DISASTER AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

A Project-Based Learning Course in Salt Lake City, Utah and Yurihonjo City, Akita

SUMMARY

CRN: 5-7 for AIU students and 5-7 for UofU students (must be balanced numbers)

Period: 7 weeks (3 weeks in the U.S., 1 week travel, 3 weeks in Japan)

Offered: Summer 2014, May 19 – July 4

Credits: 6 for AIU students and 6 for UofU students

Lectures (30 hours: 15 hours in US and 15 hours in Japan – 2 credits)

Field activities (60 hours: 30 hours in US and 30 hours in Japan – 2 credits)

Evaluation seminars and presentations (30 hours: 15 hours in US and 15 hours in Japan – 2 credits)

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

Dr. Lina Svedin, University of Utah
Dr. Ron Hrebenar, Akita International University

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

This class is offered as part of AIU’s Project Based Learning (hereinafter called PBL; this acronym also implies the meaning of “Problem-Based Learning”) program under the “Re-Inventing Japan Project” which is a five-years grant funded by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The courses under this program will be offered either using the exchange program with the U.S.-based affiliated universities or as an individual AIU course.

PBL was originally developed and is being widely implemented in Medical School programs where students need to learn hands-on knowledge to diagnose patients’ diseases, and acquire the skills required to implement appropriate treatments for the disease. Those students are typically given a problem(s) and/or symptoms by an instructor. Students are first expected to consider the extent of their prior knowledge about the problem(s) – and to decide what further data are required in order to tackle the problem(s). Then, students are required to come up with answers (diagnosis and treatments) through further data collection and a series of intensive discussions with group members. In addition to medical science, PBL is also applied to natural science and social science programs. PBL has also been applied to various liberal arts undergraduate programs in the US, Canada, Korea, and many other countries in order to let students acquire integrated skills which are often difficult in the ordinary lecture-based classes.
There are some important principles to PBL which AIU is offering in collaboration with the partner universities: 1) The course is planned and facilitated by a team of faculty members from AIU and partner universities in US and Japan, 2) PBL is carried out by groups which consists of both Japanese and international students, 3) faculty members assigns the group a problem relevant to the particular community or broader rural society in Akita (and district in U.S. in case the course will be provided as part of the exchange program), 4) students examine the extent of their prior knowledge with regard to the problem - and decide what further information are required in order to tackle the problem(s), 5) students take the initiative in proceeding on understanding and solving the problem(s), 6) students are expected to find an answer/ make suggestions about the problem, 7) faculty members play a role as facilitators in PBL, 8) students are assigned various tasks within the group and these tasks are sometimes rotated between group members, and 9) students are expected to report their findings to the community (Please note that the underlined sections represent unique features of AIU’s PBL). It is expected that all if not most of these principles are reflected in the course design.

Several expected outcomes of PBL include: enhancing students’ intercultural communication/negotiation skills, integration capacity through applying theories/ concepts they have learned heretofore to a particular problem, coordination skills to integrate various opinions to find an answer/solutions, team work spirit, and leadership.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Preparedness for and management of natural and man-made disasters is critical to the health and prosperity of modern communities. Increased interdependencies, information flows and tight coupling of complex social and technological systems is making disaster mitigation and management challenging. Communities such as Yurihonjo (Japan) and Salt Lake City (USA) share the challenge of facing a wide range of potential disasters, risks and organizing challenges. Among them are earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, chemical and biological disasters, typhoons, wild fires, blizzard. Management challenges they share include identifying and communicating risks, mitigating and preventing acute disasters, managing materialized crises and disaster including evacuations, assisting vulnerable populations, communicating with other organizations and the public, facilitating accountability and bringing traumatic events to closure.

In an event of the disasters especially with large scale ones, several government agencies at different levels (e.g., state, city and town) play major roles in the prevention, mitigation, evacuation and closure of the disasters. Close collaboration between these agencies including vertical and horizontal cooperation would be the key to effectively operate these measures. In addition, these
public services at municipality level needs to take into account various situations, e.g., geography, distribution of housings, and demography including age composition of the communities. On the other hand, the success of these public service measures relies heavily on how the community members react toward these events as they are often the ones to take the initial responses and conducting day-to-day precautionary measures on the disasters.

This course is designed explicitly to promote analytical approaches to complex policy problems, cross cultural understanding and collaboration of value and perception driven issues in the two countries. A key strategy will be the integration of AIU and UofU students in a team-building project based learning experience.

The whole course is designed to let students think, analyze and plan “fictional” disaster management plans of Salt Lake City and Yurihonjo City from the perspectives of citizens. The procedure is similar in US and Japan. The Module 1 will be fully devoted to intensive lectures to provide basic backgrounds on various aspects of disaster and crisis management. In the Module 2, pairs of Japanese and US students will be formed and be allotted different communities at different geographical and population settings which they will be asked to think in their respective positions. Students take the initiative to plan and prepare for the interviews to relevant government agencies from their allotted positions. Then in the Module 3, students will develop the management plans based on the obtained knowledge, result of the interviews, and from the perspectives of respective positions. Finally, students will integrate the views from different positions into single management plan which may require intensive cooperation and negotiation.

Through this exercise of taking virtually different positions, considering from different aspects on disaster and crisis management, comparing between the two municipalities in US and Japan, and intensive group works, students are expected to achieve various objectives of PBL and at the same time obtain in-depth understanding and applied skills of disaster and crisis management.

Various learning activities will be included in the course:

- Team-building and group work exercises
- Case study analysis and crisis simulation
- Class room lectures and small group analysis and application
- Collection of data on disaster and crisis preparation, planning and response
- Field visits with governmental organizations and leaders
- Team presentations of research findings
- Development of research report
OBJECTIVES

Student learning goals

➢ To acquire ability to think from different perspectives and positions.
➢ To acquire cross-cultural and group communication, coordination, negotiation and integration skills.
➢ To understand key elements of risk analysis and mitigation planning, the organization and management of disaster and crisis response, crisis leadership and communication, as well as post-disaster evaluation and organizational learning.
➢ To acquire ability to systematically analyze and portray context based difference in disaster perceptions, organizational culture and management styles.
➢ To understand environmental and structural differences based on culture as well as political and administrative traditions.

Expected outcomes

➢ Develop and pose research oriented and citizens' perspective questions during field visits
➢ Develop and practice skills during applied class activities
➢ Group presentation
➢ Group research report

GRADING COMPONENTS

➢ Quiz (individual grade)
➢ Class critiques of oral presentations (group grade)
➢ Final research report (group grade)
➢ Class participation (individual grade)
➢ Individual written work (individual grade)

READING MATERIALS


**SCHEDULE**

Students who are taking this course are expected to do some reading assignments before this course starts to get prepared and make the most of the limited time of the course.

First three modules take place in Akita-Ken, Japan. Course begins May 19, 2014

**MODULE 1 (Japan): Lectures, Group Discussions and Quiz (week 1)**

Lecture and quiz

- Overview and history of disaster management in Japan (Dr. Akira Nakamura – Meiji University)
- The Great East Japan Earthquake (Dr. Naruo Uehara – Tohoku University)
- Crisis leadership (Crisis communication II)
- Crisis management ethics

**MODULE 2 (Japan): Field research (week 2)**

Field visit to different agencies and stakeholder groups in Yurihonjo City and allocation of student groups to agencies/stakeholders

- Planning and preparing for research questions in the field research

Interviews to relevant government agencies

Group interview with the community representatives

**MODULE 3 (Japan): Group work, material assembly and presentation (week 3)**

Development of fictional disaster management plan in Yurihonjo City
- Risk Inventory and Prioritization activity
- Preparedness and Mitigation Communication Strategy activity
- Designing an Important Message to the Public and preparing for broadcast activity
- Cooperation by Design activity

Documentation and material assembly

Presentation to the government representative(s) in Yurihonjo City

Both UU and AIU student groups travel to Salt Lake City, Utah, USA in week 4: June 8-15, 2014

MODULE 4 (US): Lectures, Group Discussions and Quiz (week 5)

Lectures and quiz
- Overview and history of disaster management in US and Salt Lake City
- Risk management and disaster mitigation (Crisis communication I)
- Crisis cooperation and coordination (Crisis communication II)

MODULE 5 (US): Field research (Week 6)

Field visit to different agencies and stakeholder groups in Salt Lake City and allocation of student groups to agencies/stakeholders
- Planning and preparing for research questions in the field research

Interviews to relevant government agencies

Group interviews with the stakeholders

MODULE 6 (US): Group work, material assembly and presentation (week 7)

Development of fictional disaster management plan in Salt Lake City
- Risk Inventory and Prioritization activity
- Preparedness and Mitigation Communication Strategy activity
- Designing an Important Message to the Public and preparing for broadcast activity
- Cooperation by Design activity

Documentation and material assembly

Presentation to the government representative(s) in Salt Lake City

Course Ends. Sat July 5, 2014.