

UNIB10013 Catastrophes as Turning Points

Credit Points:	12.5
Level:	1 (Undergraduate)
Dates & Locations:	2015, Parkville This subject commences in the following study period/s: Semester 2, Parkville - Taught on campus.
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: 170 hours
Prerequisites:	None
Corequisites:	None
Recommended Background Knowledge:	None
Non Allowed Subjects:	None
Core Participation Requirements:	<p><p>For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the Disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Student Support and Engagement Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Overview, Learning Outcomes, Assessment and Generic Skills sections of this entry.</p> <p>It is University policy to take all reasonable steps to minimise the impact of disability upon academic study, and reasonable adjustments will be made to enhance a student's participation in the University's programs. Students who feel their disability may impact on meeting the requirements of this subject are encouraged to discuss this matter with a Faculty Student Adviser and Student Equity and Disability Support: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability</p></p>
Coordinator:	Dr Darrin Durant
Contact:	Darrin Durant ddurant@unimelb.edu.au
Subject Overview:	<p>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, the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, the Challenger explosion, the Thalidomide disaster, the release of Cane Toads, the Chernobyl nuclear 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # 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:	<p>Students who successfully complete this subject will..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # 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:	<p>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.</p>
Prescribed Texts:	<p>Subject readings will be available online.</p>
Recommended Texts:	<p>Wider Reading</p> <p>HortonForestW. and Dennis Lewis (Eds.) <i>Great information disasters: twelve prime examples of how information mismanagement led to human misery, political misfortune and business failure.</i> London, England, 1991.</p> <p>Landauer, Thomas. <i>The Trouble with Computers</i>, London, MIT Press, 1997.</p> <p>James C. Scott, <i>Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed.</i> New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.</p> <p>Tenner, E. <i>Why things bite back: technology and the revenge of unintended consequences</i>, New York: Knopf, 1996.</p> <p>Winner, Langdon. <i>The Whale and the Reactor</i>, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.</p> <p>Lyytinen, K. and R. Hirschheim 1987. <i>Information Systems Failures: A Survey and Classification of the Empirical Literature.</i> Oxford Surveys in Information Technology (4): 257-309.</p> <p>Hall 1980. <i>Great Planning Disasters.</i> London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.</p> <p>Perrow, C. 1984. <i>Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies.</i> New York: Basic Books.</p> <p>Vaughan, D. 1996. <i>The Challenger Launch Decision : Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA.</i> Chicago: University of Chicago Press.</p> <p>Joyce Fortune and Geoff Peters (2005) <i>Information Systems: Achieving Success by Avoiding Failure.</i> Wiley.</p> <p>Andrew Hopkins (2002) <i>Lessons from Longford: The Esso Gas Plant Explosion.</i> CCH Australia Ltd.</p>
Breadth Options:	<p>This subject potentially can be taken as a breadth subject component for the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Bachelor of Arts (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/B-ARTS) # Bachelor of Biomedicine (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/B-BMED) # Bachelor of Commerce (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/B-COM) # Bachelor of Environments (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/B-ENVS) # Bachelor of Music (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/B-MUS) # Bachelor of Science (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/B-SCI) # Bachelor of Engineering (https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2015/B-ENG) <p>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.</p>
Fees Information:	<p>Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees</p>

**Links to further
information:**

<https://breadth.unimelb.edu.au/breadth/info/index.html>