

**COURSE: Accountability in Humanitarian Assistance****LEAD PROFESSOR**

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**TIME AND LOCATION:** Friday 2/3, Saturday 2/4, 9:00am - 5:00pm. Waverly Building, Room 566A.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

It is widely recognized that the humanitarian landscape has shifted over the past few decades, and that more people are vulnerable due to increased threats. At the same time, there are more opportunities than ever to meet the humanitarian needs of people. Multiple actors are capable and willing to respond to humanitarian needs, technological and innovative solutions are available to meet these needs, and host governments – especially those in middle income states – play a greater role in addressing the humanitarian needs of their citizens. In addition, new modes of operating have emerged and the international humanitarian community must continually adapt to incorporate them.

At the same time, in many disaster contexts, too few people know what they are entitled to receive, and are unable actively and meaningfully participate in the planning and delivery of assistance. Since the 2005 S.E. Asian tsunami, accountability within the humanitarian system has been a topic that has garnered much attention. More actors - donors, affected people, governments - are insisting that NGOs and the UN also be held to account to the people they intend to serve. A proliferation of codes, standards and frameworks have emerged to guide humanitarian responders in promoting greater accountability. This trend has gained such momentum, that it is now essentially unquestioned as a driving concept or paradigm for humanitarian action.

This course aims to introduce students to the current challenges and opportunities facing humanitarians as they work amid the complex realities of today's crises. Over the two days the course will cover today's main debates, innovations, challenges and new ways of effectively responding to humanitarian crises, focusing on the contemporary significance of accountability for humanitarian response.

**PREREQUISITES**

None.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The course is designed to provide students the opportunity to think critically about some of the most pressing issues of today's humanitarian landscape. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Describe current challenges and dilemmas frequently encountered when operating in various humanitarian contexts
- Understand the origins of the accountability debate and the historical events that have led to greater demand for accountability in humanitarian action;
- Identify various accountability mechanisms and techniques practiced by humanitarian actors in programming response to complex emergencies

- Analyze the benefits and drawbacks to current innovations in humanitarian practice such as cash transfers

### **ASSESSMENT AND GRADING POLICY**

Students' conceptual understanding and practical knowledge will be assessed through responses to questions and in class exercises, participation in class, and a final paper.

Student grades will be based on:

- **Class Participation - 50%**  
Half of a student's grade will be based on participation in classroom discussions and exercises. Class attendance and contributions to class discussion and group exercises are mandatory.
- **Group Presentations/ assignments- 30%**  
Throughout the course students will be expected to present in groups on a certain topic. This will be either developed during class or prepared as an outside assignment.
- **Final Paper – 20%**  
Students are asked to write a final paper addressing a critical issue discussed during class. Your paper should reflect the results of in depth research, and it should convey your own analysis and conclusions. The paper should be no longer than 5 pages in length, including a proper bibliography (if needed). All pages should be numbered. Further guidelines will be distributed in class.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Students are expected to keep up with readings, attend each lecture and participate both in class and group work. The readings will be distributed before class either on line or printed and passed out.
- All assignments are to be submitted on time unless there is a documented compelling health or personal problem.
- Attendance is mandatory for the full duration of the class. As this is a condensed class students are expected to be present for all coursework.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

Course concepts, skills, and field lessons are taught through lectures, class discussion, in-class exercises, video presentations, guest speakers, examination of research findings and program evaluations.

*There is a no-laptop/phone policy in class as the structure of the class depends on active participation and engagement. Please bring your laptops to do in-class research and prepare presentations, but during lectures and discussion, these are not to be used. All lectures will be shared and any other notes can be taken by hand.*

### **READINGS**

#### **Required:**

- Leaving No One Behind: Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Age of the Sustainable Development Goals (Summary version), OCHA 2015 (Found on course site)
- Better Humanitarian – Development Cooperation for Sustainable Results on the Ground, Center on International Cooperation 2016
- How the Red Cross Raised half a billion Dollars for Haiti and Built 6 Homes, ProPublica

- [Concerning Accountability in Humanitarian Action](#), Austin Davis, Humanitarian Practice Network, 2007
- [Doing Cash Differently – How Cash Transfers can Transform Humanitarian Aid](#), Overseas Development Institute, 2015
- [Humanitarian Crises, emergency preparedness and response: the role of business and the private sector](#), Humanitarian Policy Group, 2014

**If you're interested in learning more:**

- [World Humanitarian Summit 'One Humanity: Shared Responsibility](#), Secretary General's report to World Humanitarian Summit, 2016
- [Planning from the Future: Is the Humanitarian System Fit For Purpose?](#), Kings College, 2016
- [President Trump's Humanitarian Agenda](#), IRIN News, 2016
- [Trump Team's Queries About Africa Point to Skepticism About Aid](#), New York Times, 2017
- [Humanitarian Exchange Special Feature: Accountability](#), Overseas Development Institute
- [What people in humanitarian crises need is cash, not commodities](#), The Guardian, 2016
- [State of evidence on humanitarian cash transfers](#), Overseas Development Institute, 2015
- [Disaster do gooders can actually hinder help](#), NBC News, 2010
- [How to help Nepal Survivors](#), Slate, 2015
- [Please don't send your old shoes to the Philippines](#), Slate, 2013
- [Are You Listening Now?](#) CDAC Network, 2016

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

- [World Humanitarian Summit: Key Documents](#) Lists all of the documents submitted leading up to the WHS and the outcomes, including core commitments, that followed.
- [Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action \(ALNAP\)](#) Invaluable resource for reports, evaluations, assessments related to all humanitarian topics.
- [Cash Learning Partnership \(CaLP\)](#) Resources related to the use of cash during humanitarian response.
- [IRIN](#) News source on humanitarian issues
- [Humanitarian Practice Network](#): Independent think tank of the Overseas Development Institute for humanitarian policy and practitioners.
- [CDAC Network](#): Organization devoted to improving communication with people affected by humanitarian crisis