

COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT--FALL 2007

GEOG 507

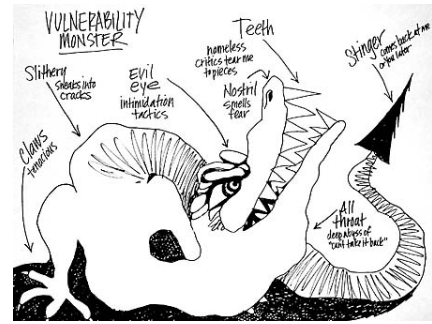
Human-Environment Seminar

Vulnerability and Adaptation to Environmental Change

Instructor: Brent Yarnal

Tentative Course Time & Place:

2:00-3:15 p.m., Monday & Wednesday, 319 Walker



Vulnerability is a much debated, but often poorly understood concept in human-environment research. Despite disagreements over exactly what the term means, the human-environment research community's focus on vulnerability has shifted attention from simple assessments of environmental stressors (e.g., sea-level rise or hurricanes) and their impacts to a more complex, nuanced examination of the natural system or social system under stress and its ability to respond to the stress.

A growing focus of the human-environment research community is adaptation. Societies, organizations, and individuals have adjusted their behavior in response to past environmental changes, and many are now facing the need to adapt to changing environmental conditions. In the past, adaptation was reactive, but today it is anticipatory of future conditions, thereby altering our understanding of the term.

Vulnerability and adaptation are linked concepts—one of the determinants of vulnerability is the capacity of a person, group, or place to adapt to environmental change. The human-environment literature is increasingly acknowledging this tight coupling.

Thus, GEOG 507 will explore many facets of vulnerability and adaptation and their coupled relationship. The course will compare understandings of vulnerability and adaptation from various perspectives. It will pay special attention to the geographical factors involved in the vulnerability or adaptation of places.

GEOG 507 will revolve around daily readings and student-led discussions. Each student will be responsible for: (1) reading one paper per class meeting; (2) leading at least two discussion sessions; (3) writing three 10-page papers—on vulnerability, adaptation, and a topic of personal interest related to vulnerability or adaptation; and (4) making a 15- to 20-minute presentation on the personal paper.

Prerequisites. Graduate students with diverse academic backgrounds are encouraged to enroll.

The class meeting time will be established at the first meeting of the course. If you cannot make the first meeting, email the instructor and let him know when you can make it between 10:00 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays.

For more information, please contact:

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