UNIB10013 Catastrophes as Turning Points

Credit Points:	12.50
Level:	1 (Undergraduate)
Dates & Locations:	This subject is not offered in 2014. Standard
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: Two 1-hour lectures per week for 12 weeks and eleven 1-hour tutorials scheduled across the semester. Total Time Commitment: estimated as 120 hours across the semester.
Prerequisites:	None
Corequisites:	None
Recommended Background Knowledge:	None
Non Allowed Subjects:	None
Core Participation Requirements:	For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Description, Subject Objectives, Generic Skills and Assessment Requirements of this entry.The University is dedicated to provide support to those with special requirements. Further details on the disability support scheme can be found at the Disability Liaison Unit website: http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/
Contact:	**Dr Michael Arnold (http://www.findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person14731)** **mvarnold@unimelb.edu.au (mailto:mvarnold@unimelb.edu.au)**
Subject Overview:	There is much to be learned from failure, and in recent history there has been no shortage of examples of human-made catastrophes - the Bhopal Chemical spill, theTuskegeesyphilis experiment, the Challenger explosion, the Thalidomide disaster, the release of Cane Toads, theChernobylnuclear meltdown, the collapse of the West Gate bridge. Through a series of case studies, drawn from different disciplines and from different Faculties, students will appreciate the educative value of human-made catastrophe. Each may be seen as a turning point in our understanding of the world, and our place in it. Students will critically examine the dimensions of failure, the contested accounts of causes and explanations of failure, and will assess the professional, political, institutional, and public responses to failure. Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to convincingly interpret and respond to situations where things go badly wrong through an understanding of: # the educative value of human-made catastrophe; # the contexts in which things go wrong; # the range of factors and causes that are implicated in catastrophe; # the theoretical grounds upon which causal claims are made, and are contested; # critical assessments of common responses to human-made catastrophe.
Learning Outcomes:	Students who successfully complete this subject will.. # develop an appreciation of the educative value of failure for our understanding of technical, scientific and economic systems. # demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate claims about the causes of failure. # demonstrate the ability to convincingly critique responses to failure. # develop a sound knowledge of the meaning of failure, the dimensions of failure, and the terms in which failure is said to occur. # develop a sound knowledge and understanding of iconic examples of failure. # develop an understanding of the methods and analytical skills required to conduct a small scale case study.

Assessment:	One 1500 word essay presenting a critical account of the causes of catastrophe and the value of catastrophe in theoretical terms (30%), due week 5. A tutorial paper using the current week's case study, providing an account of the causes of the catastrophe, or the value of the catastrophe (20%) Due weeks 5-12. A 2000 word case study using a case not covered in the readings, providing an account of the causes and the value of the catastrophe (50%) due at the end of semester. This subject has a minimum hurdle requirement of 75% tutorial attendance. Regular participation in tutorials is required. Assessment submitted late without an approved extension will be penalised at 10% per day. After 5 working days late assessment will not be marked. In-class tasks missed without approval will not be marked. All pieces of written work must be submitted to pass this subject.
Prescribed Texts:	Subject readings will be available online.
Recommended Texts:	Wider Reading HortonForestW. and Dennis Lewis (Eds.) *Great information disasters: twelve prime examples of how information mismanagement led to human misery, political misfortune and business failure*.London,England, 1991. Landauer, Thomas. *The Trouble with Computers*, London, MIT Press, 1997. James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed.* New Haven:YaleUniversityPress, 1998. Tenner, E. *Why things bite back: technology and the revenge of unintended consequences*, New York: Knopf, 1996. Winner, Langdon. *The Whale and the Reactor*, Chicago:UniversityofChicagoPress, 1986. Lyytinen, K. and R. Hirschheim 1987. *Information Systems Failures: A Survey and Classification of the Empirical Literature*.OxfordSurveys in Information Technology (4): 257-309. Hall 1980. *Great Planning Disasters*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Perrow, C. 1984. *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies*.New York: Basic Books. Vaughan, D. 1996. *The Challenger Launch Decision : Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA*.Chicago:UniversityofChicagoPress. Joyce Fortune and Geoff Peters (2005) *Information Systems: Achieving Success by Avoiding Failure*. Wiley. Andrew Hopkins (2002) *Lessons from Longford: The Esso Gas Plant Explosion.* CCH Australia Ltd.
Breadth Options:	This subject potentially can be taken as a breadth subject component for the following courses: # **Bachelor of Arts (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2014/B-ARTS)** # **Bachelor of Biomedicine (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2014/B-BMED)** # **Bachelor of Commerce (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2014/B-COM)** # **Bachelor of Environments (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2014/B-ENVS)** # **Bachelor of Music (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2014/B-MUS)** # **Bachelor of Science (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2014/B-SCI)** # **Bachelor of Engineering (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2014/B-ENG)** You should visit **learn more about breadth subjects (http://breadth.unimelb.edu.au/breadth/info/index.html)** and read the breadth requirements for your degree, and should discuss your choice with your student adviser, before deciding on your subjects.
Fees Information:	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees
Generic Skills:	Students who successfully complete this course will # have developed skills in critical thinking and analysis. # have developed research skills. # appreciate the value and the limitations of case studies. # be able to think in theoretical terms.

	# be able to understand the importance of social, ethical and cultural contexts. # be able to communicate knowledge intelligibly and economically. # have developed written communication skills.
Links to further information:	https://breadth.unimelb.edu.au/breadth/info/index.html