



## **After Harvey: Putting History, Disasters into Context**

### **UH Interdisciplinary Faculty Combine Forces to Create New Course**

Inspired by Houston's recent experience of Hurricane Harvey, UH faculty combined forces to develop a new undergraduate course designed to encourage students to view Gulf Coast history from an interdisciplinary perspective and contextualize disasters such as the Galveston hurricane of 1900, Katrina in New Orleans, and Harvey in Houston, within the broader sociohistorical and political-economic landscape.

Dr. Keith McNeal, associate professor of anthropology in the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, and his colleagues feel it's important for students who have just recently been through the recent experience of Harvey in Houston "to begin learning and thinking about it critically, not only as residents of the area but also as future professionals and citizens of the city, perhaps changing future career paths and contributions."

The course is the brainchild of Dr. McNeal and Dr. Christian Eberhart, professor of religious studies in the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies, Dr. Carl Lindahl, a professor in the Department of English who is also a folklorist well-known for having orchestrated research on Katrina survivor and evacuation storytelling in Houston, and Dr. Kristin Wintersteen, assistant professor in the Department of History, who already teaches a capstone course on critical issues in Gulf Coast history.

For the Hurricane Harvey portion of the course, local speakers will be brought in, such as anthropologist Roberto Barrios from Southern Illinois University (speaking on the anthropology of disaster and flood risk in Houston); Steven Klineberg from the Kinder Institute at Rice University; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers folks from the Addicks and Barker Reservoirs; the leadership of #BLMHTX; and a Gulf Coast environmental justice activist group. Students will also be embarking on field trips, such as to the Houston Ship Channel.

Students from History, Anthropology, Religious Studies and beyond are all conducting independent research projects on some aspect of Gulf Coast or Greater Caribbean history more generally, in addition to a number of important projects on various dimensions of the impact of Harvey in Houston. They'll be presenting these projects during the final two weeks of the semester.