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American Public University System
The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

School of Public Service and Health
Course Number: EDMG698
Course Name: Comprehensive Examination in Emergency & Disaster Management

Credit Hours: 0
Length of Course: 8 weeks
Prerequisite: Completion of all MA in Emergency and Disaster Management or Homeland Security course work

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Course Description (Catalog)

EDMG698 Separate Comprehensive Examination (0 hours)
Comprehensive final examination for students in the Master of Arts in Emergency Management program. The "Comprehensive Final Exam" is tailored specifically to each program and must be taken after students have completed 36 hours of study (i.e. during the semester following the final course) and successfully completed before the award of a degree.

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Course Scope

The Emergency and Disaster Management degree is designed to provide students with graduate level knowledge and associated critical thinking/decision making involved in planning, management, relief, and recovery for, in, and from public crises. As a core of study, students will be exposed to the history, theory, planning, management, response, relief, recovery,
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Included in the curriculum are natural, technical, and human-induced crises. This comprehensive exam will require the student to answer questions that require analysis and synthesis, generally crossing two or more courses in each question. The questions will also seek to allow the student to show a mastery of practice and theory working in concert.

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Course Objectives

Students may be tested on any of the required/core learning objectives (outcomes) for the MA in Emergency and Disaster Management learning objectives. Graduates in this degree program will be able to do the following:

- Develop a research proposal for emergency and disaster management and report the findings, including an estimation of economic impacts.
- Select, evaluate, and prioritize research projects and proposals in community preparedness and emergency response.
- Organize emergency management functions and activities using contemporary emergency and disaster management concepts and federal guidelines.
- Formulate plans that clearly differentiate disaster response actions including recovery operations, and their funding, from routine emergency operations.
- Design and promote inter-disciplinary training to assure integration between all aspects of an Emergency Operations function including: planning and pre-event preparedness; threat and vulnerability assessments; capability and capacity evaluation; public policy issues; mitigation strategies; exercises and training; program evaluation.
- Develop plans and policies that ensure the strong organizational and personal relationships necessary to be able to work with the key Federal Agencies to ensure Interagency cooperation at all levels during any large scale incident.
- Formulate policies procedures and protocols to allow seamless agency integration in both small and large Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) assuring compliance with the National Response Plan, National Incident Management System.
- Perform economic and social analyses necessary to provide funding recommendations to appropriate fiscal authorities, develop and manage budgets.

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Course Delivery Method

This course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments are due by Sunday evening of the week as noted and include one Forum question (accomplished in groups
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through a threaded forum) and one examination submitted for review by the Faculty Member). Assigned faculty will support the students throughout this eight-week course.

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Course Resources

Required Course Textbooks: None, but the examinee may use any books from any prior courses or other sources as the comprehensive exam is open-book.

Required Readings: The primary resources for EDMG698 are the Comprehensive Examination Study Guide (located in Resources) and Chapters I, V, and VI of the APUS Capstone Manual (2012 Edition) (also located in Resources). There is no other specific reading requirement or textbook for EDMG698. Students are responsible for the information contained in all required texts from their required, core, major, and elective courses in the MA in Homeland Security or Emergency and Disaster Management degree programs.

Additional Resources: Other sources, including electronic sources, found by the student during exam preparation or the open-book exam.

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General Advice on Preparing for and Taking Exam

Congratulations!

If you are reading this, chances are you have finished your coursework and are preparing to take the Comprehensive Examination. This is quite an accomplishment. Take a minute to pat yourself on the back and reflect on all that you have done and the things that you have sacrificed in order to get to this day. Although you have work ahead of you (namely studying for the Comprehensive Exam); you have done much of the work already – it is all in your head. The challenge now is to find a way to get it out of your head and onto paper.

Here are some guidelines to prepare for the Comprehensive Examination. Please add your own ideas as you review these suggestions.

Get Organized:

Go through all of your notes and handouts and establish a need-to-study pile and a do-not-need to study pile. If you have any flashcards or articles from any of your classes, put them in the need-to-study pile. They will definitely come in handy.

Establish a Study Group:

Although this may be difficult to do, you can handle this process by using e-mail or the study group forum in the classroom. The group will not only help with studying information but also with discussion concerns about the examination. Each of you probably have had different instructors; therefore, the some of the materials you have may differ. Courses do have the objectives covered, but there are ‘extras’ from each instructor which can be shared.

Ask Questions:

Do not be afraid to ask questions of your instructor or classmates. Taking an examination like this can be a scary thing and a great way to lessen your fears is to ask questions. Ask your classmates to help if you do not understand something. Ask the instructor to assist and conduct the review of the questions so that you can better understand the requirements.

Write Sample Essays:

Set aside time each week or day to write a sample essay. Take this process seriously – set up a workspace, set a time, and pick a question. Writing an essay in 90 minutes can be challenging. In fact, the hardest part of the essay portions of the examination is beating the clock. Stretch for a few minutes after 45 minutes of sitting. This will ‘generate’ fresh ideas.
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Be sure to read the questions carefully and answer them completely. You can write a fantastic essay, but if it does not address the question, it will not pass.

Make an outline or mind map for each question.

Do not try to cover too many points in your essays. Use specifics, facts, defined points, examples as much as possible. You do not have to know the exact date of a theory or model developed, but you do need to have an idea of approximately when, by whom, the reasons, etc.

Opinions – be careful to use your opinion by professing it. If you add your ideas in an essay toward the end, then start with: ‘In my opinion...’, or ‘Based on personal experience....’ In that way, the specifics of the essay will not run into your opinions.

Take Care of Yourself:

Do what you need to stay healthy. Eat well, drink lots of water and get plenty of sleep in the week before and during the examination. You should be doing this all the time, but I know how hectic life can be. You have the information that you need in your head. If you have been meeting in a study group or exchanging ideas throughout the program, then you have learned on how to express key points that you have studied.

Good luck to you with the Comprehensive Examination and all your future endeavors.

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Evaluation Procedures

Forum: You are required to do the single forum (Week 1 Forum – Introduce Yourself). URGENT NOTE! You must introduce yourself a 200-250 word post in Week 1 - Introduction forum by midnight Eastern Time Sunday night, or you will be automatically disenrolled from this course. This is university policy that applies to every course at APUS and is necessary to satisfy U.S. Department of Education rules. This is a graded forum.

Practice Essays: During weeks 2 through 7, you must write answers to TWO (2) of the study questions and submit them to the instructor for review and comment. These essays will be used by yourself and the instructor to judge your readiness to take the exam and awareness of the type of answers that will fulfill the requirements. The two practice essays will not count as part of your grade. YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE YOUR COMPREHENSIVE EXAM UNLESS THE INSTRUCTOR HAS APPROVED TWO PRACTICE ESSAYS.
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Exam: During week 8, you will take your comprehensive exam in the presence of a proctor. If you will be unable to take the exam during week 8 for a valid reason, you must inform the instructor as early as possible; in this situation, a reasonable accommodation may be possible. The comprehensive exam is open book, open notes, and open internet. You will answer four essay questions that will be graded as follows:

1. “Pass with Distinction” – This grade is assigned to essay answers that clearly demonstrate an understanding of the issue beyond what is typically expected of graduate students.
2. “Pass” – This grade is assigned for essays that meet the requirements for a graduate-level essay.
3. “Fail” – This grade is assigned for essays that clearly do not meet the requirements for a graduate-level essay.

Note: Standards for essay question evaluation will follow the Rubric Evaluation standards uploaded under Lessons.

The course final grade will be assigned as follows:

1. Students who pass three questions “with distinction,” and the fourth with a “pass,” will pass the comprehensive examination “with distinction.”
2. Students who pass three questions with at least a “pass” will pass the examination, which allows for one “fail” on the four examination questions.
3. Students who fail two or more questions will fail the examination. The highest evaluation that may be obtained on a second attempt at the comprehensive examination is “Pass.”

This table is given for information. Grading of the exam questions and the total exam is as described above.

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<tr>
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Weekly Lesson Schedule:
This is a recommended schedule for preparing for and taking your comprehensive exam.

Week 1

Requirements:

1. Introduce yourself in Forum 1, which is required to be at least 200-250 words long.
2. Using the link in ANNOUNCEMENTS, start the process to arrange for a proctor for your comprehensive exam. You will not be allowed to take the exam without an approved proctor.
3. Download the Comprehensive Examination Study Guide from Resources. This is a very important document—it lists the six Comprehensive Exam study questions that you must study and research. The actual questions on your exam will be drawn from these six areas but will not duplicate any of the six study questions.
4. Begin the course with an intensive study (15-20 hours each week) of textbooks, lesson handouts, miscellaneous readings, course notes, etc., from your required, core, major, and elective courses in your MA program. In the first weeks of study, the student should concentrate on understanding the major theoretical frameworks and research methods material presented during their MA program. At this point, the student should try not to memorize definitions, lists, or other detailed material presented in the readings.

Weeks 2 through 7

Requirements:

1. Continue with the intensive study (15-20 hours each week) of textbooks, lesson handouts, miscellaneous readings, course notes, etc., from your required, core, major, and elective courses in your MA program.
2. Submit TWO (2) practice essays answering two of the six study questions in the Study Guide for review and comment by your instructor. YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO TAKE YOUR COMPREHENSIVE EXAM UNLESS THE INSTRUCTOR HAS APPROVED TWO PRACTICE ESSAYS.

Week 8

Requirements:

1. Confirm that all arrangements are in place with your proctor. A username and password should have been sent to your proctor. If
2. Be sure that you have arranged a location and set aside six hours and 30 minutes to take your exam.

3. The examination will consist of four (4) questions, all four of which must be answered. The examination must be taken in one day of 6 examination hours (roughly 1-1/2 hours per question). From the time you access the exam, you will have 6.5 hours to complete the exam: six hours to answer the questions and 30 minutes for a single break. You are on your honor not to work on the exam during the break.

4. Students who are unable to type or who otherwise may not be able to meet the examination requirements should contact the instructor well before the examination day to make alternative arrangements.

5. If you have questions about graduation requirements, please contact Graduations@apus.edu.

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Policies

Please see the Student Handbook to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked question about policies are listed below.

- Drop/Withdrawal Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Extension Process and Policy
- Disability Accommodations

Writing Expectations/ Citation and Reference Style

1. Precise, concise, grammatically correct writing is expected in your comprehensive exam essay answers.

2. Answers shall be uploaded in the exam as Word (.doc or .docx) files. Prior approval of the instructor is required if you need to submit some other file format.

3. All written submissions should be submitted in a format that conforms to APA Style (Sixth Edition). Here are the fundamentals of the general layout as modified for comprehensive exam answers:
   a. All parts of paper in 12-point Times New Roman font.
   b. Body of paper double-spaced with 0.5” first line indent, one-inch margins on all four sides of page.
   c. No title page, running head, or page numbers are required.
   d. Proper in-text citations for any sources used in exam.
   e. References list continues after last line of answer and may be in approximate APA format.
   f. No abstract is required.
Online Library

The Online Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. This is your starting point for access to online books, subscription periodicals, and Web resources that are designed to support your classes and generally not available through search engines on the open Web. In addition, the Online Library provides access to special learning resources, which the University has contracted to assist with your studies. Questions can be directed to librarian@apus.edu.

- **Charles Town Library and Inter Library Loan:** The University maintains a special library with a limited number of supporting volumes, collection of our professors’ publication, and services to search and borrow research books and articles from other libraries.
- **Electronic Books:** You can use the online library to uncover and download over 50,000 titles, which have been scanned and made available in electronic format.
- **Electronic Journals:** The University provides access to over 12,000 journals, which are available in electronic form and only through limited subscription services.
- **Tutor.com:** AMU and APU Civilian & Coast Guard students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutor.com connects you with a professional tutor online 24/7 to provide help with assignments, studying, test prep, resume writing, and more. Tutor.com is tutoring the way it was meant to be. You get expert tutoring whenever you need help, and you work one-to-one with your tutor in your online classroom on your specific problem until it is done.

The AMU/APU Library Guides provide access to collections of trusted sites on the Open Web and licensed resources on the Deep Web. The following are specially tailored for academic research at APUS:

- Program Portals contain topical and methodological resources to help launch general research in the degree program. To locate, search by department name, or navigate by school.
- Course Lib-Guides narrow the focus to relevant resources for the corresponding course. To locate, search by class code (e.g., SOCI111), or class name.

If a guide you need is not available yet, please email the APUS Library: librarian@apus.edu.
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