

**New Topics in Sociology: Sociology of Disability**  
**SOC499H1F – LEC 5105 - Sociology of Disability**  
**Fall 2017, Tuesday 6-8pm; OISE 252 Bloor St. West, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 4418**

**Course Description:** This Disability Studies course treats 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.

**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 Hours: By appointment, OISE, 252 Bloor Street West, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor, 12-236 (North off elevators). Drop in office hours will be announced in class.

**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 blackboard or by copying the link provided in the course outline into your browser. Many of the articles can also be found collected in *Rethinking Normalcy: A Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Titchkosky and Michalko. This book is available at Caversham Booksellers, 98 Harbord St., Toronto, ON, M5S 1G6. Open Mon-Wed 9-6, Thur-Fri 9-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5. An Independent Book Store.

Please bring readings to class 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 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 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:* We will learn to think sociologically/critically about dominant everyday ways that disability appears, this includes how disability appears as a bio-medical, economic, individualistic, bureaucratic, and deviance problem. We will also consider how government and schools have told us how we “should” articulate disability.

**Theme Two:** *The Social Model of Disability:* We will learn what it means to conceive of disability as a complex social phenomenon produced by capitalism and often used to feed its enterprise. We will begin to explore how this relates to White settler colonialism.

**Theme Three:** *Disability as a Critical Space for Critical Inquiry into the Human Condition.* Is it possible to engage disability in a sociological fashion such that we do more than reproduce everyday conceptions of normalcy? Can we address disability in ways that do not reproduce the values that feed current power structures and that might help us re-think our inter-relatedness?

*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.

**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:**

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

-Presentation or Alternative = 20%

-Exercise 1– Due October 24<sup>th</sup> = 30%

-Paper Due in the second to last class, November 28th, 2017 = 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 one week after the final day of classes.

All work can only be turned in to me; no one else, nowhere else, but me.

**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%.** 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 how the space has accommodated you or your enjoyment of the space. In the final page (or two), make use of the social model of disability so as to reflect on your two pages of writing and the meaning of disability and impairment.

**OR...Alternative Disability Studies analysis = 20%.** 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 14<sup>th</sup>. The sooner you do this work, the sooner you will receive comments and guidance from me.**

**Exercise 1– Due October 24<sup>th</sup> *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 28th, 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 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. Re-vamp the course outline, highlighting your modifications. Following the re-designed course outline, please include a four to five page justification for your modifications. Please conclude with an argument for how your modifications resist perpetuating normal power relations over disability and thus

resist individualizing or medicalizing disability, or conclude by reflecting on the alternative conceptions of disability that the course now makes apparent.

**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 all assigned reading materials with you to each class.

## Detailed Course Outline

### Part I: Studying Dominant Conceptions of Disability

**September 12<sup>th</sup> Week 1:** Introductions, Access, & the Question of Disability

**September 19<sup>th</sup> Week 2:** Ruling Conceptions of Disability: Medico-bureaucratic

-Max Weber: “Bureaucracy”

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

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

[http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/report/en/](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>

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>

### September 26<sup>th</sup> Week 3: Guest Lecture TBA

Introduction: The Study of Disability vrs Disability Studies

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

### October 3<sup>rd</sup> Week 4: The Social Model of Disability

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

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

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

### October 10<sup>th</sup> 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. Blackboard.

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

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](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 17<sup>th</sup> Week 6

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.” In *Rethinking Normalcy* Blackboard.

(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 26<sup>st</sup> Week 7: *Exercise is Due in Class***

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](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>

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

### **October 31<sup>st</sup> 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. Blackboard.

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

*November 6-10 Arts and Science Reading Week*

### **November 14<sup>th</sup> Week 9 “Institutionalizing Normalcy” (Alternative Assignment due)**

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.

### **November 21<sup>st</sup> 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](http://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. (On Blackboard)

### **November 28<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> International Day of Disabled Persons*

### **December 5<sup>th</sup> , 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. Blackboard

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

#### **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.

### **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” <http://bccc.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 statement**

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 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.

**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. No work will be accepted one week after the final day of classes.

Exercises are to be turned into me or to my mailbox, “Titchkosky” at OISE, 12th floor, far north.

All work can only be turned in to me; no one else, nowhere else, but me.

## DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR

- In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://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>

### 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](http://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](http://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](http://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 files for students and for classroom instruction on this site. For more information, please contact the ELL Coordinator Leora Freedman at [leora.freedman@utoronto.ca](mailto: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>