



Syllabus Archiving COVID-19

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Fall 2020, Rutgers University-Newark

Tuesday 2:30 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.

*synchronous remote course

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30 am -12:30 pm on Zoom and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we document and analyze the experience of living through the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant historical event that is changing the world as we know it. The centerpiece of the course is that each student will create an online archive—a collection of primary source materials—that centers around one aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic. The materials collected can be written, visual, audio, video, and so forth. Students can focus on whatever most interests them about the pandemic; some possibilities include the experiences of frontline healthcare workers, government responses, local attempts to flatten the curve, the perspectives of children, WHO strategies, social networking online, unemployment, local responses, the Black Lives Matter movement, etc. All students will also keep a regular journal and thereby produce a first-person account of their own experience living, in fall of 2020, in a world reshaped by COVID-19. In addition, graduate students will write a final research paper or compose an online exhibit, utilizing materials from our online archives. Overall, this course empowers students to use the tools of history to understand an event causing upheaval in all of our lives and also to develop skills in historical analysis and the collection and presentation of archival documents.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR REMOTE LEARNING

Class meetings are on Zoom (link on Canvas); you need a stable internet connection.

All readings and assignments are available on Canvas; no book purchases are required.

We will be working with Omeka. You do not need any prior experience with this platform.

Please complete all listed readings before we meet on Tuesdays.

TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING

The pandemic is a difficult time. The professor is here to help you succeed, and there are also resources at Rutgers that can provide support (see syllabus's Support and Assistance section). If you find things tough at any point, please know that you are not alone. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the professor if you find your academic work is suffering.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students can expect the following through successful completion of this course:

Learn strategies for producing, approaching, and making sense of primary historical sources.

Learn about the benefits and challenges of trying to document a historical moment in real-time.

Develop an appreciation of archives and the skills to construct an online archive.

Work with different types of archival materials and methods of historical inquiry.

Formulate historical questions and identify the means of investigating those queries.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

For undergraduates, your grade is based on four components:

Class Attendance and Participation	30%
Journal	20%
First Days Project	10%
Final Project	40%

For graduate students, your grade is based on five components:

Class Attendance and Participation	30%
Journal	15%
First Days Project	10%
Final Project	30%
Final Paper or Exhibit	15%

Class Attendance: Your attendance grade includes:

- (1) being present on Zoom during class
- (2) being prepared for class and doing readings in advance
- (3) participating during Zoom classes
- (4) occasional in-class exercises and, possibly, out-of-class exercises

Class is 2:30–5:20 p.m. EST on Tuesdays, unless otherwise noted. We will have a number of virtual visitors.

Class Preparation: You should carefully read all listed readings and come prepared with observations and questions.

Projects and Assignments: There are four major assignments in the course (three for undergraduates):

Journaling, throughout the term + one turn curating journal excerpts for the week

First Days Project: Due October 4

Final Project: various due dates; finalized by Dec. 10

Final Paper: Due Dec. 17

Journals. Each student will journal three times weekly (or more). Journals can include media (images, audio, video) or not. The professor will periodically provide prompts. All journals will be housed on Canvas and will be visible to the class. Also, each week one student will curate excerpts from all the journals to be published publicly; we will decide collectively, as a class, our policies regarding whether and/or how to maintain privacy for the curated collections.

First Days Project. Everyone will produce two archival items that document the thoughts, emotions, and/or actions of two individuals when the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020. One person will be yourself, and the other will be somebody you interview (virtually, unless they are in your household). The archival documents can be audio or written, and there are also possibilities for adding media. We will collect these into an online collection, thus producing our first online archive as a collective class effort.

Final Project. Each student will curate a series of online archival objects focused on one aspect of living through the pandemic (students choose their focus). There will be regular due dates and opportunities for feedback. Students may also focus on pandemic-adjacent topics, including social unrest, political change, cultural phenomena, and so forth in 2020.

Final Paper or Exhibit. Graduate students are required to produce either a final paper (10–15 pages double-spaced) or an online exhibit using 10–20 objects (you can draw from objects you contributed and also from those contributed by other students). Both final papers and exhibits should demonstrate critical historical thought.

CLASS POLICIES

Absences: Clear any absences with the professor, in advance if possible. Please note the following Rutgers University policies on absences:

- *Excused Absences:* Recognized grounds for absence include illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, and recognized religious holidays. You must contact the professor or grader, in advance where possible, or absences will be counted as unexcused.
- *Extended Absences:* Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

Academic Dishonesty: The professor expects full academic honesty from all students. If you plagiarize, cheat, help another student cheat, or are otherwise academically dishonest, you will face disciplinary action. Being caught cheating is the last thing anybody needs in the middle of a pandemic, and you will be caught. So, Don't Cheat. See: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>



Please include the Rutgers honor pledge on all major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

Intellectual Property: Lectures, powerpoints, assignments, and other materials utilized in this course are protected by United States copyright laws as well as Rutgers University policy. You are not permitted to share any of these without written consent from the instructor. Similarly, all original work that you produce for this course is covered by copyright protections. In order to participate in this course, you must sign the FERPA release that allows Rutgers University and the professor, as a representative of Rutgers, to share your work publicly (you retain copyright of your work).

Late Work: All late work incurs a penalty of one letter grade for every 24 hours late. If you find yourselves having difficulties in this department for pandemic-related reasons, please talk to the professor.

SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

Counseling Center: The Rutgers–Newark Counseling Center provides a number of counseling and consultative services to enrolled and eligible undergraduate and graduate students. For students, if you are seeking individual or group therapy, you can expect to find a safe, supportive space to collaboratively identify and begin to change the thoughts, behaviors, and beliefs that prevent you from being your best self. <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu>.

Disabilities: Rutgers welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form: <https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>.

Food: PantryRUN, the campus food pantry, helps students who have difficulty affording enough healthy food to remain focused on their studies and stay healthy. You can find hours and information here: <https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/pantryrun>.

Pandemic Resources: Your go-to for how COVID-19 is being handled at Rutgers University-Newark is MyRun Student Resources: <https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid19>.

Writing: The Rutgers University-Newark Writing Center provides tutoring for students who want to strengthen their reading, writing, and research skills. They offer individual sessions and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers University-Newark campus; they are offering remote tutoring. More details here: <https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center>.

Week 1: Sept 1 Pandemic Pedagogy

Chakravarti “Archiving the Present: A Guide to Creating a Record of COVID-19” (30 min)
Landdeck, “Why We Should All Be Keeping Coronavirus Journals”
Ome, “Dear Diary: This Is My Life in Quarantine”
Roy, “The pandemic is a portal”

Week 2: Sept 8 Language Matters: How We Describe and Imagine the Pandemic

NO CLASS

“Words Matter: How We Talk About the Pandemic” (30 min)
Johnson and Lakoff, *Metaphors We Live By*, 3–32
Wise, “Military Metaphors Distort the Reality of COVID-19”

Week 3: Sept 15 Organizing Data, Archives, and Preservation

Class Schedule Notes

2:40–3:10 Virtual visit from Rebecca Klassen, Associate Curator of Material Culture at New-York Historical Society

3:15–3:45 Virtual visit from Lori Schwartz, Hagel Archivist at the University of Nebraska Omaha

Readings

Peruse “History Responds” and “Documenting COVID-19 in Omaha” (links on Canvas)
Popescu, “How Will We Remember the Pandemic? Museums Are Already Deciding”
Intersectionality Matters with Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Under the Blacklight: History Rinsed and Repeated” (54 minutes)
Asif, “Idols in the Archives”
Carter, “Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence”

Week 4: Sept 22 Oral History, Racism, and The First Days Project

Class Schedule Notes

2:30–3:15 Virtual Visit from Whit Strub, Associate Professor History at Rutgers-Newark on oral history

5:00–5:20 *Optional for Undergraduate Students

Readings

Sloan, “Oral History and Hurricane Katrina: Reflections on Shouts & Silences,” 176-186
Sheftel and Zembrzycki, “Who’s Afraid of Oral History? Fifty Years of Debates and Anxiety about Ethics,” 338-366

Benjamin, “Black Skin, White Masks: Racism, Vulnerability & Refuting Black Pathology,” (30 min)
Supiano, “Why is Zoom So Exhausting?”
Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County*, 3–12
Hartman, “A note on method,” xiii–xv and Hartman, “An Unnamed Girl”

Week 5: Sept 29 Omeka Tutorial

Class Schedule Notes

Virtual Visit from Krista White, Digital Scholarship and Pedagogies Librarian at Rutgers

Readings

WHO Director-General’s opening remarks at 11 March 2020 media briefing
Mayotte and Kiefer, “Self Care, Compassion Fatigue, and Developing a Capacity to Listen to Difficult Stories”

Week 6: October 6 First Days Project Presentations

*October 4, First Days Project due on Canvas

Class Schedule Notes

In-Class Presentations by students, schedule TBD

No Readings

Week 7: October 13 Experiencing and Narrating the Pandemic Differently

Class Schedule Notes

5:00–5:20 *Optional for Undergraduate Students

Readings

Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins”
Risam, “Beyond the Margins: Intersectionality and the Digital Humanities”
VOW, “Unheard Voices of the Pandemic” Storytelling Project
Intersectionality Matters with Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Under the Blacklight: Covid in Confinement” (1 hour)
Cohen, “Contested Membership”
Jain, “An Update on Journal Publishing and a Plea for our Discipline in the Time of Pandemic” (*optional for undergrad students)
Vincent-Lamarre, Sugimoto, and Larivière, “Monitoring women’s scholarly production during the COVID-19 pandemic (*optional for undergrad students)

Week 8: October 20 Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter, “What We Believe”
Black Lives Matter, “Her Story”
Kendi, “The American Nightmare”
“Black Lives co-Founder Explains Why This Time is Different”
“Struggling to Breathe: COVID-19, Protest, and the LIS Response”
Hayes, “George Floyd” (poem)

Week 9: October 27 Seeing the Pandemic Beyond the West

Seminar, September Issue (exact readings TBD)
Advani, “Male friendship and intimacy in the time of Covid-19”
Banerjee, “Fantasies of Control”
Other readings TBA

Week 10: Nov 3 Archival Storytelling and Individual Archive Projects

*Nov 1 Proposal for Individual Archive Due

Class Schedule Notes

In-class discussion of individual archive projects; schedule TBD

Readings

Skarpelis, “Life on File: Archival Epistemology as Theory”
Other Readings TBA

Week 11: Nov 10 Case Study of AIDS and How Might the Pandemic Be Remembered?

Brier, “Save our Kids, Keep Aids Out,” 965–981
Stewart-Winter, “Revisiting the Historical Record on HIV/AIDS”
Schulman, *Gentrification of the Mind*, introduction, 8–18
Royles, *To Make the Wounded Whole*, excerpts TBA

Week 12: Nov 17 Preserving Online Archives and TBD

Class Schedule Notes

2:30–3:15: Virtual Visit from Angela Lawrence, Archivist, Rutgers University-Newark
Archives

Readings TBD

Pedagogy Note: Mid-November is a long way away (I am writing this syllabus in August 2020). Let's see where we are as a class, as individuals, as a country, in the pandemic, and as humanity across the globe at this point, and then I will finalize readings for the rest of the term.

Week 13: Nov 24 NO CLASS

NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 14: Dec 1 TBD

Readings TBD

Week 15: Dec 8 Final Discussion and Debrief

*December 10 Final Projects Due

*December 17 Final Paper Due (for graduate students)