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Fall 2015

HIST 2050

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HIST 2050: INTERNET
Historical Catastrophes: The Irish Famine and Katrina
Dr Candy
Fall 2015

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If you ever have any questions or concerns please e-mail instructor directly rather than posting a question to the discussion board. You can e-mail anytime.

Online office hours are Tuesdays 9am-1pm.

Books

No required books. All readings are online or on Moodle at course documents.

There is however a book review required for the midterm exam. You can purchase one of the recommended books or get it from any library or from UNO library or from UNO library interlibrary loan system or UNO library e-book system.

You may need to actually print the material on “The Great Irish Famine” from Moodle to follow the page numbers.

We also draw several articles from the December 2007 special Katrina issue of the *Journal of American History*. To find this issue just google for “Journal of American History Katrina”- go to table of contents and click on the articles by the relevant author. The issue is on line but if you have difficulty finding it you can access it via the UNO library home page --at e-journals (in JSTOR database).

Course Description

This course is reading intensive. The course compares the conditions, causes and effects of the Katrina disaster with those of the “Irish famine” of the 1840s in order to highlight some of the broader and longer historical forces which governed and produced both events. Main themes are empire, class, race, gender, media, and art. We will constantly be asking: How far have we come? At bottom, has anything much changed in the ways that we humans have organized ourselves in the past century and a half? To what extent were both catastrophes human-made? How did governments and ordinary people and artists respond to such disasters? What do the responses reveal about the underlying organization of both societies? Keeping in mind these questions in mind as we move through the discussions will be important.

Course Goals

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Place the Great Famine in the historical context of British imperial history, Irish history, U.S history, and the history of the Atlantic world.
2. Compare and reflect on the impact of Katrina and the Irish famine in terms of the role of the modern nation state in catastrophes, laws, class, race, gender, empire and capitalism, emigration, genocide and media representations.
3. Recognize the myriad ways in which Katrina and the Irish famine, as well as so many global catastrophes, can be placed in the one global field of analysis.

What do I have to do?

The first thing you must do is go to the Discussion Board/Topics area and enter your name under “Introductions.” Tell us something about yourself as it is very easy for us all to get folks mixed up when we don’t see each other in person. Anything to help us remember would be greatly appreciated.

Then follow the calendar below for weekly assignments and reading. Please do not jump forward. You must wait

until the day the assignment is due before posting it. Always keep a copy of your answers on your own computer file. Early posts will be deleted.

Each week post your response or “first answer.” Minimum length each week should be equivalent to 1 and ½ pages of single spaced, times new roman twelve pt. font size in total, for all questions together.. Sometimes there are several questions. You must post the answers to all questions in the same post. You can post anytime on Sunday until midnight. Please use an interesting label/title to distinguish your answer. It is extremely easy for me to see when people use each other’s work instead of coming up with their own. If there is even a suspicion, it will mean that that exercise will not be accepted. You must not use attachments. You must copy and paste your answer right into the board.

Late posts will be penalized by 50% per day.

No attachments allowed.

Discussion

The two days after the deadline (MT) are crucial days where I will expect you to read a range of the answers and make at least three comments which show that you have read at least three of the other first answers, responding directly to each. By one comment I mean at least five sentences. So your discussion length in total should aim for at least 15 sentences total. Extra credit for those who read most of the board and attempt to draw links or to see patterns across various other people’s responses. Resist the temptation to make short comments just for the sake of “visibility” as it clutters the board. No marks at all go to such efforts. Instead digest the material, wait and think about it and then post something thoughtful and substantive.

In discussion of other’s work please do not simply get back and congratulate each other without adding something substantive from the reading of your own. You can congratulate each other but add something new and substantial of your own, always backed up by new points from the reading.

The instructor will generally respond to all students in a broadcast style message but may also elect to respond to individual students if a response requires individual comment.

Since this is an internet course in which the class does not physically meet, the Discussion Board dialogue is meant to replace the class discussion.

In all answers it is necessary that you reflect comparatively on the two catastrophes. The more constant comparisons you make between Katrina and the famine the better. Some of the famine material may seem to be only directly related to Katrina, but it is up to you to find points of comparison, whether they be theoretical or empirical. Remember that both historical events happened in the one flow of history: the history of New Orleans and the history of Ireland have been shaped by the same historical forces/ideologies.

You will be assessed on the quality and length of your responses, your attention to the reading, your promptness, and your willingness to engage thoughtfully with other students in the class. You will be judged on the informed quality of your analysis and on your in depth response to the substance of the readings, not on your point of view.

Grading

First Answers: 40%

Discussion: 20%

Exam I: 20%

Final Exam II: 20%

Late posts will be penalized by 50% per day.

No attachments allowed.

You will not get a weekly grade. If there are problems with your answers I will let you know, by e-mail, what to do to improve.

Most problems are that first answers are too short and vague; are not grounded enough in the detail of the reading, with not enough facts, dates and detailed references to the readings. If there are consistent problems with your work, I will let you know via email. If you are concerned yourself, e-mail me.
You will also get a midterm grade.

Assignment Schedule:

Sunday 8/23

Introduce yourself on moodle board.

Tell us at least four sentences about who you are and why you are taking the class.
Familiarize yourself with the syllabus and moodle.

Sunday 8/30

Tell a version of your own “Katrina story.” Post a two page summary of your own experience of Katrina as an historical event including the aftermath of Katrina to the present. Using five numbered, relevant examples give an example of how you saw, or recall, the following features at work in New Orleans either before, during or after Katrina (to the present).

- 1.class differences (various socio-economic levels)
- 2.race/ethnicity
- 3.gender
- 4.nation/governments (all levels, including foreign)
- 5.capitalism

OR, if Katrina did not affect you directly, then select a story from the UNO hurricane digital archive www.hurricanearchive.org and analyze it in terms of how you see the following factors at play therein:

- 1.class differences (various socio-economic levels)
- 2.race/ethnicity
- 3.gender
- 4.nation/governments (all levels, including foreign)
- 5.capitalism

Sunday Sept 6

Conspiracy of Edward Despard: See Moodle pdf.

This chapter gives one window in to the ways in which Africa, Ireland, Britain and the Americas were interconnected in the early and later modern Atlantic world.
Identify six such connections. Why did the ‘conspiracy’ of the Despards ‘temporarily fail’ according to the authors?

Sunday Sept 13
Different Story-Same World?

Moodle: The Great Irish Famine
 Read from 'Early Ireland' to 'Census Commissioners' [pp.1-16]

And
 UNIT 1: Laws that isolated and impoverished the Irish
 Read sections on the Statutes of Kilkenny and the Penal Laws, pp16-22.

Discussion question: keeping in mind last week's reading on the Despard's as well as the above reading, what bearing does the Irish case have on Katrina and the history of the American South/peoples of the Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean in general? In what ways is the history of empire/colonialism with all its attendant oppressions relevant to the history of the South and New Orleans? How does one relate to the other? What are some similarities and differences at a broad level?

Sunday Sept 20

UNIT 2: RACISM The Great Irish Famine pp.33-60
<http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/projects/katrina/Germany.html>
<http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/projects/katrina/Hirsch.html>

To find these links google for "Journal of American History Katrina"- go to table of contents and click on the articles by the relevant author- in this case by Germany and Hirsch. They are on line. If you have difficulty you can also access them through the UNO library home page at e-journals as they are under the JSTOR database.

What links or comparisons or differences can you see between the famine reading and the two articles by Germany and Hirsch?

Sunday Sept 27

MIDTERM EXAM: Please email to me by Sunday at mid night.

As an alternative to a regular exam, I ask that you review a book on post-Katrina New Orleans, either from the following suggested list, or choose one of your own. You can find the books in bookstores and libraries or get them on interlibrary loan through UNO library.

You can google /search on amazon for other books and get them on inter library loan trough UNO library home page, within a few days—so think ahead. Please avoid "coffee table" style journalistic, nostalgic books, but opt for something more analytic and substantial, preferably by an academic. To avoid making the wrong choice please run your choice by me first.

In your review of the book, which should be four pages double spaced minimum, with citations to page numbers, simply read it for what it reflects about gender, race, class, capitalism and imperialism. Say why you think it is good and what problems you had with it. Avoid merely summarizing the content of the book, rather critique it.

Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise Of Disaster Capitalism*
Paul A. Harris, *Diary From The Dome: Reflections on Fear and Privilege during Katrina*
Martha Murray, *Left to Die: A First Hand Account of Life in the Superdome During Hurricane Katrina*
Any book from *The Neighborhood Story Project*. See www.Neighborhoodstoryproject.org. In UNO Library.

Lyn Weber and Lori Peek, eds. *Displaced: Life in the Katrina Diaspora*
 Jay Arena, *Driven From New Orleans: How Non-Profits Betray Public Housing and Promote Privatization*
 Jordan Flaherty, *Floodlines: Community and Resistance From Katrina to the Jena Six*.
 David L. Brunnsma, *The Sociology of Katrina: Perspectives on a Modern Catastrophe*
 Betsy Reed, *Unnatural Disaster: The Nation on Hurricane Katrina*
 Zeiton: Muslim New Orleanian painter, robbed and wrongfully imprisoned after Katrina

See also:

<http://katrinaresearchhub.ssrc.org/KatrinaBibliography.pdf/view>

www.cswsworkshop.org/katrinareader/

Sunday Oct 4

MASS EVICTION DURING FAMINE:

The Great Irish Famine, pp61-69

<http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/projects/katrina/Long.html> article by Long

<http://vimeo.com/26513408> Educational video on public housing in general, quite short.

<http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~ka331706/> (If link does not work google for Kainaz Amaria “Right of Return” (photo essay))

- Trying to Make it Home: New Orleans a year After Katrina, by Bill Quigley, Loyola, New Orleans, Law Professor
<http://www.commondreams.org/views06/0822-31.htm>
- Corporate welfare and hurricane ‘recovery’
<http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Nov06/Quigley13.htm>

Discuss: Are there parallels to be drawn regarding the housing crisis in the gulf coast and mass evictions during famine times?

Sunday Oct 11

ART AND POETRY, The Great Irish Famine, pp106-116

Choose three poems and/or songs and answer the questions about it on p.115 and p.116. Select your own work of art, literature, music or poetry produced in the wake of Katrina and analyze it in terms of the main themes of the course.

Why did you select it? Why did it move you? How does ‘the past’/history/nostalgia/ancestors appear implicitly or explicitly in the art?

Sunday October 25

Gender. Race and Class

Complete 1-3 below.

1. BB “Hell and High Water American Apocalypse: New Orleans 2005” *Vanity Fair* November 2005. The photographs begin on p. 359.

2. Is water sexist? Gender may seem at first glance perhaps irrelevant in this, but it is never irrelevant. You can focus on issues or moments which seem at first subtle or even trivial and still make a gendered analysis. Because the water flooded out women as well as men does not mean that gender was, or is, irrelevant to the proceedings. The *Vanity Fair* article is also a good place to analyze the gendered dynamics of media representations. For instance the men in the convention center organized the crowd by themselves into aged, infirm first, then, women and children, then men, to be ready, if a bus ever did come.

3. "Taking the Wheel" Moodle (*Times Picayune*, Sunday Oct 5, 2005).

Examine the narration of the story in which young men 'commandeered' buses to rescue women, children and men from public housing complexes in Algiers, to Houston. How does gender work in the telling of the story? Consider issues of family, kin and children.

"Taking the Wheel, "Taking the Wheel" may also be at: <http://www.nola.com/printer/printer.ssf?/base/news-4/1132988243136740.xml>

What do these documents reveal about the construction of race, gender and class? How did these categories work against people and for them in certain specific moments? Use at least five examples from the *Vanity Fair* or *Times Picayune* article in your analysis.

Sunday Nov 1

Media Views

1. Look at the website called 'views of the famine' at www.vassun.vassar.edu. Or

<http://adminstaff.vassar.edu/sttaylor/FAMINE/>

Scan the pieces from *the Illustrated London News* and the *Cork Examiner* and select two contrasting articles. Within those two, find two points of view or angles- one from each- which shows the different perspectives/biases of each on the famine. Consider such elements as tone, use of language, editorial decisions regarding what to focus on and what to ignore will be important here. Be sure to cite carefully.

2. Also have a look at the famous British *Punch* cartoons. How are Irish famine victims represented? How have Katrina evacuees been represented in US media?

3. See the sections under 'Master Pictures' at the end, of 'Embarking, Disembarking, the Voyage, and Life in America.' Read "Oxford to Skibereen" -- preface, narrative and appendix. What kind of audience is Parker addressing and why? What is his interest in the people in Ireland at the time? Are Irish people represented here somewhat like the people of Katrina week in New Orleans? Why or why not?

4. View the four slide shows at <http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/projects/katrina/media/>

There really is no "us and them" says Kathy Anderson. Do these four slide shows bear that out?

Sun Nov 8

The youth and children of Katrina

Many of you in the class were probably quite young in life in 2005.

Find some research, preferably by an academic about the trauma and experience of children and youth of Katrina and the aftermath to the present. You could look for example for issues regarding education. In general analyze how Katrina and its aftermath affected children and youth issues. What still needs more attention?

Sunday Nov 15

SJ Connolly. “Revisions Revised: The Great Famine- its interpreters old and new” See moodle pdf.
 What are the old and the new interpretations of the famine? What do you think of Mitchel’s argument? Why are historians arguing in the way that they are? What is at stake for our world?

Sunday Nov 22**“Famine, Trauma and Memory” - See moodle pdf**

Take eight points from this article about trauma, memory and collective memory of the famine and apply them to the commemoration of Katrina. Which points apply to the way that we do, or may in the future “remember” Hurricane Katrina. You may refer to local, national, international commentary, as you wish.
 In each case, say in what way the point might apply. If some points do not apply, also say why in each case.

Friday Dec 4: Final Exam Due –Send via e-mail by midnight.**Final Exam**

Review your initial analysis of the Katrina event and then submit an eight page paper (free of all grammatical and spelling errors) making comparisons between the material you have read and any other reading you want to introduce on the famine and your experiences and reflections on the entire Katrina issue/s.

What are the main similarities you have noticed between the two events and also what are the differences?
 How far can you take the comparisons, why and why not? Pay special attention to each of the main issues below, having at least two paragraphs on each topic:

1. Laws and the role of the state/s before the event
2. Racism
3. Eviction/evacuation
4. Mortality rates and “the horror”
5. Emigration/migration
6. Genocide
7. Poetry/Art/Reflections in the media.

Use footnotes or endnotes when referring to the material you have read. You can use media or online sources for Katrina issues, if foot noted with their web address.

ETIQUETTE:

Please minimize the temptation to use slang and abbreviations when typing as it can lead to confusion. Formal, old fashioned English is required.

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

It is the student’s responsibility to obtain access information (username and password) for your UNO email account.

Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.

Plagiarism policy: UNO standard plagiarism policy.

To ensure academic integrity, all students enrolled in distance learning

courses at the University of New Orleans may be required to participate in additional student identification procedures. At the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course, these measures may include on-campus proctored examinations, off-site or online proctored examinations, or other reasonable measures to ensure student identity. Authentication measures for this course are identified below and any fees associated are the responsibility of the student.