



IRS Spring Academy 2022

Investigating Space(s): Current Theoretical and Methodological Approaches: Part 5 – Spaces of Infection



Tuesday | 31 May 2022 | 4pm CET | Webinar

Invitation to Public Keynote The 1918–1919 Influenza Pandemic: Health and Economic Impacts

by Prof. Dr. Karen Clay | Carnegie Mellon's Heinz College

The COVID-19 pandemic took the world by surprise. While the first documented case was in December of 2019, it would take just three months before the World Health Organization (WHO) would declare that COVID-19 was a pandemic. As of March 2022, COVID-19 has been officially responsible for more than 6 million deaths.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded, many are drawn to the parallels with the 1918 influenza pandemic. Both are respiratory diseases caused by a virus, could spread from casual close contact, and reached most parts of the globe within months. The case mortality rates for both pandemics are higher than a typical seasonal influenza, with the 1918 influenza pandemic killing tens of millions worldwide. In both pandemics, non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) like social distancing and mask wearing were used to control the spread, though in 1918 the restrictions were far less stringent. These parallels have renewed interest in understanding the health and economic effects of the 1918 pandemic.

This talk will survey the literature on the 1918 influenza pandemic, with a particular focus on understanding its health and economic effects. It will begin by providing an overview of key contextual and epidemiological details. Karen Clay will then examine spatial variation in the effects of the pandemic, including spatial variation in mortality and in the associated economic effects. The factors underlying this variation, including the role of non-pharmaceutical interventions will be discussed. Throughout the talk she will highlight important areas for future work.

Bio:

Prof. Dr. Karen Clay is Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon's Heinz College. She holds courtesy appointments at the Tepper School of Business and in the Department of Engineering and Public Policy, is a Senior Fellow at the Scott Institute for Energy Innovation at Carnegie Mellon, is an affiliated faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Law, and is a research associate at the NBER. Professor Clay's research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the Sloan Foundation, and the Heinz Foundation. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Political Economy*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, and *American Economic Review*, *Papers and Proceedings*. Before coming to Carnegie Mellon, Karen Clay was an assistant professor at the University of Toronto. She received her Ph.D. from Stanford University and her B.A. in Economics and Math from the University of Virginia.

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