New Topics in Sociology: Sociology of Disability
SOC 499H1 F LEC5101 2022 - Sociology of Disability
Fall 2022, Tuesday 6:10-8pm; ACCESSIBLE LOCATION OISE 4-418

Instructor: Dr. Tanya Titchkosky, Professor, Department of Social Justice Education, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.
Email: tanya.titchkosky@utoronto.ca  Office Hours: By zoom arrangements.
Communication: Expect an email reply within 24 hours (not including weekends).
Prerequisite: 1.0 SOC at the 300 or higher level. Students without this prerequisite can be removed at any time and without notice.
The 4-418 OISE classroom (at 252 Bloor Street west) can be found in pictures here as well tech support for this room (and all others): https://lsm.utoronto.ca/index.html

Course Description
This Disability Studies course explores disability as a socio-cultural phenomenon of growing import to sociology. The 2022 focus is how disability appears and disappears in our lives, especially within educational institutions. 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 racial capitalism and often used to feed its enterprise.
Theme Three: Disability as a Critical Space for Critical Inquiry into the Human Condition where disability is cultural through and through. Once “disability” becomes a bounded experience and certain 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.

Course text:
DisAppearing: Encounters in Disability Studies (2022) is a *NEW* text is available at independent Caversham Bookstore 98 Harbord St, Toronto (M5S 1G6), directly from the Press https://www.canadianscholars.ca/books/disappearing, or from any on-line bookstore. A copy is on reserve at Robarts*. The first two weeks of readings are available through Quercus and/or by copying the link provided in the course outline into your browser. Please have readings available as we will often work closely with the 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, including creative responses, that is great… thank you. If/when we meet through zoom, I will post the transcript.

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/](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…”

Course aims. 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.

- A capacity to reveal how any appearance of disability, no matter how positive or just, comes along with making other conceptions of disability disappear.

Evaluation 2022:

- Participation: Attendance (being present, discussion, events, raising issues) = 10%

- Presentation 20 minutes (scheduled throughout) or Alternative (in class November 15th or before) = 20%

- Exercise 1 – Due October 18th = 30%

- Paper Due in the second to last class, November 29th = 40%

Total=100%
Submission of your work: should occur through an email directly to me (and only me) tanya.titchkosky@utoronto.ca with “Sociology of Disability EX 1” or “Sociology of Disability Final Paper” in the subject heading by 11:59 pm of 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.

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

Participation: 10% As above.

Presentation = 20% Pick one of the block quotations from the chapter(s) assigned in your presentation week. Discuss how the quotation is related to the chapter within which it appears as well as how the quotation is related to sociology of disability. After providing this brief overview illustrate the significance of the quotation by relating it to a current social issue. Launching the class into a discussion of what lies between the quotation and the current issue, should lead us toward considering the ways that disability appears and disappears. 20 minutes = 20%

[Roughly -- 7 minutes backstory/location, 7 minutes front story/present connection, 5 minutes social significance of the dis/appearance of disability]

OR… Alternative Exercise = 20%. Due by Nov 15th. In Word (no PDFs).

A. Making use of any one chapter from DisAppearing, write an essay about the different ways that disability appears and disappears within the chapter. Discuss in what ways traditional, social and critical cultural understandings of disability give rise to different ways that disability appears and disappears by critically engaging this text. 4 pages.

OR…

B. In one to two double spaced pages describe an appearance of disability in your life. In three pages, critically analyze this description by making use of three concepts or ideas made in the editor’s introduction to DisAppearing (pp1-14). To do this you will need to distance yourself from your description and conduct an analysis of your description. In your description how does disability appear and what about disability disappears? The final paragraph may conclude by reflecting on how traditional conceptions influence the appearance of disability. 4 pages

Presentation occur anytime though the term. Alternative assignments are due by Nov 15th or earlier. The sooner done, the sooner you will receive comments and guidance from me.
Exercise 1– Due October 18th = 30%

Each submission should include your name and student number, a creative title and content that takes the following forms. In Word (no PDF’s), double spaced 5 page maximum.

Encountering disability – an Exercise

A. Find a location of social activity where you feel you can hang out comfortably for 20 minutes without feeling threatened nor harming anyone. From your perspective, describe the location – 1 page. This location should be highly spatially circumscribed – within about two meters of your senses. A hall or doorway, a shop, a swing in a park, a space at the library, part of a classroom*.

B. For the next twenty minutes keep notes on the appearance and/or disappearance of disability from within the location of social activity. Provide one page of the ways that disability appeared and/or disappeared. Please note you are conducting an observation of space and its activities it invites while making sure no one’s privacy is violated and no individual is identified nor harmed nor interacted with*. Work in a safe and fair way*.

C. Provide a one page description of your timed situation specific account of a social environment within which disability appeared and/or disappeared. (1 page)

D. Making use of course readings, conduct an analysis of the 2-3 pages of description you have produced (data) in order to reveal 4 ways that social location and traditional conceptions of disability influence the appearance and disappearance of disability.

E. Conclude by evaluating which one of the four ways was most valuable to you for developing a disability studies/sociological perspective.

*Please note this exercise is to be completed in accordance with U of T’s Research Ethic Boards sense of research “exempt” from review.¹

¹ Exempt research includes (for more see: https://research.utoronto.ca/ethics-human-research/activities-exempt-human-ethics-review)

1. Research that relies exclusively on information that is either of the following

   a. Publicly available through a mechanism set out by legislation or regulation and that is protected by law (e.g. Statistics Canada files)

   b. In the public domain and the individuals to whom the information refers have no reasonable expectation of privacy (non-intrusive, does not involve direct interaction between the researcher and individuals through the Internet)

2. Research involving observation of people in public places where any of the following are true

   a. It does not involve any intervention staged by the researcher, or direct interaction with the individuals or groups

   b. Individuals or groups targeted for observation have no reasonable expectation of privacy

   c. Any dissemination of research results does not allow identification of specific individuals
Paper: 40% Due November 29th, second to last class. Word. 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 that from the point of view of common sense would be regarded as ordinary. Narrate how you found it and describe or reproduce it. Show how it objectifies or individualizes disability through traditional (medical, educational and/or bureaucratic) interpretations of disability. Show why a sociological analysis is important by demonstrating the ways in which disability appears and disappears is always related to social structures/environment, interactional norms, knowledge systems. That is, refute the notion that an impairment causes disability to appear.

Option 2 Through course readings and your independent sociological research, write an essay that addresses the following question: How is each and every encounter with disability socially produced? 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. Making use of the course outline (with redactions), use track changes as you achieve the following.

Conduct the necessary research in order to re-make the course outline so that it is now invitational to 1. disabled people and to 2. disability studies content relevant to the Department within which this course is offered. 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 in a WORD document. Following the re-designed course outline, please include a three-page justification for your modifications that discusses how your modifications resist perpetuating normal power relations over disability and thus resist individualizing or medicalizing disability; conclude by reflecting on how you made disability appear differently than it did prior to your modifications. Append a one page bibliography of relevant readings that you would add to the course.

Readings, lectures, course work, discussions are oriented to the three themes:

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 – its cultural through and through.
All 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 actual ways that disability appears and disappears in our everyday reality, can we possibly start to address the marginalization of millions and millions of people understood as “disabled”.

There is no grading “rubric.” There is working with and through the three themes.

Course Readings

Part I: Studying Dominant Conceptions of Disability

September 13th Week 1: Introduction

Introductions, The Question of Access as it appears and disappears in on-line environments, our lives, and education generally.

Prior to class, take 15 minutes to check out [http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/library/](http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/library/)


-Introduction of the three main themes of the course.

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

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

BACKGROUND – skim any or all of these.

- Canadian Survey on Disability Reports: A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017
- 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

September 27th Week 3: The Study of Disability vrs Disability Studies

Foreword, by Rod Michalko
Introduction, by Tanya Titchkosky, Elaine Cagulada, and Madeleine DeWelles

October 4th Week 4:
The Social Model of Disability – Theory and Practice

Chapter 1: DisAppearing Promises: The University’s Unfortunate Framing of Disability, by Tanya Titchkosky

Chapter 2: Nativity, by Hanna Herdegen

Optional Background Readings on Quercus:
Finkelstein: http://www.independentliving.org/docs3/finkelstein01a.html
October 11th  Week 5:

**Chapter 3:** Navigating Borderlands: Deaf and Hearing Experiences in Post-Secondary Education, by Sammy Jo Johnson & Sarah Beck

**Chapter 4:** Let Me Hear You Say Black Lives Matter, by Thomas Reid

Optional Background Readings on Quercus:

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.


October 18th  Week 6

**Chapter 5:** Between Peace and Disturbance: Anorexia, Control, and Embodiment, by Madeleine DeWelles

**Chapter 6:** Disabling Curricular Encounters: The Barriers in Barrier-Free Access, by Maria Karmiris

Optional Background Readings on Quercus

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 [Upadate to Chouinard](https://jenrinaldiphd.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/chouinard-like-alice.pdf)


(For further challenges to legal cliché’s see [http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472420916](http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472420916))
PART TWO: Disability, Disability Studies & Critical Relations to Culture

October 25th  Week 7:

Exercise is Due by mid-night via email of word document

Chapter 7: Ghosts, Mice, and Robots: DisAppearing the Autistic Person, by Helen Rottier, Ben Pfingston, & Josh Guberman

Chapter 8: Performing Dyslexia in Contemporary Japan, by Satsuki Kawano

Chapter 9: Tuning Goes Frig, by Sid Ghosh

Optional Background Readings on Quercus


November 1st  Week 8: Disability, Illness, Injury.

Chapter 14: The Impositions of Forgotten Wor(l)ds: Rehabilitation and Memory Loss, by Lindsay Gravelle

Chapter 15: The DisAppearances of Deafness in Early Childhood Diagnostic and Intervention Practices, by Tracey Edelist

Optional Background Readings on Quercus


November 7th - 11th Arts and Science Reading Week

Alternative Assignment due Nov 15th if you do not do a presentation

November 15th Week 9 “Institutionalizing Normalcy/Medicalizing Deviance”

Chapter 16: Diagnosing Despair: Constructing Experience through Psychiatric Hegemony, by Efrat Gold & Sharry Taylor

Chapter 17: An Autist Amongst Exceptionalities, by Joey Tavares

Chapter 18: DisAppearing Disability: Disability MAiD Invisible, by Nancy Hansen

Chapter 19: The Pill Box Shuffle, by Leanne Toshiko Simpson

Optional Background Readings available on Quercus


November 22nd Week 10:

Chapter 20: The Infinity of the Encounter: Deafness, Disability, Race, and the Sound of Story, by Elaine Cagulada

Chapter 21: “Where Are the Goddamn Pens?”: And Other DisAppearances in Writing Intellectual Disability, by Chelsea Temple Jones

Optional Background Readings on Quercus


November 29th Week 11: Paper Due = 40%

Chapter 22: Are You My Homi? Close (Autistic) Encounters of the Third Kind, by Maya Chacaby

Optional Background Readings on Quercus


*December 3rd* International Day of Disabled Persons

**December 6th , Last Class – Week 12. Lecture: What is disability studies now that you are part of it?**

**Chapter 23: Magic Wand, by Lynn Manning**

**Optional Background Readings on Quercus**

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


**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.

Disablist language is something to think about in this classroom. To suggest that something or someone is lame, crazy, idiotic, or is blind, deaf, sp@z or r-word 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://bcccsyracuse.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. **Submission of your work:** should occur through an email directly to me (and only me) [tanya.titchkosky@utoronto.ca](mailto:tanya.titchkosky@utoronto.ca) with “Sociology of Disability EX 1” or “Sociology of Disability Final Paper” in the subject heading by 11:59 pm of 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.

**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](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:

- 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.

**DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR**

• Students who miss the test, or are late in submitting an assignment for medical reasons, need to email the instructor (not the TA), and also declare their absence on the system (ACORN).
  (NOTE: Because of Covid-19, students do NOT need to submit the usual documentation, i.e., medical notes or the Verification of Illness forms).
Students who miss the test, or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

**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 get the most out of reading [http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/reading.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/reading.html)
Critical reading toward critical writing [http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/critrdg.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/critrdg.html)
Taking notes from reading [http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/notes.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/notes.html)

**Other Writing Resources:**


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](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).


4. Information about the English Language Learning program (ELL) is available at [http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell](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

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