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HSTA 391.50B: Special Topic - Covid-19 and History: Disease and Disaster in Perspective

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COVID-19 and History: Disease and Disaster in Perspective

Course: HSTA 391 (Summer 2020)

Classroom: Online

Time: No scheduled meeting time

Instructor: Leif Fredrickson

Contact: leif.fredrickson@umontana.edu

Office hours: Email for phone appointment

We'll use this [Moodle site](#) for announcements, readings, assignment uploads and discussions.

Description

This class will look at the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic in historical perspective. We'll compare the COVID-19 pandemic to past disease outbreaks – such as tuberculosis, the 1918 flu, polio and AIDs – exploring how people have understood and responded to these outbreaks. More broadly, we'll examine the history of American responses to acute crises, like the Great Depression and Hurricane Katrina. We will also examine how the development of the US and the world have shaped our prospects for dealing with COVID-19, by looking at the history of globalization, health care policy, and the media. Finally, we'll explore how diseases – such as the Black Plague and smallpox – have fundamentally shaped human history, in order to think about how COVID-19 might shape our future. While looking to the past and the future, we will also work on a public history project that will document the on-going COVID-19 pandemic – an event that is bound to be one of the key historical events of the 21st century.

Learning Outcomes -- After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand key aspects of past pandemics – how they changed history; how people understood, experienced and responded to them
- Understand how the recent history of environmental change, global interconnection, social policies, and global health policies have shaped the context of COVID-19
- Use the past to interpret and understand the COVID-19 pandemic, including thinking about how it will play out and what changes it may bring

Overview

Grades/Assignments

20% - Participation/ Response

20% - Essay 1

20% - Essay 2

20% - Oral History Questions, Plan

20% - Oral History Interview

Important Dates (Subject to Change)

May 11 – First day of class

May 30 – Essay 1 due

June 8 – Oral history plan, questions due

June 19 – Oral history due

June 19 – Last day of class

June 26 – Essay 2 due

Readings

There is no required text for this class. We will read a variety of short primary and secondary sources as well as other types of media.

Class Policies

Inclusive Environment

This class is welcoming and respectful of student diversity in gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race and religion. If you have any religious events that conflict with the class, please let me know. More generally, if you have any concerns or suggestions for making the class more inclusive or welcoming, for you or other students, please tell me.

COVID-19 and this Class

These are stressful times. If you are struggling, in class or outside, please let me know. I am here to help you, or assist you in finding help.

Class Conduct

Respect each other. Listen to others and be serious and careful in talking to others and discussing sensitive issues.

Attendance and Late Assignments

It is important to attend class for your participation grade, to get instructions and guidance on assignments, to participate in the group project, and to get background knowledge for your research papers and oral histories. Missing class will count against your participation grade. If you have to miss class, or have missed class, let me know as soon as possible. You can always make up participation credit for missed class – ask me. I accept late assignments, usually with no penalty. Very late assignments, or late group assignments, may have some penalty, but are still worth turning in. Please talk to me as soon as possible if you think you will be handing something in late, or have had to hand something in late.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism is the use of another person's phrasing or ideas without crediting that person (whether it is a verbatim quote or not). If in doubt, give credit to the source and/or ask me. Plagiarism/cheating can result in total loss of credit for assignments/tests.

Resources and Help

Disability

UM assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact them in Lommasson Center 154 or 406-243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Student Support for Writing, Public Speaking, Study, Test Taking, Technology and More
[Office for Student Success](#): 406-243-2800

Mental Health Counseling

Curry Health Center Counseling: 406-243-4711; Crisis/Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Please contact me if you have any concerns at any time, whether they are related

to the class or not. I am here to help you feel welcome and help you succeed!

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

Letter grades

A+	97–100%
A	93–96%
A–	90–92%
B+	87–89%
B	83–86%
B–	80–82%
C+	77–79%
C	73–76%
C–	70–72%
D+	67–69%
D	63–66%
D–	60–62%
F	0–59%

Participation/Response Grade

This is based on the quality of your written responses to readings and your participation in online discussion. Activities including short written responses to prompts and other students; questions for the instructor; and responses to surveys. Your grade will be based on regular, quality contributions to the discussion.

Essays

Students will write two essays, each approximately 2,000 words in length. Each essay will compare aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic to past pandemics, disease events, disasters, etc. Student will draw on lectures and readings, reflect on their own experiences, and explore and incorporate contemporary social media. Each essay will be centered around one or more themes that our lectures and readings for that week have addressed. Students will have the option of donating their reflections and social media documentation to the Mansfield Library's archive of documents related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oral History Interview

Students will learn how to do oral histories and will carry out a short oral history with a local healthcare worker. Student will identify an interviewee, schedule and interview, and develop a set of oral history questions. The questions will be informed by both our current knowledge of the COVID-19 pandemic and our knowledge of past pandemics, especially the experience of frontline healthcare workers. After students conduct the interview, they will make a synopsis for the interview. These interviews will be archived at the Mansfield Library for future researchers.