



MACALESTER

# Sociology of Disasters

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ENVI / LATI / SOCI 294-02

Spring 21, Module 3

MTWRF 3:15 pm - 4:30 pm / Jan 21, 2021 - Mar 13, 2021

Zoom link:

Professor: Marla Perez Lugo, PhD

# Dear Student:

Welcome to Sociology of Disasters. I am Marla Perez Lugo, a Hubert Humphrey Visiting Professor from the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez and your instructor for this class. During this module, we will be exploring disasters as sociological phenomena. The course is based on the premise that disasters, even if triggered by a natural event like an earthquake, a tornado or a hurricane, are not natural processes. Disasters ARE SOCIAL PROCESSES in their causes and in their consequences. This social-scientific approach is particularly important due to the emphasis that we as a society put on disciplines such as engineering and the natural sciences in the understanding, preparing, responding, and recovering from disasters. I mean, the natural and technological sciences are relevant, but not the only parts of the puzzle.

Given our new normal in living with COVID-19, our course will be mostly online but we could change to hybrid if the circumstances allow it. The structure of the course is the following: we will meet on zoom every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for lectures, class discussion and guest speakers. On Monday, you will be working on a weekly forum, reacting to the readings and other assignments. Fridays are "reading/working on your own" day, getting ready for the next week. This means that we will meet in person three times a week and the rest of the course will be covered through independent work. Please be advise that this course has a Moodle page that you must search and enroll in. In this Moodle page, you will see and have access to all the materials, readings and assignments that we will be using. Moodle is meant to provide the structure for the in-person dimension and the platform for our online interactions. However, I am sure that we all understand that we need to be flexible in our approach to the class, just in case the state's and the school's guidelines change. In the meantime, I would like to adapt the structure of the course to the needs of the majority of the students. Please start by answering to the short survey in Moodle called "[housekeeping](#)", available in the first block. Your answers will help me to design the course more effectively.



I recognize that you may have concerns about many things that are likely to affect your learning this semester: your own health and well-being and that of your loved ones, pervasive and continual racism and anti-Blackness, political instability, money, housing, food, etc. Please know that many of us at Macalester are working to support all students in relation to these and other concerns. If you have financial concerns that may not be met by Financial Aid, please access [Macalester's Emergency Aid Program](https://www.macalester.edu/financialaid/emergencyaid/) (<https://www.macalester.edu/financialaid/emergencyaid/>). The [Emergency Aid Program](https://www.macalester.edu/financialaid/emergencyaid/) is also the place to go if you do not have access to a reliable computer or internet; someone will connect you with the appropriate people inside Information Technology Services. Other important information is available on the "Class Policies" section of this document.

Please do not hesitate in contacting me if you have a question, suggestion, problem, complaint or a comment regarding this course. Feel free to contact me also if you believe I can be of any help in any other dimension of your academic life. My email address is [mperezlu@macalester.edu](mailto:mperezlu@macalester.edu) and my phone number is 787-806-8584. I am available to talk anytime Monday through Friday between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm (CT). However, it would be nice if you request an appointment in advance to make sure that I can block from my schedule all the time necessary for our conversation. Please, if I do not respond to your email in less that 24 hours, assume that I did not receive your message and email me again.

Thank you again for enrolling and I am looking forward to meet you all,

Marla





# A Little About Me...

These are the characteristics that define me as a person. Although not necessarily in that order, I am Puerto Rican, a mother of 5 children, an Environmental Sociologist, a wife of a Political Scientist, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez, cofounder of the Puerto Rico's National Institute for Energy and Island Sustainability and of the RISE Network. I am also a survivor of Hurricane Maria, and a disaster researcher. The picture in the left, Playa Combate (or Combate Beach), is my most favorite place on earth.



# Course Description

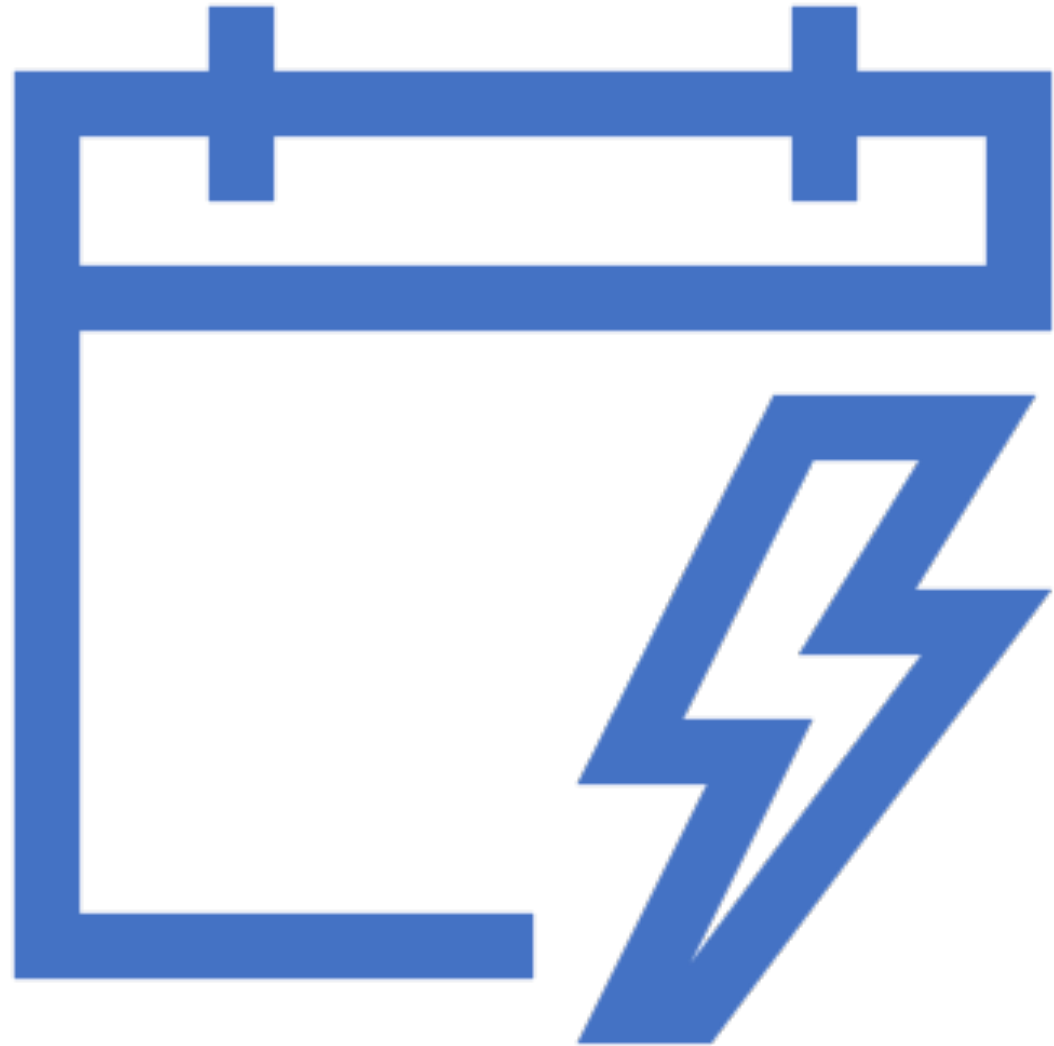
Disasters are fundamentally social processes. While triggered by the impact of natural or technological events, their causes lie in the vulnerable social conditions of the impacted society or community. Also, their consequences are not equally distributed across the impacted population. The course is designed as a survey of the social, cultural, and structural causes and consequences of those collective crisis situations that we call disasters. We will be focusing on the conceptual foundations of the discipline and, through the analysis of contemporary disasters, in the main theoretical approaches in the field including homeostatic and political ecological models.

# Course Goal and Objectives

- The objective of this course is to introduce students to the sociological examination of disasters.
- At the end of this course, students will be able to:
  1. Identify and explain the main sociological approaches to disasters
  2. Define main vocabulary used in the area
  3. Explain the social causes of disasters
  4. Identify the different stages of the disaster cycle
  5. Explain the concept of vulnerability and how it influences the disaster experience
  6. Reflect on the ethical issues idiosyncratic to disaster research
  7. Apply newly gained sociological knowledge of disasters to the analysis of cases and issues.

# Topics & Schedule

The following table itemize the topics that we are going to be discussing throughout the course. However, keep in mind that this information can vary depending on unforeseen events or conditions. I promise to keep you informed of any changes.





DATES	TOPICS	GUEST SPEAKERS
Jan 21	Getting to know each other	Me, you, us 😊
Jan 25-29	Introduction to the Introduction: What the heck is sociology	Yiamar Rivera-Matos, MA
Feb 1-5	What is a disaster? What does have sociology to do with it?	Jessica Ortiz-Corral, MA
Feb 8-12	Sociological Approaches to the Causes of Disaster: Exposure, Risk and Vulnerability	Amy Nitza, PhD, LMCH
Feb 15-19	Vulnerable Populations: Race, Class, Gender, Age, Mobility, etc	Samantha Penta, PhD
Feb 22-26	The Disaster Cycle: Preparedness, Response, Recovery and Mitigation	Adi Martinez-Roman, PhD
March 1-5	Disaster Resilience	Olivia Scriven, PhD
March 8-12	Studying and Teaching Disasters	Joan Pakenham, PhD

# Essential Vocabulary

Emergency

Disaster

Catastrophe

Extreme event

Hazard

Vulnerability

Exposure

Resilience

Risk

Uncertainty

Emergence

Disaster agent

Disaster or  
hazard cycle

Mitigation

Preparedness

Response

Recovery

Vulnerable  
populations

# Guest Lecturers

Every Wednesday we will host a disaster expert that will share with us their knowledge and experience either in the academic or in the practical context.





January 27

**Yiamar Rivera Matos, MA**

PhD candidate at the Science and Technology Policy Program, Arizona State University. Her research focuses on energy transitions in post-disaster conditions.





# February 3

## **Jessica Ortiz-Corral, MA**

Research Analyst at Harris County Public Health, TX. She has a Masters Degree in Sustainability from Arizona State University. Her research focuses on community resilience to disasters.



# February 10

## **Amy Nitza, Ph.D, LMHC**

Dr. Amy Nitza is the Director of the Institute for Disaster Mental Health at SUNY New Paltz. She is a psychologist who specializes in providing mental health training in academic and non-academic settings both nationally and internationally, with an emphasis on disaster mental health and trauma recovery. As a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Botswana, she trained mental health and school counselors and studied the use of group counseling interventions in HIV/AIDS prevention among adolescents. She has collaborated with the University of Notre Dame in Haiti to develop trauma-related interventions for children in domestic servitude, and to provide training for teachers in dealing with traumatized children in the classroom. She is also currently collaborating with UNICEF USA to develop and implement a program of mental health support for children impacted by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. Amy is the author and editor of numerous publications, including the recent book *Disaster Mental Health Case Studies: Lessons Learned from Counseling in Chaos*. She is a Fellow of the Association for Specialists in Group Work and serves on the Executive Board of the Society for Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy (Division 49) of the American Psychological Association. She holds a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Indiana University. She formerly served as an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Professional Studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.





# Feb 17

## **Samantha Penta, PhD**

Assistant Professor of Emergency Preparedness in the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at SUNY Albany. She earned her Ph.D. and Master of Arts in Sociology and an Honors Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and History with Distinction at the University of Delaware. Previous to her appointment at SUNY Albany, she worked for several years at the Disaster Research Center at the University of Delaware. Dr. Penta's research focuses on health and medical care in crises, decision-making in preparedness and response, and humanitarian logistics. She worked on projects examining evacuation and preparedness challenges for long-term care facilities, disaster donations behavior, and community recovery and resilience to disasters and epidemics. Her most recent work examines the processes involved in planning and implementing international crisis medical relief efforts, focusing on health and medical responses to the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Dr. Penta specializes in qualitative research and has participated in multiple quick response field research deployments, including to New York City following Superstorm Sandy, the Oklahoma City area following the May 2013 tornados, Florida leading up to Tropical Storm Erika, Nepal after the 2015 earthquake, and North Carolina following Hurricane Dorian in 2019. Dr. Penta has presented her work in regional, national, and international forums, including at the Natural Hazards Workshop in Colorado, at the Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland, at the International Sociological Association's World Congress of Sociology in Japan, and at the 4th International Conference on Urban Disaster Reduction in New Zealand. Her published work is featured in outlets including the *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*, *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, *Earthquake Spectra*, *Sociological Forum*, and the *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*.





# February 24

## **Adi Martínez-Roman, JSD**

Dr. Adi Martínez-Roman, J.S.D., is the Senior Policy Analyst – Puerto Rico for Oxfam América since June 2019. Before coming to Oxfam, she was the executive director of the Fundación Fondo de Acceso a la Justicia in Puerto Rico for two years, and the Auxiliary Dean of Students of the University of Puerto Rico Law School for seven years, where she also taught several courses on the Legal Profession, Law and Poverty, and Law and Social Change. Also, she is currently the President and founder of Firmes, Unidos y Resilientes con la Abogacía (FURIA, Inc.), a non-profit that accompanies low-income community leaders in Puerto Rico on their advocacy endeavors. She holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and International Affairs, a law degree from the University of Puerto Rico and received both her Masters of Law and Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas of the Universidad Carlos III of Madrid (Spain).

# March 3

## **Olivia A. Scriven, PhD**

Dr. Olivia A. Scriven is Academia Advisor with FEMA's National Disaster Recovery Support (NDRS) cadre. As Academia Advisor, Dr. Scriven links colleges and universities with disaster-impacted communities in order to provide those communities with technical assistance to help advance their long-term recovery and resilience goals. From work with rural counties in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael in 2018 to more recent work with Native Americans trying to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, Dr. Scriven has leveraged college and university technical assistance to support housing assessments, water quality studies, timber remediation, and architectural and engineering designs for dual-use resiliency centers. Dr. Scriven holds the doctorate in the history and sociology of science and technology from the Georgia Institute of Technology ("Georgia Tech") and has worked with a range of colleges and universities in the United States and South Africa to design and evaluate programs to increase the participation and performance of under-represented populations (including women) in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, including health. Dr. Scriven's work has been published by Oxford University Press, and she is regularly invited to serve on peer-review panels for Federal funding agencies and academic journals.







# March 10

**Joan P. Packenham, PhD**

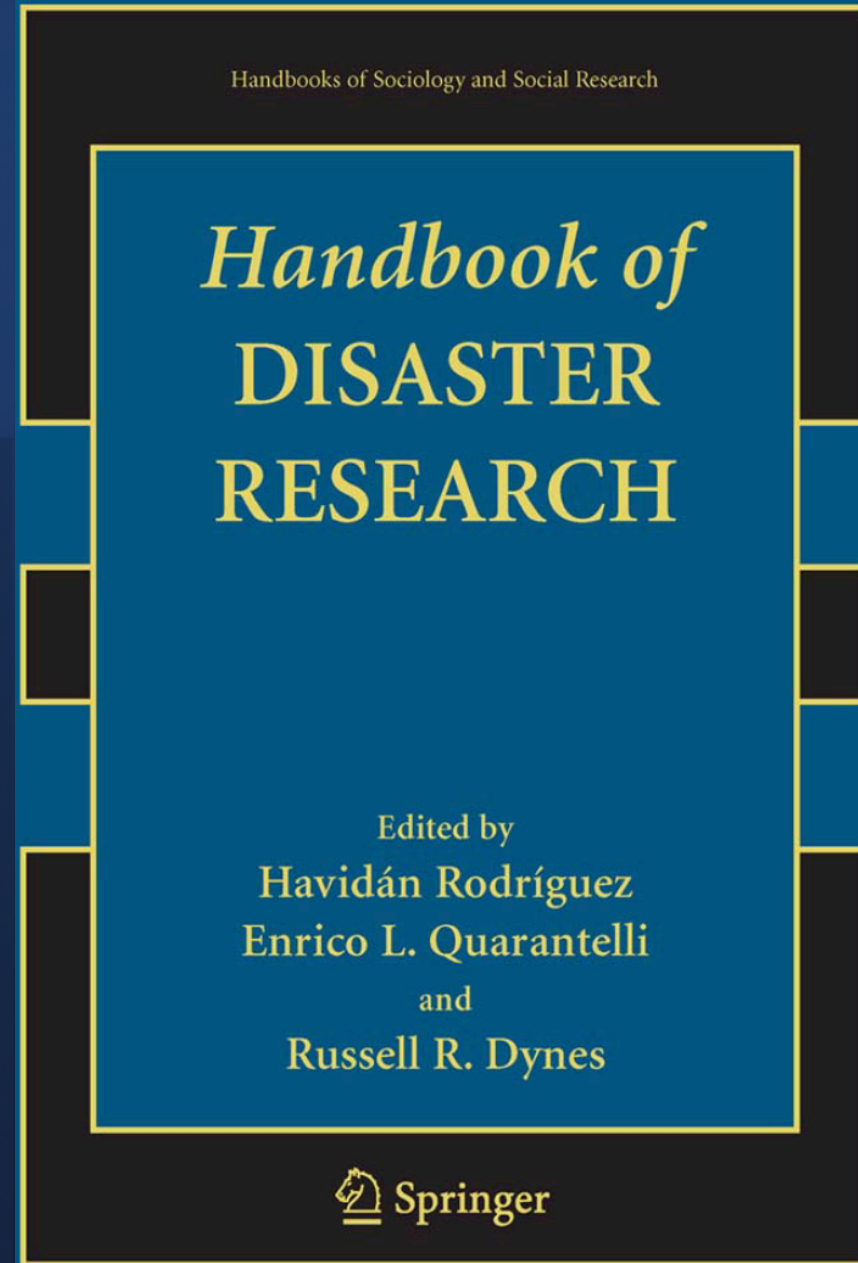
Director of Human  
Research Compliance at  
National Institute for  
Environmental and Health  
Sciences.

# Books, References and Other Resources



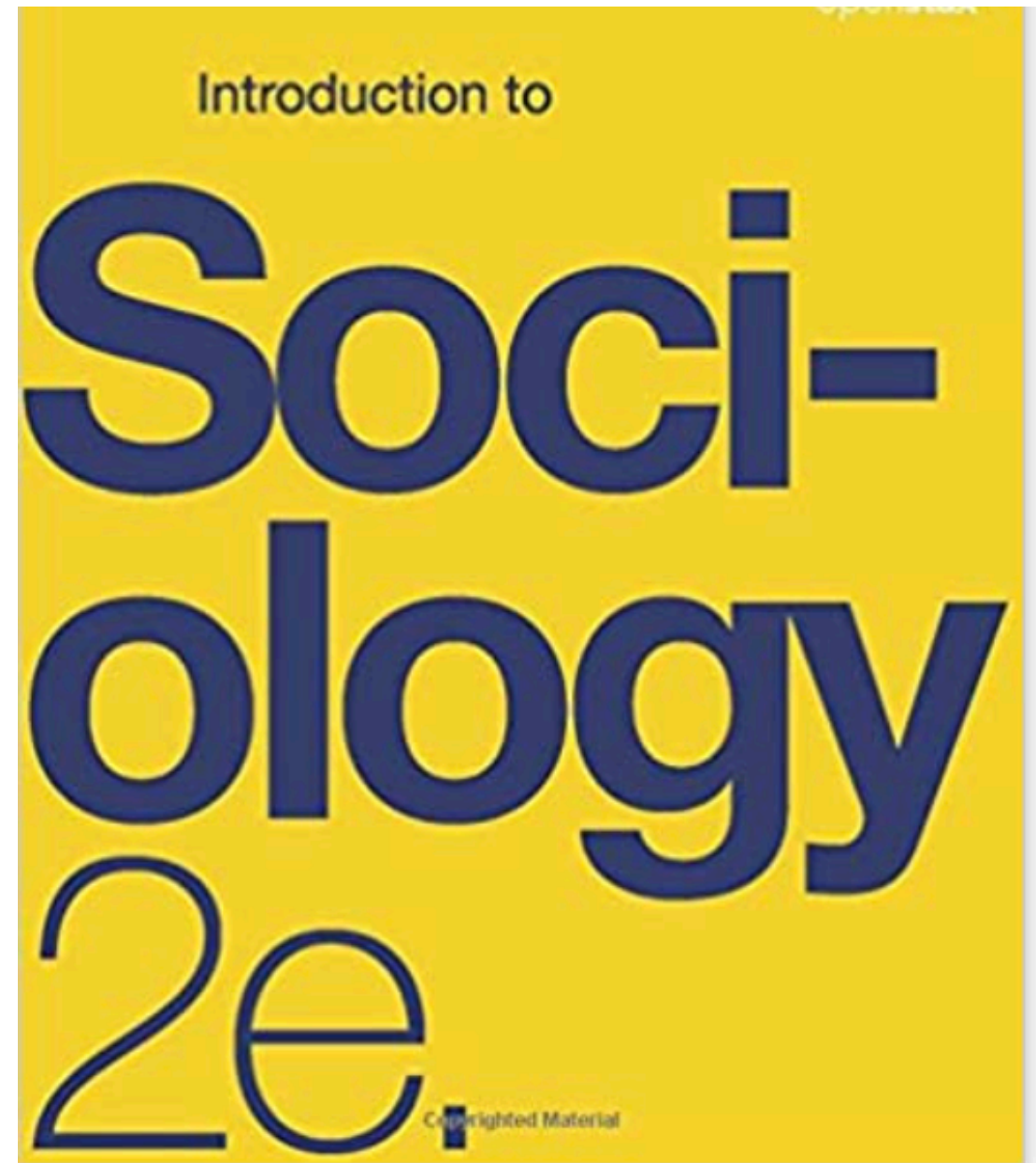
This course is organized around a set of readings that will be used to guide weekly forum entries, lectures and class discussion. Students are expected to complete all readings prior to the class period for which they are assigned. Not all reading topics will be discussed in the lectures, but you are still responsible for all of the material covered in the required readings. All readings will be provided in the moodle page of the course.

Andersson, W. A., Kennedy, P. A., & Ressler, E. (2007). *Handbook of disaster research* (Vol. 643). H. Rodríguez, E. L. Quarantelli, & R. R. Dynes (Eds.). New York: Springer.

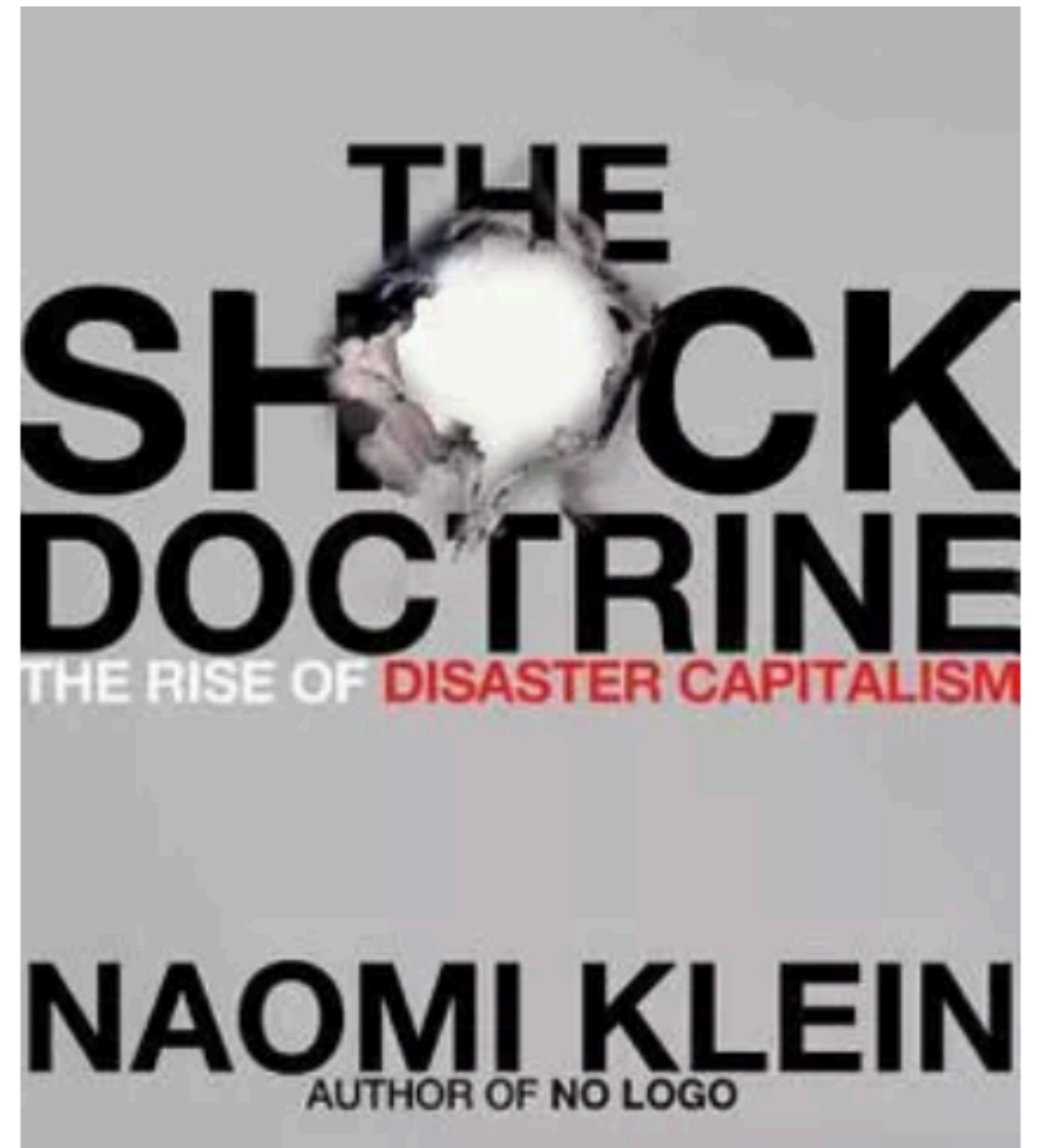




Griffiths , H., & Keirns, N.  
(2015). *Introduction to Sociology*  
2e. Houston: OpenStax.  
Retrieved from  
[https://openstax.org/books/intro-  
duction-sociology-2e/pages/1-  
introduction-to-sociology](https://openstax.org/books/introduction-sociology-2e/pages/1-introduction-to-sociology)

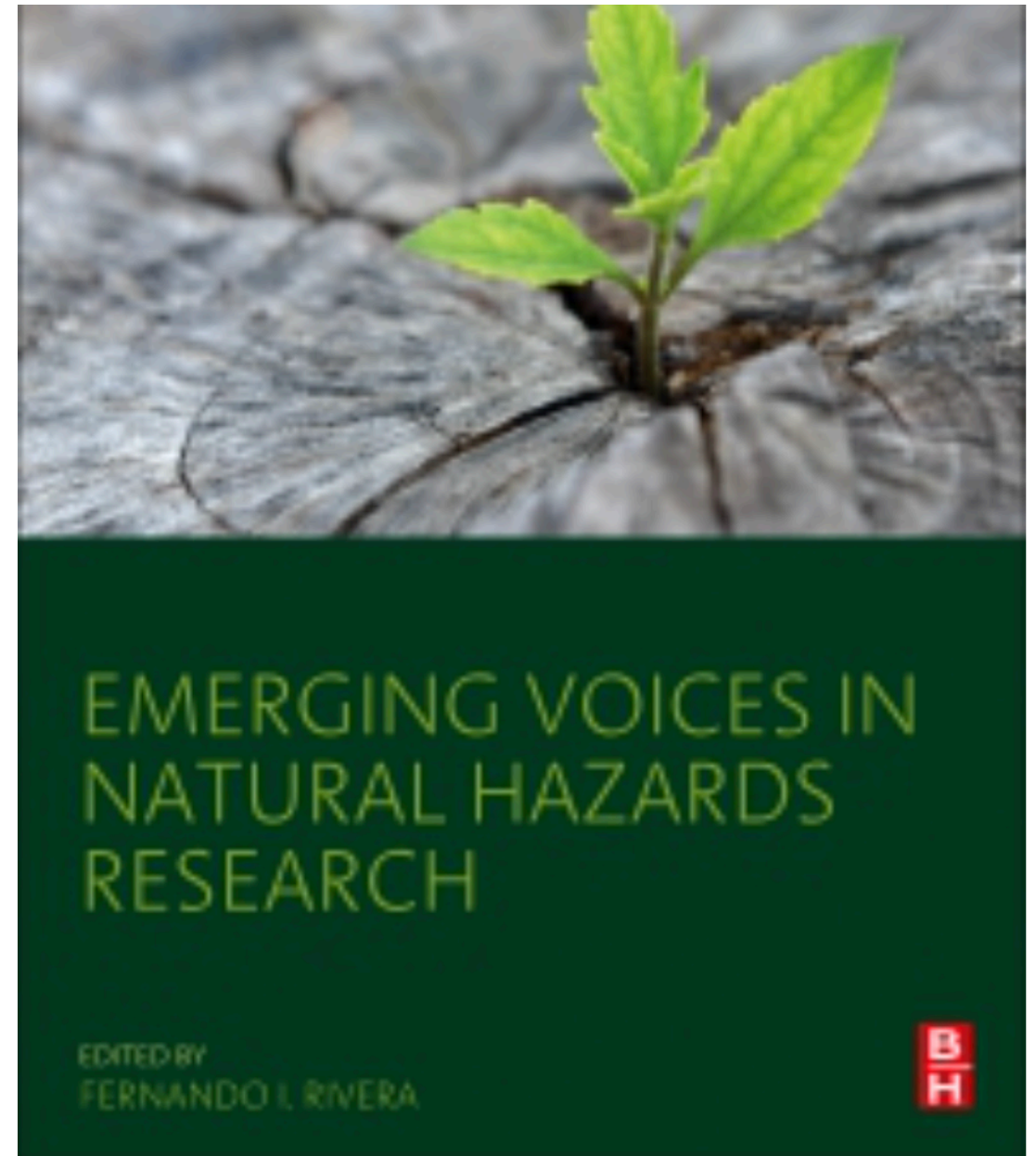


Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. Macmillan.





Rivera, F. I. (Ed.).  
(2019). *Emerging  
Voices in Natural  
Hazards Research*.  
Butterworth-  
Heinemann.

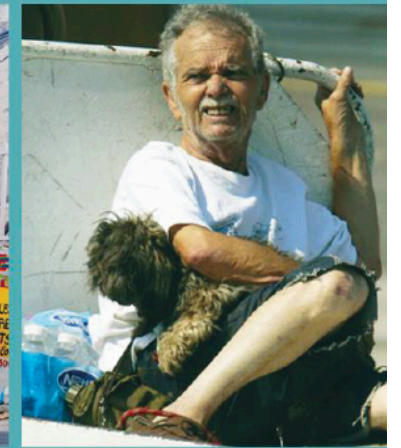
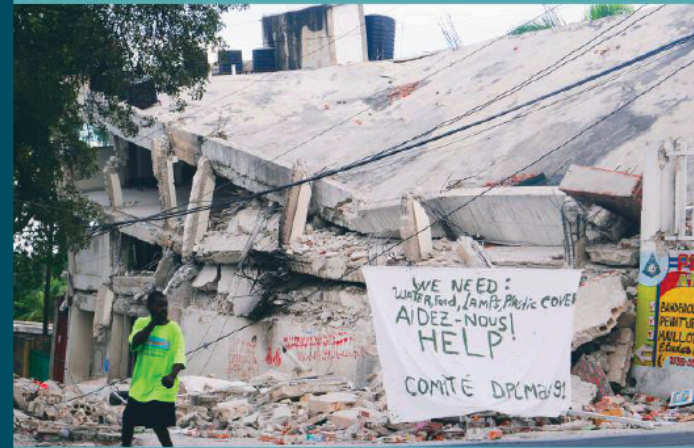




Thomas, D. S., Phillips,  
B. D., Lovekamp, W. E.,  
& Fothergill, A. (Eds.).  
(2013). *Social  
vulnerability to  
disasters*. CRC Press.

# to Disasters

Second Edition



Edited by  
Deborah S.K. Thomas  
Brenda D. Phillips  
William E. Lovekamp

 CRC Press  
Taylor & Francis Group



Tierney, K.  
(2019). *Disasters: A  
sociological approach*.  
John Wiley & Sons.

**DISASTERS**

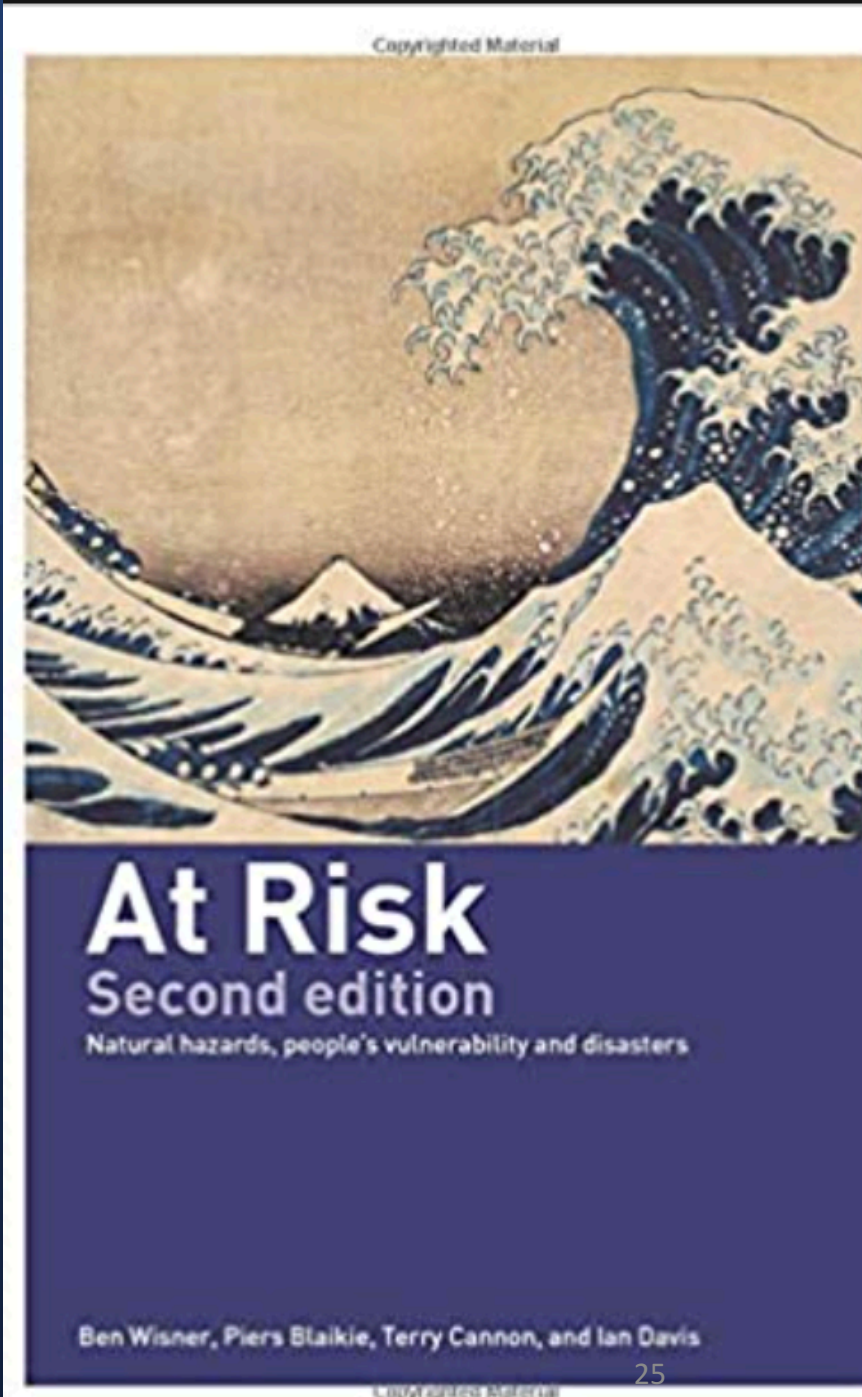
**A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



**KATHLEEN TIERNEY**



Wisner, B., Blaikie, P. M., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., & Davis, I. (2004). *At risk: natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters*. Psychology Press.







## Other resources

- **Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011)**  
[https://youtu.be/28Z\\_D9Grh18](https://youtu.be/28Z_D9Grh18)
- **Arrival (2016)**  
<https://youtu.be/tFMo3UJ4B4g>
- **The Impossible (2012)**  
<https://youtu.be/PaY8EeUYh10>
- **Deepwater Horizon (2016)**  
<https://youtu.be/S-UPJyEHmM0>
- **Cooked: Survival By Zipcode (2020)**  
<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/films/cooked-survival-by-zip-code/>
- **The Shock Doctrine (2009)**  
<https://youtu.be/aL3XGZ5rreE>
- **The Response: How Puertorricans are Restoring Power to the People (2019)**  
<https://youtu.be/gTr46Bh5-Fk>
- **Fire and Blood (2019) TBA**

# Grading

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Forum Entries  
(40%)

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Participation in  
Class (20%)

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Leading a class  
discussion (20%)

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Final Assignment  
(20%)

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Introducing a guest  
speaker (Bonus)



# Policies

These are just reminders of Macalester's Policies regarding academic integrity, assistance for students with financial or mental health needs, disability and accommodations, community health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic and dating, domestic and sexual violence.





# Academic Integrity

(<https://www.maclester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>)

- Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work; violations of academic integrity are serious offenses. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty -- including, for instance, forgery, cheating, and plagiarism -- are subject to disciplinary action.
- *Forgery* includes the alteration of college forms, documents or records, as well as the signing of such forms or documents by someone other than the proper designee.
- *Cheating* is the dishonest or unauthorized use of materials for academic work. Examples of cheating include:
  - Copying another's papers or notes during an exam
  - Talking about a test or looking at another's paper during an exam
  - Altering a graded exam or paper without informing the instructor and resubmitting it for re-grading
  - Gaining unauthorized access to past exams from a course
  - Removing tests from a classroom or office without prior consent
  - Discussing an exam you have taken with other students, either from your class or from another section of the same course, who have yet to take that exam
  - Providing false or exaggerated excuses to postpone due dates
  - Lying to an instructor or college official to improve your grade or to get special privileges
  - Submitting work done in another class without prior permission of both instructors
  - Having another person do your work for a course (including unauthorized collaboration)

- *Plagiarism* is the unacknowledged use of another person's work (words, ideas, data, etc.) in a graded or published piece or in a speech.
- The following are examples of plagiarism:
  - copying all or parts of another person's paper, article, or notes and representing it as your own
  - submitting a paper copied in full or in part from one purchased from a paper writing service or obtained electronically
  - failing to fully cite (author, article title, book or journal, page number, date of publication) each instance where you have incorporated another's ideas or quoted words into your own written or oral work.
- While instances of forgery and cheating are often clear cut, cases of plagiarism can be more complicated. Plagiarism can be intentional, as when a student knowingly submits as one's own work a purchased paper, or a paper that was written entirely or in part by another student. But plagiarism may also be the result of misuse of sources, which occurs when writers cite information incorrectly or incompletely. In this case, the author may make a good faith effort to acknowledge the sources, but because this is a learning process, a student author may make errors in documentation and integrating quotes and paraphrases into their own work. While unintentional, the misuse of sources is still plagiarism. It is very important, therefore, for students to make sure they understand how to properly cite sources, to take advantage of the research and writing assistance provided by staff in the library and the MAX Center, and to confer with their instructors when they are unsure if they are using sources appropriately.

# Disability Statement and Accommodations:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Macalester College works hard to ensure that all facilities and programs are accessible to all students. Accommodations are based on individual need substantiated by the appropriate process. What is reasonable is also determined by what is essential to this course. Any students who believe that they may need accommodations due to disability impacts should contact the Disability Services office by emailing [disabilityservices@macalester.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@macalester.edu), or by calling 651-696-6974 to schedule an appointment to discuss your individual needs. Students should then follow up with me directly to discuss accommodations for this course.



Community health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic (<https://www.macalester.edu/covid-19/return-to-campus/community-commitment/>).

- Our individual and community health depends on our choices and actions. Our ability to stay safer is only as strong as our shared commitment to each other. We are asking each of you—students, staff, and faculty—to be flexible and adopt new behaviors to support the well-being of our community and keep each other as healthy and protected as possible. The elements of our community commitment come from the Minnesota Department of Health and other public health guidance. We each have a role to play in our culture of mutual care, accountability, and safety.
- The coronavirus does not differentiate an individual’s particular identities, characteristics, or roles. Inequitable societal structures, however, have led to disparate impacts, resulting in higher burdens of illness among members of BIPOC communities and other historically marginalized groups. Macalester College reaffirms its commitment to creating a community free of any form of bias, harassment, or discrimination.
- As part of this community’s culture of mutual care and accountability, we all will:
  - Always wear a face covering that covers both nose and mouth when indoors, and outdoors when six-foot physical distancing cannot be maintained; Maintain a physical distance of six feet with people outside of my pod;
  - Wash hands regularly throughout the day or use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren’t readily available;
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with sleeve or elbow;
  - Comply with signage and move through spaces as directed;
  - Clean shared items and surfaces; Use the app provided by the college to conduct a daily health self-check;
  - Stay home if ill or experiencing COVID symptoms; Seek testing when experiencing COVID symptoms;
  - Follow guidelines to isolate, if tested positive, or quarantine, if considered a close contact or awaiting test results;
  - Participate in public health measures such as contact tracing;
  - Complete the Mac Stays Safer training before arriving on campus;
  - Follow posted guidance or specific instructions provided by department or programs (e.g. lab spaces, athletic teams)

# Your Mental Health

(<https://www.macalester.edu/healthandwellness/counseling/>)

- Feeling stressed, anxious, sad, overwhelmed, alone, or sick and achy? Finding it hard to be motivated, meet deadlines or attend class? Having a hard time sleeping, concentrating or retaining information no matter how much you study? Help is available!
- The Laurie Hamre Center for Health & Wellness offers a variety of counseling services to support students in their mental health, including [short-term counseling](#), [wellness groups](#), [care coordination](#), [24-hour phone counseling](#), [drop-in appointments](#), [Let's Talk](#), and [medication management](#). \*Spring 2021 all mental health services will be virtual\*

# Attendance Policy

- Attendance plays an essential role in learning; you are warmly invited, encouraged, and expected to attend all synchronous class/lab meetings (whether in-person or virtual). Attendance will be important not only for your learning, but also for our ability to build a community together and maintain a sense of connection and commitment to one another during this time of imposed physical distance. Your presence in class matters.
- I recognize that there are unavoidable circumstances that sometimes make it impossible for you to attend class. Although I hope it isn't the case, those unavoidable circumstances may be more common during this module given that we are in the midst of a pandemic. If you will not be in class for any reason, it is your responsibility to inform me in advance via email. It is also your responsibility to make up work you missed in your absence. Students with disabilities should discuss their accommodations with me early in the course to work out a plan that aligns with maintaining course expectations and learning goals.



# Participation Policy

- Participation is distinct from attendance and is also an essential part of this course. In-class discussions (in-person or via Zoom), on-line discussion forums, responses to brief ungraded writing assignments, etc. will be factored into your participation grade. Engaging with the (real and virtual, synchronous and asynchronous) classroom space — including by helping to create an environment where all of us can learn and think well about one another — will also be factored into participation.
- It is important to remember that we all have different styles of expression. If you have not been able to participate in a class discussion for any reason but want to demonstrate your active engagement, please send me an email after class with a comment or an idea you had that you would have liked to share, but were not able to during class.
- Students with any concerns, questions, or need for consideration for flexibility should connect with me as soon as possible to determine an appropriate plan.

# Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Statement

<https://www.macalester.edu/titleix/sexualmisconductpolicy/>

- Macalester is committed to providing a safe and open learning and living environment for all students, staff, and faculty. If you (or someone you know) has experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone, and that help and support are available. **Please be aware that as a faculty member, I am a *non-confidential resource*, although I will keep anything you disclose to me *private*.** This means that if I become aware of incidents or allegations of sexual misconduct, I am required to share the matter with the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Title IX Coordinators. This College policy is intended to ensure that you receive the resources and support you need.
- Even as you might be away from campus, or your needs change, resources are available for you if you need support related to sexual and/or relationship abuse. If you would like to contact the Title IX office, Macalester's Title IX Coordinator is available and can assist you with supportive measures and referrals: Phone: 651-696-6258 Email: [titleixcoordinator@macalester.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@macalester.edu) / Incident Report Form: [Macalester Incident Report](#)
- If you would like to talk to someone who would not have to share what you tell them with the Title IX office, *confidential* support resources through Macalester are also available to you: **Free, Urgent, Phone Counseling (Press 2) is available to Macalester students anywhere in the world, 24/7/365.** Speak to a licensed mental health counselor 24 hours a day by calling Hamre Center at 651-696-6275, then press or say option 2 when prompted.
- To make an appointment with one of our counselors or medical providers, call 651-696-6275 or email [health@macalester.edu](mailto:health@macalester.edu)
- To contact support through the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, call 651-696-6298 or email [religiouslife@macalester.edu](mailto:religiouslife@macalester.edu)

# Religious observance

- Students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this module. If you have a religious observance/practice that conflicts with your participation in the course, please contact me before the end of the first week of the module to discuss appropriate accommodations.
- In an effort to respect religious diversity, I request that students who desire to observe a religious holiday during a scheduled class meetings/ class requirements talk to me about reasonable consideration by the end of the second week of the course.



For any questions or  
comments... or to  
converse about the  
meaning of life 😊

[mperezlu@macalester.edu](mailto:mperezlu@macalester.edu)

787-806-8584

