

New Topics in Sociology: Sociology of Disability
SOC 499H1 F LEC5101 2021 - Sociology of Disability
Fall 2021, Tuesday 6:10-8pm; Zoom

Course Description:

This Disability Studies course explores disability as a socio-cultural phenomenon of growing import to sociology. It examines competing definitions and conceptions of disability and their social and political consequences in everyday life through three themes.

Theme One: *Traditional Conceptions of Disability:* We will learn to think sociologically about bio-medical, economic, individualistic, bureaucratic, and deviance conceptions of disability; this includes examining everyday ways we are told we “should” articulate disability.

Theme Two: *The Social Model of Disability:* We will learn what it means to conceive of disability as a social phenomenon produced by capitalism and often used to feed its enterprise.

Theme Three: *Disability as a Critical Space for Critical Inquiry into the Human Condition.* Once “disability” becomes a bounded experience and identity, what does it teach us about “non-disability” and everyday expectations regarding group life? In what ways might disability experience invite us to not reproduce the values that feed current power structures and help us re-engage our inter-relatedness?

These three interrelated themes will help us to re-think normalcy while revealing how disability is used within contemporary power arrangements to manage matters of race, class, gender, sexuality, and conceptions of undeserving people at the limits of life and death.

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

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Office phone: 416-978-0451

Office Hours: By zoom arrangements.

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

Prerequisite: 1.0 SOC at the 300 or higher level. Students without this prerequisite can be removed at any time and without notice.

Course text: All texts are available through Quercus or by copying the link provided in the course outline into your browser. Please have the readings available during class time as we will often work closely with these text.

Volunteer Note Takers: Each week, 2 students will be asked to send their notes from class to me and will post to the class, via Quercus, under “discussions”. If any one wishes to add to these notes... thank you.

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 any other reason.

FREE: 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...”

There are three themes that orient our “Sociology of Disability” course:

Theme One: *Traditional Conceptions of Disability:*

Theme Two: *The Social Model of Disability:*

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 deserving and undeserving people at the limits of life and death. These social categories are tied up with the ongoing production 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 ordering everyday reality, can we possibly address the marginalization of millions and millions of people understood as “disabled”.

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, human/non-human, etc., as they work to organize conceptions of what it means to be human.

Evaluation 2021:

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

-Presentation (throughout) or Alternative = 20% (in class November 16th or before)

-Exercise 1– Due October 19th = 30%

-Paper Due in the second to last class, November 30th = 40%

Total=100%

-Note taking for class distribution – optional and volunteer

Submission of your work should occur in the class on the due date. However, every student has 3 bonus late dates that can be used for any assignment. Please note the number of late days used on the title page of your assignment. If you use your 3 bonus late days, and if you are without a valid medical excuse, 1% per day up to 10% per assignment will be deducted. No work will be accepted 5 days after the final day of classes.

All work can only be **submitted to me**; no one else, nowhere else. Only me – tanya.titchkosky@utoronto.ca with a Sociology Assignment # X in the subject heading.

Evaluation Details (these will be furthered developed in class time as well):

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

Presentation = 20% Please do not propose questions for the class to ask, nor small group work, nor games. Instead, present a brief overview of one class reading assigned for that week; then connect the reading to current social issue. Use the reading to unlock the meaning of the issue; use the social issue to demonstrate the meaning found or not found in the article. Make clear in what ways “disability” is and is not being conceived. 20 minutes = 20%

OR... Alternative Auto-ethnographic Exercise = 20%. Due by Nov 16th. Find a place you enjoy being. In one page, write a thick present tense description of this place *without saying why you enjoy it*. In two pages, describe who the space expects; describe how you know this. Go on to describe how the space has accommodated your enjoyment of it, yourself and/or others. In the final page, make use of the social model of disability so as to reflect on your two pages of writing and how the meaning of disability has been made. 3-4 pages.

OR...Alternative Disability Studies analysis = 20% Due by Nov 16th. In one page, discuss an appearance of disability in your life. In two to three pages, critically analyze this appearance by making use of two readings from the class to address your one-page description. Conclude by reflecting on either “Where does disability appear?” or “To whom or to what does disability belong?”

Presentation occur anytime though the term. Alternative assignments are due by Nov 16th or earlier. The sooner you do this work, the sooner you will receive comments and guidance from me.

Exercise 1– Due October 19th Keywords in Disability Studies = 30%

Each submission should include your name and student number, a creative title and content that takes one of the following forms.

Keyword Combo

Page one: clearly stating a keyword/concept from the DS literature, as well as one to three authors who use the term, discuss its significance, in particular, how it opens a door on a particular way of understanding the meaning of disability.

Page two: clearly stating a keyword the DS literature, as well as one to three authors who use the term, discuss its significance, in particular, how it opens a door on a particular way of understanding the meaning of disability.

Page three to five: Given the first two pages, what conception of disability has been made to appear? For example, are the meanings of disability as concretely expressed on page the first two pages of writing the same, different, alienated, contradictory, liberating, oppressive; or objectifying and individualizing; or bureaucratic, medical, or sociological?
Say and *show* how.

Paper: 40% Due November 30th, second to last class. 8 pages, double spaced, 12-point font, one inch margins, and creative title with your name and student number.

Option 1 Gather *one* definition, description, *or* one representation of disability. Show how it objectifies or individualizes disability through medical and/or bureaucratic interpretation/use of disability. Discuss the social and political consequences of this. Conclude by arguing for why a sociological analysis is important, or 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 should conclude with a discussion of the socio-political consequences that accompany this understanding of disability.

Option 3 Disability-izing the Curriculum.

For this paper you will need to obtain an existing (non-DS) course outline with the instructor’s and course name redacted. This redacted course outline should appear in an appendix.

Conduct the necessary research in order to re-make the course outline so that it is now invitational to *both* disabled people and to disability studies content. This will require both removing and adding to the course outline. Re-make the course outline, highlighting your modifications using track changes and comment bubbles. Following the re-designed course outline, please include a three-page justification for your modifications and a one page bibliography of new/additional readings. Please conclude with an argument for how your modifications *resist* perpetuating normal power relations over disability and thus resist individualizing or medicalizing disability; conclude by reflecting on the alternative sociological conception of disability now made present in the course.

Volunteer Work: Each week, 2 students will be asked to volunteer as class note takers and to submit their notes to Quercus “Discussion,” prior to the next class. Not only does this benefit the whole of the class but it also provides a different way for you to experience course content.

Reading: In this course, we will conduct close and detailed readings of the text. Please make sure you have available all assigned reading materials during class.

Detailed Course Outline & Readings

Part I: Studying Dominant Conceptions of Disability

September 14th Week 1: Introductions, Access, & the Question of Disability

September 21th Week 2: Ruling Conceptions of Disability: Medico-bureaucratic

-Max Weber: “**Bureaucracy**”

<http://www.prism.gatech.edu/~jwalsh6/Weber-Bureaucracy.html>

Extra: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/bureaucracy>

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

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

- Expanding the Circle: Monitoring the Human Rights Of Indigenous, First Nations, Aboriginal, Inuit And Métis People With Disabilities In Canada Site Report March, 2016

<http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EXPANDING-THE-CIRCLE-Holistic-Report-March-2016.pdf>

- Listening to Ontarians with Disabilities: Report Of The Third Review Of The Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act, [Of] 2005, by The Honourable David C. Onley – Reviewer January 2019 <https://www.aodareview2018.ca/>

Skim -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>

Optional Background Readings: <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/index.shtml>

“Awareness” and regarding disability as an economic agent: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=6264>

Optional: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-people-disabilities.html>

September 28th Week 3:

Introduction: The Study of Disability vrs Disability Studies

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

October 5th Week 4: The Social Model of Disability

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

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

Optional Background: Titchkosky, “Disability Studies: The Old and the New” from *Rethinking Normalcy*, 38-62.

October 12th Week 5:

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.

Davis, Lennard. "Constructing Normalcy" from *Enforcing Normalcy* (1995). Verso Press.
http://blogs.fad.unam.mx/asignatura/adriana_raggi/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Davis.pdf

Goffman <http://sociology.about.com/od/Works/a/Stigma-Notes-On-The-Management-Of-Spoiled-Identity.htm> (For more accounts of Goffman in DS <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4014>)

October 19th Week 6 *Exercise is Due in Class*

Just a legal issue? -- "Law and Social Space" (*Rethinking* Ch. 12 & 13: 198-225)

Rioux **Ch. 12** "Bending Toward Justice" and Vera Chouinard, **Ch 13** "Legal Peripheries." from *Rethinking Normalcy*

Ralph, M. 2015. "Impairment," in *Keywords for Disability Studies*. Eds., Adms, Reiss and Serlin. New York: New York University Press. 107-109.

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

An update to Chouinard <https://jenrinaldiphd.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/chouinard-like-alice.pdf>

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

October 26th Week 7:

Paul Hunt (1966) "**Critical Condition**" Reading on-line: <http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/Hunt-critical-condition.pdf>

Katherine Frazee, Disability in Dangerous Times. (2009) http://www.oadd.org/docs/Frazee_15-3.pdf *Journal on Developmental Disabilities*; Vol. 15 Issue 3, p118-124, 7p

Senier, Siobhan. (2012). "Rehabilitation Reservations: Native Narrations of Disability and Community," *Disability Studies Quarterly*. Vol 32, No 4 (2012). <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1641/3193>

November 2nd Week 8: Exclusion -- Rethinking Normal Assumptions.

Michalko, Rod. "I've got a Blind Prof": The Place of Blindness in the Academy." *The Teachers Body: Embodiment, Authority and Identity in the Academy*. Eds. Diana Freedman and Martha Stoddard Holmes. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003. 65-80.

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

Background – for exploration: Disability & Displacement from *Forced Migration*
<http://www.fmreview.org/disability.html> (July 2010).

November 8th - 12th Arts and Science Reading Week

Alternative Assignment due Nov 16th if you do not do a presentation

November 16th Week 9 “Institutionalizing Normalcy”

McGuire, Anne. (2016). Chapter 5 “On the Cultural Logic of Normative Violence” *War on Autism*. Michigan. University of Michigan Press. 186-224.

Malacrida, Claudia. (2015). “Chapter Excerpt” *A Special Kind of Hell*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 59-92.

November 23rd Week 10: Race, Disability and Colonialism

Gilroy, Paul. 2013. <https://www.bl.uk/eccles/pdf/baas2013.pdf> “Race and Racism in “The Age of Obama”” *The Eccles Centre for American Studies The Tenth Annual Eccles Centre for American Studies Plenary Lecture given at the British Association for American Studies Annual Conference, 2013* www.bl.uk/ecclescentre

Soldatic, Karen. (2015). “Postcolonial reproductions: disability, indigeneity and the formation of the white masculine settler state of Australia.” *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* Volume 21, 2015 - Issue 1: Disability and Colonialism: (Dis)encounters and Anxious Intersectionalities Download : <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2014.995352>

Background: 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.

November 30th Week 11: Paper Due = 40%

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

Mitchell, David with Sharron Snyder. (2015). “From Liberal to Neoliberal Future of Disability, Rights Based Inclusionism, Ablenationalism, and the Abled-Disabled.” In *The Biopolitics of Disability*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press. 35-62.

Background: “Narrative” David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder in *Keywords* 126-129.

December 3rd International Day of Disabled Persons

December 7th , Last Class – Week 12.

Lecture: What is disability studies now that you are part of it?

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

Goodley, Runswick-Cole, Lawthom. (2014.) 432-361. “Post-human Disability Studies” *Subjectivities*. PDF On-line.

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.

I also 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 degrade or exclude students, staff and faculty. All people are invited to work toward inclusion while exploring the meaning of disability as it appears and disappears in our classroom.

Dis-abilist language is something to think about in this classroom. To suggest that something or someone is lame, crazy, idiotic, or is blind, deaf or retarded will occasion us to collectively reflect on this language usage.

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/>

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” <https://bccesyracuse.wordpress.com/about/> or 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.

Submitting Assignments

No work for this course can be submitted to anyone other than the Professor. Do not fax, email or leave your work with anyone other than me. All work is due on its due date and at the start of the class. Put “Sociology Assignment (name of the assignment)” in the subject heading and email it to me.

Lateness. Submission of your work should occur in the class on the due date. Every student has 3 bonus late dates that can be used for any assignment. Upon turning in your assignment to me, please note the number of late days used. If you use your 3 bonus late days, and if you are without a valid medical excuse, 1% per day up to 10% per assignment will be deducted for each day late. No work will be accepted 5 days after the final day of classes.

Plagiarism statement

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work;
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while “editing”.

- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

To remind you of these expectations, and help you avoid accidental offences, I will ask you to include a signed Academic Integrity Checklist with every assignment. If you do not include the statement, your work will not be graded.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code*. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Tips regarding 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>

Other Writing Resources:

1. Students can find information about college writing centres at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. The teaching approach of the college writing centres is described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/learning>.

2. The home page for the website "Writing at the University of Toronto" is www.writing.utoronto.ca. You can use the navigation bar or the search function to find pages relevant to your course. Students will benefit from your recommendations.

- More than 60 Advice files on all aspects of academic writing are available at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice. A complete list of printable PDF versions are listed at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/about-this-site/pdf-links-for-students>.
- You may in particular want to refer students to "How Not to Plagiarize" and other advice on documentation format and methods of integrating sources; these are listed in the section at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources.

3. Please refer students to the Writing Plus workshop series, described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus>. A flyer for this series is attached.

4. Information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) is available at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>. You might particularly want to recommend the following activities:

- the Communication Cafe, which meets weekly at four different times and locations for the first five weeks of each term for practice with oral skills like class discussion and presentations
- Reading eWriting, an online program that helps students engage course readings more effectively. You can also find further instructional advice for students and for classroom instruction on this site. For more information, please contact the ELL Coordinator Leora Freedman at leora.freedman@utoronto.ca

Many thanks for helping publicize writing and language support in Arts and Science.
<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>

The English Language Learning (ELL) Program

The English Language Learning (ELL) Program is designed to help multilingual students achieve the high level of English required for top academic work at U of T. Our courses and activities are free and non-credit. All sessions are taught by highly qualified university instructors. Native speakers of English are also welcome. Visit our website at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>