

“The novel coronavirus is an unfolding public health crisis that is touching the entire world and all parts of our lives. The pandemic is exacerbating many of the longstanding inequalities and divisions that are squarely in the intellectual and methodological bailiwick of the Social Sciences, and SSRI is committed to facilitating and catalyzing interdisciplinary research that provides evidence that our society needs to move forward.” Don Taylor, Director, SSRI 

TEACHING

U.S. DEMOCRACY IN A PANDEMIC (PPS 290)

1

Every pandemic is more than an epidemiological challenge – it is a challenge to society, culture, and the political system. This course, to be offered in summer session II, brings together an interdisciplinary team of faculty from across Duke to teach students as we work together to examine and understand how the U.S. government, and its residents, are responding to the coronavirus and how the coronavirus will change our beliefs, behaviors, institutions, and outcomes. The course will examine the structure, institutions, and operations of the U.S. government and the preferences, beliefs, and behaviors of its residents, activists, and officials with a focus on the ways in which the novel coronavirus outbreak is affecting those features and attributes – and in which they are responding to the pandemic. It will incorporate examinations of how different U.S. residents – across socio-economic status, place of residence, citizenship status, age, and gender, for example – are differently affected by government policies, and will also use comparisons with other historical events (such as the 1918 flu pandemic) and other countries to inform the examination of the response to and effects of the current pandemic. Together, we will gain a better understanding of how the United States has responded and is responding to the coronavirus crisis and why, the existing and possible future effects of that response, and the ways in which we can act now to influence our future.

Alexandra Cooper, Associate Director for Education and Training, SSRI: cooper@duke.edu

COVID-19: LEARNING FROM BIG DATA (IDS 730)

2

Students in IDS 703, Data Scraping and Introduction to Text Analysis, examined different sources of online data, such as Tweets and Google searches, to understand how online behaviors capture and reflect their authors' sentiments, concerns, and behaviors. Student teams found many common patterns that repeated across different regions, but also noted significant variations in the start dates and intensity of the observed behaviors across place and time. Although the students have completed their work for this course, many are planning to continue and expand their projects by exploring additional social networks such as Reddit and Facebook, relating the observed trends to COVID-19 case load in different U.S. states, and examining the impact of official stay-at-home orders.

Chris Bail, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy: christopher.bail@duke.edu

OPEN DESIGN+

3

Open Design+ is a new summer research experience in which students use design thinking to develop innovative solutions to complex, real-world problems. This summer, the challenge space is how might we use the experience of COVID-19 to transform learning at Duke? Working in small, interdisciplinary teams of undergraduate and graduate students, participants in Open Design+ will gain an understanding of open design, a variation of design thinking that emphasizes the ethical implications of how and what we design. Students will learn qualitative research skills and conduct extensive interviews with stakeholders in the challenge area, including Duke students, faculty, and administrators to ideate solutions for sustained learning innovation at Duke; they will also learn critical skills and mindsets such as: brainstorming ideas and creating prototypes, testing and iterating solutions, communicating across audiences and media, thinking divergently and convergently, and collaborating and problem-solving in uncertain situations. This remote program will run during the summer II session.

Aria F. Chernik, Associate Professor of the Practice, SSRI: aria.chernik@duke.edu

TEACHING

NAVIGATING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CURRENT RESPONSE AND FUTURE ACTION (PUBPOL 890)
(WITH THE DUKE-MARGOLIS CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICY)

4 This collaborative project course, proposed to be offered jointly by the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy/SSRI, leverages an existing graduate course – High-Value Health Care – and will engage graduate and advanced undergraduate students in interdisciplinary teams throughout the course on an applied COVID-19 response-related project. Student project(s) will focus on one of more of these topics and could include designing an interactive dashboard of state health care system or public health infrastructure responses; proposing new or modified payment models for COVID-19 treatments; assessing the effects of the widespread rollout of telemedicine in the coronavirus era; evaluating new approaches to telemedicine; identifying how value-based payment and delivery models can best address COVID-19 and future pandemics; or, assessing behavioral health needs resulting from the pandemic. The course will allow students to gain and deepen knowledge of health policy, obtain practical experience, and develop relationships with the Center and affiliated faculty, staff, and external partners.

Sarah Dunn Phillips, Assistant Director for Education, Duke-Robert J. Margolis, MD, Center for Health Policy: sarah.dunn.phillips@duke.edu

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY (PSY 318S)

5 The course will provide an overview of research in the scientific study of human strengths and happiness. We will discuss psychological theories, research, and intervention techniques that help us understand the positive, adaptive, and creative aspects of human behavior. What have researchers interested in positive psychology managed to learn so far? How can psychologists explain the fact that despite difficulties, the majority of people manage to live lives of dignity and purpose? We will learn about the beginnings of the field of positive psychology and how researchers define and measure happiness. Then, we will discuss misconceptions about happiness (e.g., can money buy happiness?) and the scientifically-validated factors/strategies that can help us thrive. We will end by reviewing critically what we learned and evaluating the limitations of the available science of happiness.

Patty Van Cappellen, Director, Interdisciplinary Behavioral Science Research Institute, SSRI: patty.vancappellen@duke.edu

DUKE AND DURHAM'S RESPONSE TO THE 1918 INFLUENZA AND THE 2020 COVID-19 PANDEMICS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES 100 YEARS MAKE? (EHD 290T)

6 This for-credit tutorial class to be offered Summer II will engage students in readings on topics such as different approaches to studying pandemics, the history of Durham, and qualitative methods. Its primary focus will be learning by doing. In addition to contributing to our knowledge of Duke and Durham in times of pandemics, students will, over the course of the project, gain an understanding of the fundamentals of research design, archival research, qualitative analysis, and case study methodology.

Whitney Welsh, Research Scientist, SSRI: whitney.welsh@duke.edu

The deadly COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on U.S. citizens, residents, society, and economy are among the greatest crises the U.S. has ever faced. Duke's Social Science Research Institute is responding to this crisis in real time by taking steps to initiate and coordinate research, reach out to students] to help us navigate through this extraordinarily difficult period. Interdisciplinary teams of faculty, researchers, and students from across Duke University and Duke Health System are collaborating on identifying and implementing vital, evidence-based strategies to address the pandemic and its widespread effects.

These highlights demonstrate the work from the Institute's faculty, researchers, and students since mid-March 2020.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND SHAPING POLICY

SURVEY OF SOCIAL DISTANCING IN NORTH CAROLINA

1

The Duke Forge/Duke University Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) COVID19 Digital Lab commissioned a survey conducted by Clarity + Campaign Labs (CCL) from March 29-31, 2020 and repeated April 4-6 and 11-13. Designed to examine social distancing in response to the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID19) pandemic, the survey asks a demographically representative sample of about 1,200 North Carolinians about their behavior in the past week. The initial survey provides insight into behaviors prior to the statewide “Stay at Home” order issued by Governor Cooper that took effect at 5:00 pm on March 30, 2020, while subsequent administrations examine responses unfolding over time. This survey will be repeated weekly through May.

See the latest survey findings: <https://bit.ly/2VhRvE3>

Don Taylor, Faculty Director, SSRI: don.taylor@duke.edu

DUKE AND DURHAM’S RESPONSE TO THE 1918 INFLUENZA AND THE 2020 COVID-19 PANDEMICS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES 100 YEARS MAKE?

Working with Duke’s Story+ program, this project will engage students in learning about pandemics and different approaches to studying them, the history of Duke and of Durham, and qualitative methods. Participants will use a hands-on approach to examine the University’s and city’s response to each of these pandemics in context, and will thereby contribute to our knowledge of public and policy reactions to pandemics, to Duke and Durham and their shared yet distinct history and nature, as well as developing skills in research design, archival research, qualitative analysis, and case study methodology.

Whitney Welsh, Research Scientist, SSRI: whitney.welsh@duke.edu

VOTING IN A PANDEMIC: WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR FALL 2020?

Working with Professor Gunther Peck and building on his work with the Hart Leadership Program, SSRI will coordinate a group of vertically integrated summer research teams focusing on U.S. electoral institutions in the pandemic. These teams will bring together mentored groups of graduate and undergraduate students to examine the ways in which considerations around health, safety, and distancing may affect the operation and adaptation of activities including voter registration and polling. Likely topics include students as voters and the ways in which U.S. electoral institutions pose particular barriers to young, geographically mobile citizens, but may also organize to examine other topics depending on student interests. At the discretion of student participants and faculty mentors, team projects may continue into and even beyond fall.

Alexandra Cooper, Associate Director for Education and Training, SSRI: cooper@duke.edu

THE CORONAVIRUS AND COVID-19:
UNDERSTANDING ITS EFFECTS ON AND THE BELIEFS AND RESPONSES OF ORDINARY CITIZENS

The effects of the novel coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) are severe and the only tools widely available to reduce its impacts right now are social distancing and personal hygiene. In short, at present, public policy and group and individual decision-making are our only tools to fight the spread of the coronavirus. Yet the messages ordinary Americans – on whose choices the success of our SARS-COV-2 efforts hinge – have received about this novel disease vary widely, as do the sources to which they turn for information, their views about the integrity of those sources, and their decisions in the context of this pandemic. We seek to survey participants in the MURDOCK study to understand how they are learning about the coronavirus, what they believe, how their lives have been affected by the response to the crisis, and how that information, their experiences, and other factors (such as public policies and their employers’ responses, if any) are shaping their behaviors.

Alexandra Cooper, Associate Director for Education and Training, SSRI: cooper@duke.edu