moodle for examples.

Book Reviews = 20% (2 @ 10% each)
Each student will select two of the main textbooks to write formal book reviews for (Gould, De León, Dawdy, or Petryna & Schlanger (both sources together)). Reviews are due by the class period associated with the last assigned reading in that book. A good review includes an analysis of the book and where it fits in the larger literature on a subject. It begins with specifics about this book and moves into larger ideas. It captures the essence of the book without relying on the book’s author’s own words.

Book reviews must be 600-900 words in length and include the following elements:

1. General description of the problem addressed by the book,
2. Summary of the book's argument or thesis,
3. Description of the author’s qualifications to speak on this topic,
4. Summary of the book's content including the methods used and the material covered,
5. Two properly cited direct quotes that serve as evidence for an argument,
6. Description of the book’s strengths and weaknesses pointing out where the book shines and where it could be improved,
7. Conclusion that summarizes your opinion and identifies the proper audience for this book.

Reviews should not include citations or references to any works other than the book being reviewed. The title of your review should follow the following format:

Book Title. BOOK AUTHOR FIRST NAME LAST NAME. Publication Year. Publisher, City. # of pages pp. $price (paperback), ISBN #

Reviewed by Your First Name Last Name, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY.

Paper Proposal on Research = 5%
Writing a paper proposal is an organizational tool that forces you to know what you are trying to say before you start writing your paper. The title explains what argument your paper will make. The bibliography is a list of sources you expect will help you make that argument. The abstract sets up the argument and how you think you will be able to explain it and solve a problem.

Consider the following questions when assessing your paper proposal.
1. Does the title tell you what the paper will be about in a specific manner? Is it vague as to the issue and place that the paper will be about?
2. Does the abstract set up an argument and reveal how the problem can be solved?
3. Does the abstract go beyond the case studies to reveal applicability to a larger issue?
4. Are the references appropriate for the argument being made? Were multiple perspectives (including counter perspectives) considered?
5. Overall, does the proposal meet the assignment criteria?

Flash Presentation on Research = 10%
An in-class presentation of the research will be given before the paper is finished. This 13-15 minute presentation is worth 100 points or 10% of the course grade and must use no more than 10 slides.

1. Title
2. Background on disaster type
Summary of relevant readings
Your original research question
Background on the disaster you are considering (must not be one already covered in class)
Map showing location of disaster
Application of archaeology to that disaster
Expected results of that application
How results answer research question
So-what? takeaway - how is the conclusion generally applicable

Paper on Disaster Archaeology = 20%
Each student will choose one of four main topics to do their research project on. The choices are 1) environment as hazard using De León as primary background, 2) technology as hazard with Petryna and Schlanger as primary background, 3) surviving disaster with Dawdy as primary background, or 4) learning from disaster events with Gould as primary background. Within that context, students are free to choose a past or current disaster to apply the course’s background material to, with the main argument being that disaster archaeology can teach us how to lessen the impact of future occurrences of that type of disaster. Each paper must have a minimum of 10 cited sources, 5 of those from the course readings and 5 from readings not included on the course syllabus. Each paper must be between 3,500 and 5,000 words in total and include at least one map and one other image. See paper format requirements for more details.

Paper outline:
Title
Abstract
Introduction to the disaster of your choice
Review of primary (5 course readings) background source for either environment, technology, surviving, or learning
Review of secondary background material (5 additional readings not assigned as part of the course)
Application of the primary and secondary material to the disaster of your choice
Anticipated results of that application (How would disaster archaeology help lessen the loss from future occurrences?)
Comparison of results to material from week 6 (Preparing for disaster)

The grading criteria for this paper will be as follows:
How well does this paper summarize the main ideas of the course? (20%)
How well does it go beyond the course content to address the future of disaster archaeology? (20%)
How well does it incorporate the course readings and the additional readings selected by the student to support the student's own ideas? (20%).
Is the paper original and free of plagiarism? (20%)
Is the paper well written with clear title, organization, section headings, and proper use of in-text citations and bibliographic style? (20%)

Extra Credit = no more than 10%
Opportunities for extra credit will be announced as they arise. Each student can apply up to 100 extra credit points to their course total. Be sure to take these opportunities as they come up. Extra credit will be awarded for up to 2 documented visits to the writing center to work on your final paper. The writing center closes before the paper is due so be sure to get an early start on the paper if you plan to take advantage of this extra credit opportunity.
Written Assignment Formatting

Word Counts
For assignments completed in this course, word counts include title and body text. Word counts do not include the reference list or figure captions or abstract. Abstracts have their own word count guidelines.

Titles
The title of a written work reflects the thesis of that work. The title must be specific to the argument your paper will make, revealing both the topic covered and method, theory, and or case study being used to explore that topic.

If your paper does not have a title then you probably aren’t sure what your thesis is.
If your paper title is vague then you probably aren’t sure what your thesis is.
If your title would work for a murder mystery novel then it is a bad title for an academic paper.

Abstracts
An abstract is a brief summary (150-200 words) of what a longer piece is attempting to argue. It should include a sentence for each of the following:

1. Problem to be addressed
2. Method you are using to assess the problem
3. Theory or perspective used to find the solution
4. Solution being proposed
5. Region(s) for which problem and solution are addressed
6. Applicability of this case to others and the wider problem

Figures
All tables, charts, and images included within written work must have a numbered caption that explains the figure and what is represents. This caption is an abbreviated form of the description that appears within the text. Every figure must be cited within the text and cited in the order in which they appear. An example is below.

On the first day of the course I brought the students to the house and asked them to write down what they thought of it. Most students had never noticed the distinctive octagon-shaped building (Figure 1) that they walked past to arrive at our classroom.

Figure 1. The Octagon house on the campus of Heidelberg University, Tiffin, Ohio. Photograph by April M. Beisaw.

Bibliography vs References or Works Cited
A reference list is not the same as a bibliography. A bibliography is a list of recommended readings. A reference list is a list of what you have read and used to make your argument. A reference list is the same as “works cited” because all references must be cited to show where and how they informed your research. References are your evidence.

Referencing and Citing Sources
In this course, we will use the Society for American Archaeology’s format for references and citations. The full style guide is available through this link. Every source you cite must be in your reference list and every source in your reference list must be cited in your text.

The basic reference formats are below. Additional authors are listed First Name Last Name after the first author’s Last Name, First Name entry. Reference lists are sorted alphabetically by that first author’s last name. Two sources with the same authorship are sorted chronologically with the oldest first. There are two spaces before and after the date.
The city in which a book was published is always included. If the city is not well known, then a two letter abbreviation for the state or country is added after a comma to clarify the location of publication. Such as:

White, Tim D. and Pieter A. Folkens

Some books include chapters written by different authors. When citing and referencing such works you must use the specific chapter title and author, not the book title and editor. Each chapter you use gets its own line in the reference list.

Citations point a reader to your reference list so that they can find the same exact information in the source you used. Ask yourself “could I have made this statement without having read a specific work?”. If the answer is no, add a citation to that statement. Use author and date when the concept being pointed to occurs throughout the source. Specific page numbers are included in citations when the information being pointed to occurs on a certain page of the source. The title of the source is never included in the citation. Examples of citations are below.

- Facial recognition is a forensic technique of last resort and is rarely used (Ubelaker 2008).
- “Social identities are deeply rooted in historical visions which are strongly defined along intersecting axes of race/ethnicity, class, and gender” (Reckner 2002:97).
- According to Beisaw (2016:12), citing sources is not fun, but it is necessary. This perspective helps to contextualize the suffering of her students.

Quoting and Paraphrasing Sources
When you use the exact words of someone else, you must put those words within quotes and cite the source. Direct quotes should be reserved for instances when the way the original author said something is the point of the quote.

- During ethnographic fieldwork with ghost hunters, Michelle Hanks recorded the thoughts of one ghost tourist: “you get to know a lot of history doing this. …Certainly more than I learned at school” (Hanks 2015:130).

When using a direct quote that will take up more than 3 lines of your paper, you must set that quote off as a block quote using a space before and after the quote and a tab for each line. This makes it obvious when the bulk of your paper is relying heavily on the words of others. Block quotes are discouraged.

The majority of your citations should **not** be direct quotes. Instead you should paraphrase the words of others and restate them in a way that is applicable to the argument you are making. Those citations do not get direct quotes because it is the idea that matters, not the exact words used to convey that idea.

- Archaeology, once the stuff of exciting stories (Holtorf 2010), took on the unfathomable labels of “boring” and “tedious.”
- One archaeologist advocated storytelling as a way to enhance archaeological practice by presenting possible explanations along with much-needed imagination (Lewis 2000:7). Another archaeologist suggested that the fear of seeming unscientific has kept archaeologists from developing better ways of speaking to and writing for the public (Majewski 2000:18).

Whether or not a paraphrased citation gets a page number depends on whether the idea being cited occurred throughout the source (was the subject of the paper) or appeared in only one place in the source (may have been a tangential idea just touched on).

**Generating Reference Lists With Refworks**
All Vassar students have a free Refworks account that is accessible through the library home page. Use of Refworks can expedite the creation of bibliographies and reference lists but it will result in only a draft list that must be corrected by you.
Go to library.vassar.edu -> My Accounts -> Refworks
Create an account if you don’t already have one

Go back to library.vassar.edu -> Databases to do your searching
When you find sources to use for your paper choose Export -> Refworks
   For peer-reviewed sources in sciences, social sciences, humanities try Scopus
   For peer-reviewed anthropology & archaeology sources try Anthropology Plus, AnthroSource, and Annual Review of Anthropology

Go back to Refworks through library.vassar.edu -> My Accounts -> Refworks
Select the sources you want to include in your paper’s reference list
   Put them all in one folder for handy access
Select Create Bibliography from lower right hand column menu
   Decide if you want all in your folder or just selected references to be included
Click Manage Output Styles
Search for American Antiquity -> Click on it in results -> Click green arrow to move to your Favorites list
Close Manage Styles Window
Select American Antiquity in the Create A Bibliography window -> Create Bibliography

You now have a draft of your reference list that you need to check for accuracy
   Check every capitalization and every punctuation for consistency
   Delete any references that you don’t end up citing in your paper
Policies

Academic Integrity
As a Vassar student, you have agreed to the academic integrity policy in “Vassar College Regulations.” This includes:

1. Each student’s work shall be the product of the student’s own effort.
2. Each student shall give due and appropriate acknowledgement of the work of others when that work is incorporated into the writing of papers.
3. Unless otherwise directed, every student working in a laboratory is expected to make all necessary measurements, drawings, etc., independently, from his or her own observations of the material provided.
4. Collaboration in preparation of written work may take place only to the extent approved by the instructor.

Penalties for violating Vassar’s academic integrity policy can be found in the same regulations document.

Accessibility Accommodations
If you have a condition that requires special accommodations (speech or hearing problems, attention disorder, etc.) it is your responsibility to have that disability documented by the Office for Accessibility and Educational Opportunity and provide me with a copy of your AEO accommodation letter before accommodations are needed.

Appointments
Students are welcome to drop in unannounced during office hours. This time is available on a first-come first-served basis. If you need to speak with me outside of those schedules times, use the Google Calendar link on Moodle to schedule an appointment. Requests should be made at least 24 hours ahead of time. Make sure you have your Google Calendar set to Eastern Standard Time Zone.

Assignment Submission
Unless otherwise indicated, all work is to be submitted electronically through Moodle or the course Wordpress blog. Files cannot be submitted through email or handed in on paper or electronic media. Work not submitted according to the assignment's instructions or by the assignment deadline will be subject to the Late Work Policy.

Attendance
Class content and assigned readings are related but they are not the same. Therefore all students are expected to attend every class as well as complete every assignment. Some class meetings may take place in alternate locations and during alternate times. Attention to the course schedule is essential. Tardiness may result in a missed exercise. Accommodations for health-related issues require a health advisory from Health Services. Accommodations for personal issues require communication from the class Dean.

Changes and Moodle
This syllabus is general outline of the course content. The professor reserves the right to deviate from this outline. All changes will be posted on Moodle. Therefore the content on Moodle is what students are expected to follow for successful completion of this course.

Class Participation
This is an interactive course that requires full participation in order to meet the course objectives. Students who find it difficult to speak in class are expected to discuss course material with the instructor during office hours or by email. When course exercises take place outside of the classroom students are expected to maintain classroom behaviors: pay attention, stay with the group, and stay engaged. Unacceptable behaviors include listening to music, reading material not related to this course, and napping while being transported to a field site.

Collaboration
Unless otherwise indicated, each student's work should be easily distinguishable from that of any other student in multiple ways. Don’t share files. Do share ideas. Don’t produce one result and turn it in with different names. Do work independently alongside one another. Don’t rely on anyone else to get you through. Do be sure you can and do complete your own work. See Academic Integrity policy above.
Late Work
Unless otherwise indicated, all late work will be penalized according to the following schedule: 10% for first 12 hours, 20% for second 12 hours, 50% for the third 12 hours. Beyond 36 hours past an assigned deadline, late work is only accepted when accompanied by a communication from Health Services or the Dean's office.

Letters of Recommendation
Requests for letters of reference or recommendation must be made two weeks before the submission deadline for that letter. Before I consider a request, you must provide the following: 1) who the letter should be addressed to, 2) the submission deadline, 3) why you are applying for the position/funding, and 4) what you hope to get out of the experience/funding.

I am happy to write letters for students who go beyond the basic requirements of attending class and completing assignments. Before requesting a letter from any professor, consider how well the professor knows you as an individual. The best letters of recommendation tell stories about how students work independently or as part of a team, how they deal with adversity, what their goals and aspirations are, and what related strengths or weaknesses they have. If I don’t know these things about you I cannot write a good letter.

Office Hours
Students are welcome to drop in unannounced during office hours. This time is available on a first-come first-served basis.

Textbooks
I do my best to keep the cost of textbooks under $100/course. Students are expected to obtain a copy of each required textbook but are encouraged to explore cheaper options such as purchasing used or electronic copies of renting books. Anyone who elects to use an electronic version of a text should be able to bring an e-reader to class so that they have access to the textbook material for class discussion and exercises.

Title IX Responsibilities
Please be aware all Vassar faculty members are “responsible employees,” which means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship abuse, or stalking, I must share that information with the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to make that notification, the Title IX office will only provide outreach by email. You will control how your case will be handled — you don’t have to read or respond to the email, and it is completely up to you whether to pursue a formal complaint. Vassar’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to resources you may need.
Schedule
(≈100 pages of reading per week)

Week 1  Intro to Disaster Archaeology? (Disaster Recovery Exercise)
Read Gould (2007) Introduction pgs 1-6, What is Disaster Archaeology pgs 7-35, On Trial pgs 36-49
Lecture material includes crash course on archaeology method & theory

Week 2  Training for Disaster Recovery (Guest lecture by Pleasant Valley Fire Chief - Jeff Hickman)

Week 3  Bodies and Mass Graves (Guest lecture by Dutchess County Forensic Examiner - Bob Bready)

Week 4  Cultural Disasters? Archaeology of the American Southwest
Gould Book Reviews Due (10%)
Lecture material includes Samuels (2016)

Week 5  Natural Disasters? Volcanoes and El Ninos (Guest Skype presentation on Puerto Rico archaeology - Antonio Curet)
Lecture material includes Lowe (2012), Andrus et al. (2008), Gamble (2007), Sheets & Payson (2012) - how to write policy statements

Week 6  Preparing for Disaster (Guest lecture by Dutchess County Emergency Management Coordinator - Bill Beale)
Read Cooper (2012), Sandweiss & Quilter (2012), Rico (2014)
Policy Statement Due (20%)
Lecture material includes Dawdy (2010)
Fall Break

Week 7  No class meeting - CHAT conference
Read De León (2015) Chapters 1-4

Week 8  Environment as Hazard
Read De León (2015) Chapters 7-11
De León Book Reviews Due (10%)

Week 9  Life & Death After Disaster (Guest lecture by Mid-Hudson Red Cross - Kelly Formoso/John Vale)
Read Dawdy (2008), Dawdy (2016) - Chapters 1-3
Lecture material includes research paper guidelines and research process

Week 10  Life & Death After Disaster - Pt 2 (Skype conversation with Antonio Curet of the NMAI on Puerto Rico *Tentative)
Read Dawdy (2016) - Chapters 4-6
Dawdy Book Reviews Due (10%)

Week 11  No class - Thanksgiving

Week 12  Technology as Hazard
Petryna & Schlanger Review Due (10%)

Week 13  Flash Presentations of Research Paper Topics (10 minutes each) (10%)

Week 14  Individual paper meetings to be scheduled - Paper proposals due (5%)

Finals Week Research papers due (20%) - 11pm on Sunday Dec 16