

CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

Research Agenda-Setting Paper

This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.

Working Group Name:

Historical Approaches and COVID-19

Working Group Description:

Historical sources and methods are crucial to understanding the COVID-19 pandemic. This Working Group brings historical methodology to bear on the pandemic as a tool to be used in conjunction with and in support of other forms of analysis. The Working Group also emphasizes the formation and maintenance of archival materials, including oral history, that explain the background, present moment, and future of the pandemic. Our goal is to foster the historical study of disaster, including pandemic, and to encourage disaster scholars in other disciplines to take advantage of historical expertise.

Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:

Priority Research Topics	Potential Research Questions
<p>1. Archives webpage and coordination: We plan a website to bring together information about COVID-19 archival and oral history documentation projects for the benefit of archivists, oral historians, scholars interested in using these collections, and potential participants/donors. The website will contain a map of documentation projects, a finding aid of finding aids, a document of best practices for collecting developed in collaboration with people doing the work. In the long term, we hope to have a workshop for archivists, oral historians, and other people engaged in documentary projects about COVID-19 to foster collaborations and learn from each other. We plan to coordinate and liaise with the Society of American Archivists and the Oral History Association as relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research Question 1</u>: What archiving and oral history projects on COVID-19 exist? • <u>Research Question 2</u>: What are best practices for conducting oral histories of the COVID-19 pandemic? • <u>Research Question 3</u>: How can archivists and oral historians best disseminate knowledge of their projects to other researchers?

<p>2. Historical approaches to COVID-19: By the end of the summer 2021, we intend to issue a call for papers for short working papers that could be assigned to classes on what history contributes to the study of and response to COVID-19. The goal is to publish working papers 2,000-3,000 words long that will be peer reviewed, although not necessarily original research. The goal will be to introduce historical scholarship and ideas to disaster scholars in other disciplines and to provide a teaching resource to undergraduate and potentially graduate teachers looking to integrate COVID-19 and disasters into their courses. We expect that some or all of the CONVERGE funding will be spent on translations as part of this part of the project.</p> <p>Working Papers will be published on the website of the Initiative for Critical Disaster Studies at NYU Gallatin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research Question 1</u>: Can historians successfully contribute their knowledge and analysis to COVID-19 response? • <u>Research Question 2</u>: What do the histories of disaster, pandemic, and other topics tell us about COVID-19? • <u>Research Question 3</u>: How can undergraduate history instructors incorporate COVID-19 into their courses?
<p>3. Permanent institution-building: We hope that this CONVERGE Working Group will serve as the nucleus for a permanent, international organization of historians and humanities scholars (broadly defined) interested in disasters and crisis events. We are hoping to get a better idea of what that might look like through our current collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Research Question 1</u>: What form could a permanent, international organization of historians and humanities scholars interested in disasters and crisis events take? • <u>Research Question 2</u>: Is there a demand for an organization of historical and/or humanistic disaster scholars?

Ethical / Methodological Considerations:

The goal of this working group is to apply the methods of historical inquiry to the analysis of the experience of COVID-19.

Other Frameworks, Considerations for Collaboration, and/or Resources:

We hold periodic meetings by Zoom to discuss research and documentary projects. All are welcome to participate. Researchers should contact one of the contributors (listed below) to join our mailing list.

Contributors:

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This COVID-19 Working Group effort was supported by the National Science Foundation-funded Social Science Extreme Events Research (SSEER) network and the CONVERGE facility at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder (NSF Award #1841338). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF, SSEER, or CONVERGE.