

Katrina, New Orleans, and the Fate of the Nation
Rutgers University Workshop*: Toward an Edited Volume
191 College Avenue, Center for Race and Ethnicity

This meeting draws together a diverse group of Rutgers University faculty for sustained discussion. The workshop is a crucial step toward the conceptualization of a unique cross-disciplinary book: a series of intersecting essays, papers, and reflections on race and ethnicity in America, using the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and the Gulf region as our focus and point of departure.

WORKSHOP GOALS: The goals of the workshop are: 1) to facilitate discussion and help develop and refine the core themes, audiences, and trajectory of this cross-disciplinary project, 2) to provide concrete feedback and suggestions for the pre-circulated papers, outlines, and chapter drafts, and chart a course for revisions to the essays and the overall volume; 3) to deepen our understanding of the current developments in the region, and the public conversation about Katrina and the rebuilding of New Orleans, and 4) to design a book that will, in the end, have a broad reach and impact, using the case of Katrina and New Orleans to shape thinking, critical reflection, and policy regarding race, ethnicity, vulnerability, health, rebuilding, and cultural heritage in America.

The workshop is organized as three panels – reflecting the themes of our earlier meeting. But let us not assume that this outline foreshadows the organization of the book. Our thinking is that this question – the organization of the book – is very much on the table for discussion throughout our meeting. This design below is intended to facilitate discussion.

* The workshop is not a closed discussion – anyone interested in the topic is welcome; but in order to facilitate the conversation among authors, we have not advertised the meeting as a public event. Anyone interested should contact Melissa Stein at mstein@history.rutgers.edu.

STRUCTURE OF EACH SESSION: In order to maximize discussion, we're opening each session with about FIVE MINUTES FROM EACH AUTHOR. (We've asked authors to send their papers, overviews, presentations, or outlines to us in advance, and these will be forwarding them to you shortly.) We'll then move straight to discussion, and (below) I'll be asking a few others to help launch the discussion (with an eye toward the goals 1-5 outlined above). At that point, we'll move toward general discussion.

On Saturday, from 10-12, a small group of those able to attend will meet to discuss the main findings of the workshop, to discuss each contribution and the overall plan for the volume, and (in general) to chart a course forward.

Thanks again for your commitment to this important endeavor. We look forward to continuing this conversation, and to an excellent meeting and a fantastic book.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 10, 2006

9:00-9:30 a.m. BREAKFAST

9:20-10:30 a.m. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS**, Keith Wailoo

WHERE NEW ORLEANS NOW STANDS: comments and observations on rebuilding and the current state of the public discussion, David Troutt and Roland Anglin

10:30-10:55 **FIVE MINUTES FROM EACH AUTHORS** followed by discussion

**I. VULNERABILITY AND RACIAL GEOGRAPHY:
LEVEES, FLOOD PLAINS, BUSES, AND DISASTER AREAS**

■ [Mia Bay](#) (History) On the question of who could and could not get out of New Orleans, and how they traveled, with reference to the history of racial divisions in access to transportation in the state, as well the racial geography of New Orleans

■ [William M. Rodgers III](#) (Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy)

On race, class and natural disasters beyond Hurricane Katrina and Wilma--a look at disparate racial and class impacts across natural disasters

■ [Karen O'Neill](#) (Human Ecology) On the lack of coordination between local land use planning and federal flood control decisions that has helped produce settlement patterns along the lower Mississippi River that make poor African-Americans and whites vulnerable

■ [Roland Anglin](#) (Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy) On levees, wetlands, the policy environment, and the planning choices that left the residents of New Orleans and other places in the Gulf Coast vulnerable

■ James K. Mitchell (Geography) On disasters, human responses to environmental hazards, and the implications of Katrina for environmental policy and planning.

10:55-11:15 **DISCUSSANTS** – Keith Wailoo, and TBA

11:15-11:50 **GROUP DISCUSSION**

11:50-12:10 **FIVE MINUTES FROM EACH AUTHOR** followed by discussion

II. BODIES, HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH IN DISASTER ZONES

■ [Keith Wailoo](#) (History/Health Policy) On the pictures of disease, health, and illness that emerged in the wake of Katrina, and their broader historical, cultural, and policy significance

■ Nancy Boyd-Franklin (Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology) A video and discussion on psychological trauma resulting from race, racism, and perceived racism in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, based on training for Red Cross and mental health volunteers.

■ [Ann Fabian](#) (American Studies/History) On the startlingly visible bodies of Katrina, the rituals improvised around the corpses, the great social and economic cleavage that the storm and destruction exposed

■ [Evie Shockley](#) (English). On reading the aftermath of Katrina as an instance of Gothic homelessness, which describes the condition of people who, like African Americans, are marginalized, disempowered, and underresourced by society's powerbrokers' use of ideologies of home.

12:10-12:30 p.m. DISCUSSANTS – Mia Bay, Roland Anglin

12:30 - 1:10 p.m. GROUP DISCUSSION

1:10-2:10 p.m. LUNCH

2:10-2:30 p.m. **FIVE MINUTES FROM EACH AUTHOR** followed by discussion

III. RACE, REBUILDING, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

■ Rick Mizelle (History) On jazz, jazz funerals, and the funeral shops of Bourbon and other streets in the cultural and social fabric of New Orleans – past and present

■ [Alison Isenberg](#) (History) On urban design, preservation ideologies and the racialized dimensions of rebuilding

■ [Niki Dickerson](#) (Labor Studies and Employment Relations) On the potential employment barriers facing displaced Gulf Coast residents, and patterns of residential segregation and racial employment inequality

■ John Aiello (Psychology) On the rebuilding of networks in the city, and on leadership and communication after environmental disasters.

2:30-2:45 p.m. DISCUSSANTS – Keith Wailoo, Ann Fabian

2:45 - 3:30 p.m. **GROUP DISCUSSION**

3:30-5:00 p.m. **DISCUSSION ABOUT THE MAJOR THEMES, ORGANIZATION, SCHEDULE, TIMING, AND FUTURE TRAJECTORY OF THE PROJECT**

*****SATURDAY NOVEMBER 11, 2006*****

10:00-12:00 p.m. **GENERAL DISCUSSION OF MAJOR THEMES & THE PLAN FOR AN EDITED VOLUME**

Discussion led by: Keith Wailoo, Roland Anglin, Mia Bay