**Unnatural Disasters**

**2018**

**Essay**

Who or what is responsible for technological disasters and hazards today?

In this essay, you will synthesize the insights from Charles Perrow's *Normal Accidents* and Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society* to develop a social theory of responsibility in the age of technological or 'manufactured' risks. Who is blamed for technological hazards and disasters? How is responsibility determined, judged, justified, or contested?

'Synthesize' means you must draw on arguments made by *both* Perrow and Beck. This is not a compare/contrast; instead, you find and demonstrate your own argument about how they complement each other. On the other hand, it may be useful to draw on readings from the earlier part of the course, such as Kant/Voltaire/Rousseau on Lisbon disaster, Azande witchcraft, or 'moral' meteorology in order to develop a **comparative** frame that enhances our understanding of what is distinctive about the contemporary risk society.

There is no one 'right' answer to the question, but rather several approaches that can be argued. Thus, you will be evaluated on the strength of your thesis, as well as how it is supported with evidence from the assigned texts. Do not use outside materials that were not assigned in the course to answer the question.

**Length: Approximately 1500 words.**

***No outside sources to be used***

**References in Chicago style, in-text citation (author-date) with bibliography.**

**DUE FRIDAY APRIL 6, by 6PM. Submit to eDimension *and* put hard copy in my mailbox.**