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Special Topics: Novels in Real Time
Professor Starr
Project Pitch Draft
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1. A step back in time: The Onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in Literature
2. In this project I am analyzing how Louise Erdrich's inclusion of a relatively current events specifically the Covid-19 pandemic in her most recent novel *The Sentence* affects how readers view her book two years after the onset of the pandemic while also considering how it will affect future readers who didn't have the same proximity or life experience with the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Questions that arise from this problem: How are people who experienced living through the pandemic affected by reading about the pandemic? How will future readers experience reading this novel? How will future readers of this book judge the actions people took during this pandemic? How does the fact that this focuses on the individual level compare with the overall pandemic?
4. These questions are important to answer because the ability to distance ourselves from the events we read about in literature varies. Looking at a text written when the Spanish influenza happened and people's response to it may be very different than reading one which includes the Covid-19 pandemic and people's response to it or it could be similar and that could tell us something about the human response to disease.

5. Annotated Bibliography

Class interlocutors

The Spatiotemporal Topography of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway: Capturing Britain's transition to a Relative Modernity by Paul Tolliver Brown

--I plan to use the key term relativity which is defined as "the identity of a single object can be understood in relation to all others"

The Debt of Memory: Reparations, Imagination, and History in Toni Morrison's Beloved. This article is by Richard Perez

--I plan to use key term trauma which is defined as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience

New sources

Plagues: A Personal Time Capsule

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A631634187/LitRC?u=mlln_w_westsc&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=11b9d1d8

-this piece is a personal story about the writer's experience with her Aunt Caroline contracting Covid-19. She talks about what it was like as the pandemic began to progress in the beginning when people had just started hearing about a virus in China. She also talks about vaccinations and learning about them as well.

-Davis, Ryan. "Don Juan versus bacteriology: competing narrative explanations of the 1918-19 'Spanish' flu epidemic in Spain." *Ometeca*, vol. 16, annual 2011, pp. 171+. Gale Literature Resource Center,

link.gale.com/apps/doc/A293109507/LitRC?u=mlln_w_westsc&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=419ef33b. Accessed 13 Apr. 2022.

-In this Ryan Davis discusses the idea that literature can help people process really big ideas like a pandemic for example. He discusses two different explanations that emerged in Spain about the "Spanish" Flu. in this Don Juan is used as a comparison for Covid-19. "Zorrilla's Don Juan is a character perpetually on the move"

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>

Center for disease control. List of symptoms of the Spanish Flu

[The Spanish Influenza Transformed Everyday Life. But Artists Struggled to Visualize Its Impact](#)

-this website talks about how artists tried to encompass diseases in their work. This article has both an argument that art can't fully cover something so big and a counterargument that even if it can't that doesn't mean it doesn't offer/show us something. It also discusses how Covid-19 symptoms and Spanish Flu symptoms are similar.

[The Next Pandemic Could Come Soon and Be Deadlier | Center For Global Development](#)

-this talks about the fact that there could be another pandemic soon. It discusses various important things like the fact that different countries have less ability/resources to deal with another pandemic.

[The Kind of Outbreak Scientists Saw Coming | Columbia Public Health](#)

-This talks about how scientists had predicted that a pandemic was coming before Covid-19 first ensued. This also discusses how animal-human contraction of a coronavirus has happened many times. Climate change is causing animals to migrate to different places = viruses moving and traveling.

[The 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic in the United States: Lessons Learned and Challenges Exposed - PMC](#)

-this article also talks about what the Spanish flu taught people about diseases. It talks about the overwhelming nature of having many people in the prime of their life. This talks about the literature that was written during this time and that there are still questions that haven't been answered.

[The Spanish flu and the fiction literature - PMC](#)

This specifically looks at the Spanish Flu in fictional literature. It talks about how the flu was named and different pieces that discuss it. It looks at its origin and the treatment. It looks at pieces written by both American and British writers.

https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A293109507/LitRC?u=mclin_w_westsc&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=419ef33b

6. Key terms

1. Relativity: (Brown) the identity of any single object can be understood in relation to all others
2. Anthropocene: (Mertens) the current geological age in regards to human's impact on the environment/the effect that will be seen after humans are no longer present
3. pandemic - (n) a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease over a whole country or the world at a particular time ,
 - (adj) (of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or the world.