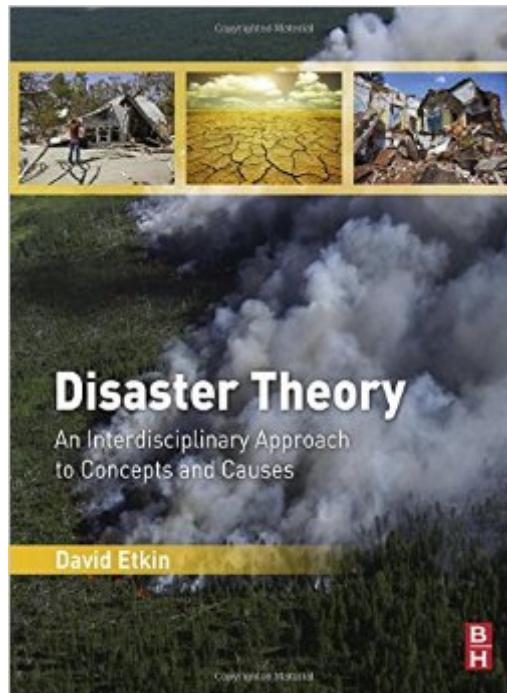


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# Disaster Theory: An Interdisciplinary Approach To Concepts And Causes



## Synopsis

Disaster Theory: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Concepts and Causes offers the theoretical background needed to understand what disasters are and why they occur. Drawing on related disciplines, including sociology, risk theory, and seminal research on disasters and emergency management, Disaster Theory clearly lays out the conceptual framework of the emerging field of disaster studies. Tailored to the needs of advanced undergraduates and graduate students, this unique text also provides an ideal capstone for students who have already been introduced to the fundamentals of emergency management. Disaster Theory emphasizes the application of critical thinking in understanding disasters and their causes by synthesizing a wide range of information on theory and practice, including input from leading scholars in the field. Offers the first cohesive depiction of disaster theory. Incorporates material from leading thinkers in the field, as well as student exercises and critical thinking questions, making this a rich resource for advanced courses. Written from an international perspective and includes case studies of disasters and hazards from around the world for comparing the leading models of emergency response. Challenges the reader to think critically about important questions in disaster management from various points of view.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I purchased this book expecting to get an overview of disaster theory, with a particular interest in obtaining some clarification on the concepts employed in the discipline. Before the book was launched I thought Etkin had the ambition of unifying and clearing up the conceptual field in an effort

to create a field of disaster studies that is less fragmented. At best I hoped he would address what the name of the discipline should be. However, this book is very introductory, and I cannot recommend it for any higher education purposes due to its complete lack of reflection and analysis and its total failure in addressing the issues promised in the book's description ("Disaster Theory clearly lays out the conceptual framework of the emerging field of disaster studies")

I have had the privilege of being involved in the design and delivery of emergency management higher education curriculum in the United States for more than twenty years. Emergency management curriculum has evolved from having very few textbooks and scholarly articles to draw from to an explosion of material now available. Professor David Etkin has developed a standout text that not only provides foundational information but does so in such a way as to actively engage students to gain a deeper understanding of the material, encouraging them to contemplate and learn more, rather than simply absorb what is given. The inclusion of questions to ponder, student exercises and projects, and recommended books and readings for each chapter create a climate for active learning, emphasizing the importance of what's being learned and how it can be applied. The capstone activity or pinnacle of his approach is the Workshop on Principles of Disaster Management. While a useful activity for students to clarify and debate their understanding of important principles, the process used is an important tool that these future practitioners can take with them to their various work settings and replicate.

Emergency management education, both pre and post professional, has just been enriched. The text by David Etkin is more than must reading. Indeed, emergency managers now have an important new tool to use in their efforts as community change agents. In whole or in part, this book will help the general public and, public safety personnel, and policy makers understand why disaster policy too often is short sighted and poorly implemented. Disasters produce both winners and losers, but most lack the analytical skill to understand why. Etkin's work is transformative, both for the multiple fields of study that nibble at the edges of disaster and the individuals trapped in social structures that too often fail. It merits widespread attention. • (Thomas E. Drabek, University of Denver, Emeritus Professor, author, *The Human Side of Disaster*, 2013.)

Professor Etkin's book is an impressive work of scholarship that makes an important contribution to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in disaster studies. The book contains thoughtful student exercises, discussion questions, further readings, case studies and a workshop on disaster

management principles. Digital assets are also available to instructors. Further, because the book is detailed, interdisciplinary and reflects a broad historical perspective, it could become a significant general reference in disaster management research. Alan Diduck, Department of Environmental Studies & Sciences, The University of Winnipeg

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