



Full Syllabus



Course Title	
Debriefing and organizational learning	
Lecturer	
Dr. Daniel Beaudoin	
Semester	
Spring	
Course requirements	
Attendance in all the classes (a minimum of 75% of the classes) Present (in small student groups) case studies of 20 minutes (30%) Write and submit a final take-home exam (70%)	
Final grade components	
1) Take-home exam - 70%, 2) Student group presentations – 30%	
Course schedule	
Class no. / Date	Subject and Requirements (assignments, reading materials, tasks, etc.)
1	Debriefing and learning in organizations – theory and practice
2	The challenges to organizational learning
3	Debriefing approaches and models (humanitarian aid and disaster response, for profit corporations, public sector, military)
4	<i>International Humanitarian aid</i>
5	Accountability mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the humanitarian sector
6	Analysis: Complex humanitarian crisis; the Syrian conflict Students class presentation
7	<i>Disaster response and recovery</i>
8	How to design a disaster response After-Action Review (AAR)
9	Analysis: AAR and lessons learned in disaster fire response (FEMA) Students class presentation
10	<i>Corporate business for-profit organizations</i>
11	Analysis: NASA, Xerox Students class presentation
12	Implementation of lessons learned and innovation
13	Implementation of lessons learned and innovation, summary of course



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Required course reading

Class 1

Boston University (NA) Experiential learning, *Center for Teaching and Learning*, retrieved January 9, 2023 from <https://www.bu.edu/ctl/guides/experiential-learning/>

Class 2

Donahue, K. A. & Tuohy, V. R. (2006) Lessons We Don't Learn: A Study of the Lessons of Disasters, why we repeat them and how we can learn from them, *Homeland Security Affairs*, Vol. 2, 2. Retrieved 12 November, 2021 from <http://www.hsaj.org>

Rudolph, J., Simon, R., Dufresne, R. and Raemer, D. (2006). There's no such thing as "nonjudgmental" debriefing: A theory and method for debriefing with good judgment. *Simulation in Healthcare: The Journal of the Society for Simulation in Healthcare*, 1(1), 49-55.

Class 3

Sundheim, D. (2015). Debriefing: A simple tool to help your team tackle tough problems. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved 25 September, 2021 from <https://hbr.org/2015/07/debriefing-a-simple-tool-to-help-your-team-tackle-tough-problems>

Miller, L. J., (n/a). Conducting a debriefing. Smith College School for Social Work. Retrieved 16 November, 2021 from https://ssw.smith.edu/sites/ssw/files/faculty_files/miller_files/miller_debriefing.pdf

Class 4

Bradol, J. H. (2007, May), Humanitarian action and political action; Don't confuse the two. An Interview with the president of Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières in France. Retrieved 2 January, 2012, from <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/article.cfm?id=2054&cat=ideas-opinions>

Barnett, M. & Snyder, J. (1998). The grand strategies of humanitarianism. In Barnett, M. & Weiss G. T. (Eds.). *Humanitarianism in question; Politics, power, ethics*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca. Retrieved 24 February, 2014 from <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/tau/docDetail.action?docID=10468047>

Class 5

SPHERE (na). Setting standards for humanitarian action. Retrieved 3 November, 2021 from <https://spherestandards.org/>

Ramalingam, B (2006). Tools for knowledge and learning: A guide for development and humanitarian organizations, *Overseas Development Project*. Retrieved 11 January, 2023 from [LINK](#)

Class 6

OCHA (2016). Evaluation of OCHA response to the Syria crisis. Retrieved 12 December, 2021 from https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OCHA%20Syria%20Evaluation%20Report_FINAL.pdf

Class 7

Asghar, S., Alahakoon, D., & Churilov, L. (2006). A Comprehensive Conceptual Model for Disaster Management.



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Class 8

USAID (2003). *After action review technical guidance*. Retrieved 11 December, 2021 from https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadf360.pdf

Morrison, J.E., & Meliza, LL. (1999). Foundations of the After-Action Review Process. *U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences*. Special Report 42. 1999. Retrieved 24 December, 2021 from https://www.cebma.org/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-the-after_action_review.pdf

Class 9

FEMA (2015). *Operational lessons learned in fire response*, US Fire Administration. Retrieved 16 January, 2023 from <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/operational-lessons-learned-in-disaster-response>

Class 10

David Garvin (1993). Building a learning organization, *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved 15 January, 2023 from <https://hbr.org/1993/07/building-a-learning-organization>

Stacey Dietsch et al (2020). Is your organization harnessing the proven power of learning? *McKinsey Organizational Group*. Retrieved 12 January, 2023 from <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-organization-blog/is-your-organization-harnessing-the-proven-power-of-learning>

Class 11

Xerox (NA) Five simple steps to problem solving. Retrieved 11 January, 2023 from <https://www.xerox.com/en-us/office/insights/problem-solving-strategies>

Eric Preston James (2007). A case study of NASA's Columbia strategy, MA thesis. Retrieved 13 January, 2023 from <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc5161/>

Optional course reading

Comments

Course description

Meaningful learning processes are critical for organizations to implement their mandates and programs effectively. Students in this course will learn to identify how debriefing and organizational learning is conducted in three areas of operation; 1) international humanitarian aid organizations, 2) disaster response and recovery, and 3) for-profit business organizations. Students will develop a critical approach to the manner in which organizations debrief and learn in these areas, and the challenges that they face in the process, and how they choose to solve them. The learning experience in class will be immersive and case study driven.



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Course objectives

Learn about the contribution of debriefing and organizational learning as tools for improving the effectiveness of organizations.

Engage with the debriefing and organizational learning methodologies in the 1) international humanitarian aid organizations, 2) disaster response and recovery, and 3) for-profit business organizations.

Identify the factors, both external and internal to the organizations that constrain their ability to learn meaningfully, and to implement change.