ORIGINAL COURSE IMPLEMENTATION DATE: January 2022
REVISED COURSE IMPLEMENTATION DATE: May 2025
COURSE TO BE REVIEWED (six years after UEC approval)**:** June 2027
Course outline form version: 29/08/2024

OFFICIAL UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OUTLINE FORM

Note: The University reserves the right to amend course outlines as needed without notice.

Course Code and Number: GDS 330	**Number of Credits:** 3 Course credit policy (105)
Course Full Title: Humanitarianism and Complex Emergencies **Course Short Title:** Humanitarianism & Emergencies	
Faculty: Faculty of Humanities	**Department/School:** Global Development Studies

Calendar Description:

Students apply a critical perspective and use ethnographic texts to interrogate complex causes of conflicts and emergencies in the global South, responses of humanitarian actors, impacts on aid "recipients", and intersecting challenges facing affected communities.

Note: Students with credit for GDS 299C, ANTH 299H, or ANTH 330 cannot take this course for further credit.

Prerequisites (or NONE):	9 credits of ANTH and/or GDS, or 45 university-level credits. Note: As of January 2026, prerequisites will change to 45 university-level credits.
Corequisites (if applicable, or NONE):	
Pre/corequisites (if applicable, or NONE):	

Antirequisite Courses *(Cannot be taken for additional credit.)*

Former course code/number: **GDS 299C or ANTH 299H**

Cross-listed with:

Equivalent course(s): **ANTH 330**

(If offered in the previous five years, antirequisite course(s) will be included in the calendar description as a note that students with credit for the antirequisite course(s) cannot take this course for further credit.)

Typical Structure of Instructional Hours

Lecture/seminar	45
Total hours	**45**

Scheduled Laboratory Hours

Labs to be scheduled independent of lecture hours: **No**

Course Details

Special Topics course: **No**
(If yes, the course will be offered under different letter designations representing different topics.)

Directed Study course: **No**
(See policy 207 for more information.)

Grading System: **Letter grades**

Delivery Mode: **May be offered in multiple delivery modes**

Expected frequency: **Annually**

Maximum enrolment (for information only)**:** 36

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

PLAR is available for this course.

Transfer Credit *(See **bctransferguide.ca**.)*

Transfer credit already exists: **No**

Submit outline for (re)articulation: **Yes**
(If yes, fill in transfer credit form.)

Department approval	**Date of meeting:**	October 15, 2024
Faculty Council approval	**Date of meeting:**	November 8, 2024
Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) approval	**Date of meeting:**	February 28, 2025

Learning Outcomes *(These should contribute to students' ability to meet program outcomes and thus Institutional Learning Outcomes.)*

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the nature and causes of global conflicts, crises, and complex emergencies.
2. Examine the impacts of humanitarian actions upon local communities and individuals in the global South.
3. Articulate how unequal power relations between humanitarian actors and affected populations can be problematic and unethical.
4. Apply diverse perspectives and approaches to intersecting challenges related to humanitarianism, development, and peace.

Recommended Evaluation Methods and Weighting *(Evaluation should align to learning outcomes.)*

Assignments:	35%	Project:	65%		%
	%		%		%

Details:

Assignments: analysis papers, ethnographic text review article

Projects: research paper (25%), reflections/online discussions and peer feedback (15%), presentation (25%)

NOTE: The following sections may vary by instructor. Please see course syllabus available from the instructor.

Typical Instructional Methods *(Guest lecturers, presentations, online instruction, field trips, etc.)*

This course will consist of lectures, presentations, guest lecturers, and in-class group work.

Texts and Resource Materials *(Include online resources and Indigenous knowledge sources. Open Educational Resources (OER) should be included whenever possible. If more space is required, use the Supplemental Texts and Resource Materials form.)*

	Type	Author or description	Title and publication/access details	Year
1.	Book	Keen, D.	Complex Emergencies (publisher – Polity)	2008
2.	Book	Heintze, J., P. Thielborger (eds)	International Humanitarian Action (publisher – Springer)	2018
3.	Book	Burtscher, D., B Stringer, J. Veran	Medecins Sans Frontieres and Humanitarian Situations: An Anthropological Exploration (publisher – Routledge)	2020
4.	Book	Bergman, C.	Another Day In Paradise: International Humanitarian workers tell their stories (publisher – Orbis Books)	2009
5.	Book	Sliwinski, A.	A House of One's Own: the moral economy of post-disaster aid in El Salvador (publisher – McGill-Quens Press)	2018

Required Additional Supplies and Materials *(Software, hardware, tools, specialized clothing, etc.)*

N/A

Course Content and Topics

Introductory module:
- Causes and nature of conflicts, crises, and complex emergencies

Impacts and manifestations of complex humanitarian emergencies module:
- Violence and war
- Displacement and famine

Responses to complex humanitarian emergencies module:
- Responding to famines and food aid
- Responding to displacement, natural disaster relief
- Responding to armed conflict, war, and medical aid and relief

Humanitarian aid system and actors module:
- Landscaping the humanitarian aid system
- Ethical issues, encounters, and ethnographies

Critiques of humanitarianism module:
- Neo-colonialism, power, agency
- Celebrity activism, public engagement, media representations
- Post-conflict societies; and Triple Nexus approaches