

New Orleans after Katrina

Investigators:

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Connie Moon Sehat, Director of Digital Scholarship Initiatives, Emory University

In the aftermath of the 2005 storm season, thoughts of New Orleans have become inseparable from memories of Hurricane Katrina. Amidst the onslaught of journalistic and popular attention paid to the City of New Orleans in Katrina's wake, questions about the social, economic, and class consequences of the hurricane remain unaddressed. What is the effect—even the cost—of “reading” New Orleans and its history primarily through a Katrina lens?

Investigators Leslie Harris, Associate Professor in History and African American Studies, Michael Moon, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts, and Connie Moon Sehat, Director of Digital Scholarship Initiatives and Adjunct Faculty in the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts, are creating a single software platform that will address “New Orleans after Katrina.” When finished, the platform will integrate a critical social history of New Orleans with new methods in digital humanities scholarship and new research in media studies and media coverage of Katrina and its aftermath. By developing an interactive online research environment, Harris and her team will encourage scholars and students of New Orleans to rethink what they know about the city and about its history before and after Katrina, with particular attention to race and class. In addition, the project's media studies focus will encourage scholars to explore new types of research architecture in an Internet age: what are implications of studying the multimedia dimensions of New Orleans and Katrina coverage by the North American press?

Harris and her team envision a project that will foster intra-university collaboration among the Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts, History and African American Studies, the Manuscript and Rare Book Library, and the newly-forming Digital Scholarship Commons. When it is finished, “New Orleans after Katrina” will invite viewers to explore from a new vantage point the enduring problems of American society that Hurricane Katrina so visibly forced upon the public. As such, the project also promises to model new outlets for humanistic scholars to bring together the best of their disciplines with the most pressing problems of their society today.