

Selected Topics in Sociological Research
Sociology of Disability
SOC493H1: Sociology of Disability L0101
Fall 2014, Tuesdays 5-7 pm

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 Social Justice Education, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

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Communication: Expect a reply within 24 hours (not including weekends) for email or phone.

Prerequisite: The prerequisite to take this course is a 300 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 Caversham Booksellers, 98 Harbord St., Toronto, ON, M5S 1G6 Canada tel. 416 944 0962 • fax 416 944 0963 open Mon-Wed 9-6, Thur-Fri 9-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5. This is an independent book seller who says “We also provide students with a 5% discount when they purchase their course texts from us.” This text will be supplemented with readings posted to blackboard or online.

Volunteer Note Takers: Each week, 2 students will be asked to send their notes from class to me and I will post to the class on blackboard.

Attendance is Mandatory. An attendance record will be kept; I expect that you will send me your regrets if you are unable to attend due to illness or other legitimate reason.

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.”

There are three themes that orient this course – Sociology of Disability

Theme One: *Traditional Conceptions of Disability:* We will learn to think sociologically/critically about bio-medical, economic, 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, however, always overlap. These themes will help us to learn to address taken-for-granted conceptions of disability as well as how contemporary power arrangements make use of “disability” in order to manage matters of race, class, gender, sexuality as well as conceptions of the deserving and undeserving poor. These social categories are tied up with the ongoing production, representation and experience of the normal character of everyday life. 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, can we possibly address the marginalization of millions and millions of people worldwide.

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

-A capacity to recognize the objectification of disability and to explore the social and political consequences of this activity.

-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:

20% Take home exercise: Due October 14th.

30% Ruptures, Resistances, Raptures: 3 short writing assignments X10% each (throughout term).

40% Paper Due in last class, December 2nd

10% Participation: Attendance (being present to the class, classmates, readings, issues, learning).

Evaluation Details (to be furthered developed in class as well.)

Take home exercise = 20% A description or definition or depiction of disability will be provided. In an essay, no longer than 2 pages show how it individualized, medicalizes and/ or bureaucratizes disability. **Due 20% October 14^h in class.** Include name and student number.

3X Ruptures, Resistances, Raptures: 3 short writing assignments X10% each = 30%

3 times during the term, each student will need to submit by email or on paper (and may also verbally present at the start of class) two sentences regarding a moment in the readings, however fleeting, where you experienced something startling or unexpected. These two artfully written sentences should follow the following form. One sentence describes the content that provided for the moment of “Rupture, Resistance, or Rapture” and the following sentence theorizes the meaning of this moment. **Due anytime throughout the term (tip: the earlier you do this the more you can learn while leaving you with less to do at the end of the term).**

Paper: 40% Due December 2nd, final day of class. 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.

Option 3 – to be developed in class together a paper topic that allows you demonstrate a sociologically informed disability studies analysis of some aspect of “normal” everyday life.

Participation: 10% Attendance - being present to the class, classmates, readings, issues, learning.

Volunteer Work: Each week, 2 students will be asked to volunteer as class note takers and to submit their notes to me prior to the next class. Upon receiving these two sets of notes, I will post them to blackboard for the benefit of the whole of the class.

Reading: In this course, we will conduct close and detailed readings of the text. Please make sure you bring your textbook and/or other reading materials with you to each class.

Readings

Part I: Studying Dominant Conceptions of Disability

September 9th Week 1: Introductions, Access, & the Question of Disability

September 16th Week 2: Ruling Conceptions of Disability: Medico-bureaucratic

-World Report on Disability (2011), Read Entire Summary (3-23)

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

-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>

-Or: <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/index.shtml> “Awareness”

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

September 23th Week 3:

Introduction: The Study of Disability vrs Disability Studies

“Forward,” “Preface” & “Introduction” v -14 of *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader* (We will contrast a sociological version of disability to a more neo-liberal one that suggests that disability makes good economic sense: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=6264> (posted on blackboard as well))

September 30th Week 4: The Social Model of Disability

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

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

October 7th Week 5: (Receive take home assignment due next week)

More than Deviance: 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.

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> (For more <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4014>)

October 14th Week 6: (Take home assignment due in class)

Just a legal issue? -- “Law and Social Space” (Ch 12 & 13: 198-225)

Rioux **Ch 12** “Bending Toward Justice” and Vera Chounard, **Ch 13** “Legal Peripheries.”

(For further challenges to legal cliché’s see <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472420916>)

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

October 21st Week 7:

Paul Hunt (1966) “**Critical Condition**” Reading on-line: <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.

October 28th 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 3rd

November 4th 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.

Low, **Ch. 15** “Negotiating Identities, Negotiating Environments: An Interpretation of the Experiences of Students with Disabilities,” in *Rethinking Normalcy*, 236-250.

November 11th 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. (On Blackboard)

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

November 18th NO CLASS

PART THREE: Questioning the Place of Disability within Critical Work

November 25th, Week 11:

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

TBA: Race and Disability – Addressing the intersections.

December 2nd, Week 12: Lecture: What is disability studies & Why Bother? Paper due.

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

Kudlick, **Ch. 2.** “Disability History: Why We Need Another “Other.” 31-35.

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.

In this course, I understand that access and accommodation are always an ongoing and shifting project and welcome 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.

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://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/> .

Also, there is Students for Barrier Free Access, SBA, at U of T. <http://sba.sa.utoronto.ca/>

However, there are many other options, all of which begin with communication with each other, with me. 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.

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.

Submitting Assignments

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.

Missed Deadlines

Students who miss a paper deadline will receive a mark of zero; UNLESS within three days of the missed deadline, you give your TA a written request for special consideration which explains why the deadline was missed, accompanied by proper documentation from a physician or college registrar (see below). **DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR**

If you miss 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 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>