

Selected Topics in Sociological Research
Sociology of Disability
SOC395H1F – Section L0401 -- SS1086
Fall 2013, Fridays 3-5pm

Course Description: This course treats disability as a socio-cultural phenomenon. It examines competing definitions and conceptions of disability and their social and political consequences.

Instructor: Dr. Tanya Titchkosky, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Social Justice Education, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

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Teaching Assistant: Rachael Carson is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Sociology. Her interests include gender, sexuality, culture and urban spaces. She is currently working on her dissertation on intimate partnership and relationships.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, October 1st, 10 -12:00; November 5, 12th, 16th, 10-12:00 & by appointment. At: Department of Sociology, 725 Spadina Ave, TA Room 225.

Email: Please, expect a reply from either Tanya or Rachael within 24 hours (not including weekends)

Prerequisite: The prerequisite to take this course is a 200 level sociology course. Students without this prerequisite can be removed at any time and without notice.

Course text: *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Titchkosky and Michalko, (2009), available at the U of T Bookstore, 214 College St., Toronto, ON M5T 3A1 (416) 640-7900. This text will be supplemented with readings posted to blackboard or online.

Background Readings: <http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/library/>

“The aim of the Disability Archive UK is to provide disabled people, students and scholars with an interest in this and related fields, access to the writings of those disability activists, writers and allies whose work may no longer be easily accessible in the public domain. It is hoped that the documents available via the Archive will help to inform current and future debates on disability and related issues. The Archive will be periodically expanded to include other material as and when it becomes available. Colin Barnes”

There are three themes that orient this course:

Theme One: *Traditional Conceptions of Disability:* We will learn to think sociologically/critically about bio-medical, individualistic, bureaucratic, and deviance conceptions of disability.

Theme Two: *The Social Model of Disability:* We will learn what it means to conceive of disability as a complex social phenomenon.

Theme Three: *Disability as a Critical Space for Critical Inquiry into the Human Condition*

All three themes overlap. They allow us to address taken-for-granted conceptions of disability as well as how contemporary power arrangements make use of “disability” to order matters of race, class, gender, sexuality as well as conceptions of the deserving and undeserving poor. In other words, a major focus of this course is to rethink normalcy by examining competing definitions and uses of the concept of disability in Canada and beyond. The guiding principle is that only through critical engagement with the conceptions of disability that already orient us to the world and organize its people, does it become possible to address the marginalization of millions and millions of people worldwide.

By introducing “disability studies,” this course aims to provide students with:

-A capacity to question the significance of understanding disability as an individualized-medicalized trouble and to contrast this with understanding disability as a complex social phenomenon.

-A capacity to use social theory so as to examine how the built environment, knowledge production, and norms of interaction combine so as to produce disability.

-A capacity to analyze cultural representations of disability and uncover taken for granted conceptions of normal/abnormal, ability/inability, independence/dependence, etc., as they work to organize what it means to be human.

Evaluation:

Test One: 25%, Take home, Due October 4th.

Paper: 40% Due in class November 15th

Test Two: 25%, November 29th

Participation: 10%

Evaluation Details (furthered developed in class)

Take home Test one: A description or definition of disability will be provided. In an essay, no longer than 2 pages show how it individualized, medicalizes and/ or bureaucratizes disability.
Due 30% October 4th, Include name and student number.

Paper: 45% November 15th, 6-8 pages, double spaced, 12 point font, one inch margins, creative title with your name and student number.

Option 1 Gather *one* definition, description, *or* one representation of disability. Show how it individualized, medicalizes and/or bureaucratizes disability and then discuss the implicit social and political consequences. Conclude by either arguing for why a sociological analysis is important, why a more social understanding of disability is essential, or by demonstrating that a more social understanding of disability can teach us something about the human condition.

Option 2 Through course readings and your independent sociological research, write an essay that addresses the following question: “What is disability?” Your essay can conclude with a discussion of the socio-political consequences of that accompany this understanding of disability.

Test two: Last week of class 25%, November 29th,

20 multiple choice and 20 short answers from readings and lectures.

Readings

Part I: Studying Dominant Conceptions of Disability

September 13th Week 1: Introductions, Access, & the Question of Disability

September 20th Week 2: Ruling Conceptions of Disability: Medico- bureaucratic

World Report on Disability (2011)

http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/

Read Entire Summary (3-23)

Advancing the Inclusion of People with Disabilities - 2009 Federal Disability Report

<http://www12.hrsdc.gc.ca/p.5bd.2t.1.3ls@-eng.jsp?pid=4168>

Background: Max Weber:

<http://www.cf.ac.uk/socsi/undergraduate/introsoc/weber12.html>

September 27th Week 3:

Introduction: The Study of Disability vrs Disability Studies

“Forward, Preface” & “Introduction” v -14 of *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*

Background:

C. Thomas, 2004. “How is disability understood? An examination of Sociological Approaches
<http://www.idris.ac.uk/book/Dis%20and%20Soc%20paper.pdf>

October 4th Week 4:

Oliver, **Ch 1** “The Social Model In Context” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 19-30.

Finkelstein, <http://www.independentliving.org/docs3/finkelstein01a.html>

October 11th Week 5:

Disability as Deviance

Titchkosky, “**Ch. 3**, Disability Studies: The Old and the New” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 38-62.

Background

Goffman <http://sociology.about.com/od/Works/a/Stigma-Notes-On-The-Management-Of-Spoiled-Identity.htm>

October 18th Week 6:

In class test

The Promise of Studying Normalcy and the Normate

Garland-Thomson, **Ch. 4** “Disability, Identity and Representation: An Introduction, in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 63-74.

Miller, **Ch. 14** Visible Minorities: Deaf, Blind, and Special Needs adult Native Literacy Access, in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 231-235.

PART TWO: Disability, Disability Studies & Critical Relations to Culture

October 25th Week 7:

Paul Hunt (1966) “**Critical Condition**”

<http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/Hunt-critical-condition.pdf>

Overboe, **Ch 5** “Difference in Itself: Validating Disabled People’s Lived Experience” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 75-88.

November 1st Week 8:

Michalko, **CH 6** “Coming Face to Face with Suffering,” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 91-114.

Ghai, **Ch. 19**, “Disabled Women: An excluded Agenda of Indian Feminism.” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 296-311.

Drop date Nov 4th

November 8th Week 9: all of Part III “Institutionalizing Normalcy”

Longmore, **Ch. 9** “Conspicuous Contribution and American Cultural Dilemmas: Telethon Rituals of Cleansing and Renewal,” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 137-157.

Reaume, **Ch. 10** “Patients at Work: Insane Asylums Inmates’ Labour in Ontario 1841-1900,” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 158-180.

November 15th Week 10:

Watts, Ivan Eugene and Erevelles, Nirmala. (2004). “These Deadly Times: Reconceptualizing School Violence by Using Critical Race Theory and Disability Studies,” In *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 41 (2): 271 - 299.

Malacrida, **Ch. 11** Discipline and Dehumanization in Total Institution: Institutional Survivors’ Descriptions of Time-Out Rooms, in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 181- 198.

November 22nd Week 11:

Dossa, **Ch. 17** “Disability, Marginality, and the Nation-State – Negotiating Social Markers of Difference: Fahimeh’s Story.” in *Rethinking Normalcy* 270-284.

McRuer, **Ch. 20** “We Were Never Identified: Feminism, Queer Theory and a Disabled World,” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 312-317.

November 29th, Week 12: TEST 25% In Class.

Statement on Access

In this course, access and accommodation are understood as:

- a right protected by law;
- services provided to registered recipients at accessibility services or by other service providers;
- a process which requires the continuous conversation, work and/or negotiation among all, including those who do or do not self-identify as disabled and allies.

This course understands that access and accommodation are always an ongoing and shifting project and welcomes conversations and work at the level of individual rights and needs, in relation to structural barriers and activist pursuits, and as part of scholarly questioning and research. This course is oriented to welcoming disability as part of its life and work while reshaping unexamined conceptions of disability that are doing the job of excluding students, staff and faculty. All people are invited to work toward inclusion of all.

What to do if you have an access or accommodation issue that you wish to address?

The University of Toronto recommends that students immediately register at Accessibility Services <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility.htm> or <http://disability.sa.utoronto.ca>

However, there are many other options, all of which begin with communication with each other, with me, or with the TA. If you want to pursue the question of access and accommodation more fully please consider checking out “Beyond Compliance” <http://bccs.syr.edu> or another disability studies course. Or consider reading, *The Question of Access: Disability, Space, Meaning* which I wrote in response to access issues here at the University of Toronto.

Rules and Regulations as provided by the University of Toronto

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Plagiarism

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters” in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

It is expected that you attend all classes and that every attempt to be present while attending class should also be made.

No work for this course can be submitted to anyone other than the TA or to the Professor. Do not fax, email or leave your work with anyone other than TA or Professor. All work is due on its due date and at the start of the class. Late work will be accepted with a penalty of 2% per day late up to a maximum of 20% at which point the work is too late to be accepted without proper documentation from a physician or college registrar.

Your policy regarding make-up tests; such as, students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero; UNLESS within three days of the missed test, students who wish to write the make-up test give their TA a written request for special consideration which explains why the test was missed, accompanied by proper documentation from a physician or college registrar (**see below**). A request should be accompanied by contact information (the student's telephone number and email address) so the date, time and place of the make-up test can be communicated to the student. A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test. Instead, the grade assigned for the missed test will be the same as the grade the student earns for the other test in this course.

DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. Telling the professor or TA why you missed a deadline or a test will not be considered.

- In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor's note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or to your TA during their office hours.
- If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or to your TA during their office hours.

LECTURE AND READING ONLINE

Academic reading is an acquired skill. It is important to learn how to efficiently and effectively approach the assigned readings in order to understand, retain and apply what you have read. The following handouts may be useful.

How to take lecture notes <http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Perfect-Lecture-Notes>

How to get the most out of reading <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/reading.html>

Critical reading toward critical writing <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/critrdg.html>

Taking notes from reading <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/notes.html>