

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology Department Website: <http://sociology.lakeheadu.ca>

Sociology of Disability: Soci/Gero/SoWk/Wome 4511

Winter 2011

Wed & Fri, 1:00 - 2:30

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Office Hours by appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the field of disability studies, a field that problematizes the definition of disability and argues that disability is socially constructed. We will examine the medical and social models of disability and the ways in which they have an impact on perceptions of disabled people. As well, we will examine the significance of the experience of disability, looking in particular at how and why experience varies, and we will consider how that experience informs individual consciousness.

This upper-level course is organized as a combination of lecture and seminar, with more emphasis on seminar discussion than on lectures. **IN KEEPING WITH THE ADVANCED NATURE OF THE COURSE, STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSING ISSUES RAISED IN READINGS.** In other words, students are expected to be present for each and every class. Students are also expected to take seriously the contributions to discussions from classmates.

Required Readings

1. Becker, Howard S. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article (2nd ed.)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. Stone, Sharon-dale. 2010. **Sociology 4511 Readings Package.**
3. Stone, Sharon-dale. 2007. *A Change of Plans: Women's Stories of Hemorrhagic Stroke*. Toronto: Sumach Press.
4. Other required readings will be posted on the Moodle site for this course (marked with *).

Recommended (not required):

Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Analytical Report. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Posted on Moodle.

Evaluation (for details, see Assignments section of outline):

Assignment	Weight
Comment Papers (5)	45%
Book Review due Wed. March 16	15%
Final take-home exam due Fri. April 15	20%
In-class participation (every class)	20%

Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable and subject to various sanctions. It involves not only copying word for word a portion of someone else's written work without crediting the author, but also paraphrasing the ideas of others without crediting the original author. See the website How to Avoid Plagiarism at <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/plagiarism.html> and see University Regulations section "IX Academic Dishonesty," Lakehead University Calendar. You will receive zero on an assignment if any part of it is plagiarized, and your name will be reported to the Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Schedule of Weekly Topics and Readings

1. Jan 5-7: The Significance of Disability.

In class documentary: *Small Differences*

- Linton, Simi. "Reassigning Meaning." Readings Package #1
- Davis, Lennard J. "Constructing Normalcy." Readings Package #2

2. Jan 12-14 Definitions of Disability.

- French, Sally and John Swain. "Whose Tragedy? Towards a Personal Non-tragedy View of Disability." Readings Package #3
- Goering, Sara. 2008. "You Say You're Happy, But ..." *Bioethical Inquiry* 5: 125-135*
- Sunderland, Naomi, Tara Catalano and Elizabeth Kendall. 2009. "Missing Discourses: Concepts of Joy and Happiness in Disability." *Disability & Society* 24 (6): 703-714*

3. Jan 19-21: Disability Theory and the Concept of Ableism

- Hughes, Bill. "Disability and the Body." Readings Package #4
- Oliver, Mike. "The Social Model in Context." Readings Package #5

Recommended:

- Campbell, Fiona A. Kumari. 2008. "Exploring Internalized Ableism Using Critical Race Theory." *Disability & Society* 23 (2): 151-162*

4. Jan 26-28: Responding to Disabling Attitudes (1)

- French, Sally. "Can You See the Rainbow? The Roots of Denial." Readings Package #6
- Keith, Lois. "Encounters with Strangers." Readings Package #7
- Murphy, Robert. "Encounters: The Body Silent in America." Readings Package #8

Recommended:

- Tighe, Cynthia Anne. 2001. "Working at Disability: A Qualitative Study Of The Meaning Of Health And Disability For Women With Physical Impairments." *Disability & Society* 16 (4): 511-529*

5. Feb 2-4: Responding to Disabling Attitudes (2)

- Dyck, Isabel. "Body Troubles: Women, the Workplace and Negotiations of a Disabled Identity." Readings Package #9
- Olney, Marjorie and Karin Brockelman. 2003. "Out of the Disability Closet: Strategic Use Of Perception Management By Select University Students With Disabilities." *Disability & Society* 18 (1): 35-50*
- Triano, Sarah. 2004. "'I'll Believe It When I See It': People with Non-Apparent Disabilities Living In-Between the Able/Disabled Divide." *World Institute on Disability, Equity E-Newsletter* (October).*

Recommended:

- Low, Jacqueline. 1996. "Negotiating Identities, Negotiating Environments: An Interpretation of the Experiences of Students with Disabilities." *Disability & Society* 11 (2): 235-248*

6. Feb 9-11: The Built Environment as Disabling.

- French, Sally. "What's So Great about Independence?" Readings Package #10
- Gleeson, Brendan. "Can Technology Overcome the Disabling City?" Readings Package #11
- Imrie, Rob. "Oppression, Disability and Access in the Built Environment." Readings Package #12

7. Feb 16-18: Issues in Bioethics and Human Rights.

In-class documentary: *The Sterilization of Leilani Muir*

- Rembis, Michael A. 2009. "(Re)Defining Disability in the 'Genetic Age': Behavioral Genetics, 'New' Eugenics and the Future of Impairment." *Disability & Society* 24 (5):585-597*
- Priestley, Mark. "Birthrights." Readings Package #13

8. Mar 3-4: Disability Across the Life Course.

- Priestley, Mark. "Generating Debates: Why We Need a Life Course Approach to Disability Issues." Readings Package #14
- Rowlands, Allison. "Acquired Disability in Young Adulthood." Readings Package #15
- Sheets, Debra J. 2005. "Aging with Disabilities: Ageism and More." *Generations* 29 (3): 37-41*

Recommended:

- Barron, Karin. 1997. "The Bumpy Road to Womanhood." *Disability & Society* 12 (2): 223-239*

9. Mar 9-11: Independent Living.

In-class movie: *Rory O'Shea Was Here*

- Goble, Colin. "Dependence, Independence and Normality." Readings Package #16
- French, Sally and John Swain. "The Relationship between Disabled People and Health and Welfare Professionals." Readings Package #17

Book Review due Wednesday, March 16

10. Mar 16-18: Employment and Social Exclusion.

In-class documentary: *When Billy Broke His Head*

- Sapey, Bob. "Disability and Social Exclusion in the Information Society." Readings Package #18
- Shier, Michael, John R. Graham and Marion E. Jones. 2009. "Barriers to Employment as Experienced by Disabled People: A Qualitative Analysis in Calgary and Regina, Canada." *Disability & Society* 24 (1): 63-75*
- Wilton, Robert D. "Working at the Margins: Disabled People and the Growth of Precarious Employment." Readings Package #19

11. Mar 23-25: Claiming a Disabled Identity.

In-class documentary: *Shameless: The Art and Politics of Disability*

- Swain, John and Colin Cameron. "Unless otherwise stated" Readings Package #20
- Thomas, Carol. "Narrative Identity and the Disabled Self" Readings Package #21
- Watson, Nick. 2002. "Well, I Know This is Going to Sound Very Strange to You, But I Don't See Myself as a Disabled Person." *Disability & Society* 17 (5): 509-527*

12. Mar 30 - Apr 1: The Future of Disability.

- No readings. Course wrap-up and discussion of take-home exam.

ASSIGNMENTS

Critical Reading Towards Critical Writing

Your written assignments in this course are expected to be **critical**. I.e., you need to reflect on what you are reading and offer your own evaluation of the ideas presented. To be critical is not necessarily to find fault with the text, it is to carefully evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the ideas and arguments presented. See the webpage published by the University of Toronto Writing Support Centre: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/reading-and-researching/critical-reading> (also posted on Moodle). You are strongly encouraged to follow the superb advice offered on this page. There are also links on this page to other pages with writing advice.

Note that all written assignments MUST follow the Guidelines For All Written Work posted on Moodle. You are also expected to follow Becker's advice in *Writing for Social Scientists*, esp. regarding grammar, style, clarity, editing, and revising (ch 1-4).

Participation (20%)

In class (10%): Readings should be understood as raising issues and offering perspectives, rather than understood as representing the final word on anything. Class time will be to a large extent devoted to the in-depth discussion and debate of issues raised in readings and in documentaries.

Participation in class discussions is a way for you to demonstrate your understanding of issues raised in the readings and other material. Students are expected to contribute to **every** class discussion. Thus, you need to **read and think about the required readings so that you will be prepared to critically discuss them in class**. You are also encouraged to show in class that you have read and considered the recommended readings, and are able to critically comment on them. You will not earn class participation marks by simply talking in class. Your **class participation mark will reflect the degree of thoughtful and critical reflection** shown by you as you engage with course material.

Moodle Forums (10%): You are also expected to regularly contribute to discussions in the Forums section. You may respond to posted questions or comments or post your own questions and comments. As with in-class participation, your mark will reflect the degree of thoughtful and critical reflection shown by you as you engage with course material.

Critical Comment Papers (45%)

You are required to write 5 critical comment papers (1 1/2 - 3 pp. ea., typed, double spaced) each to critically comment on all required readings for one week, and **submit via Moodle**. Each comment paper is worth 9% of your final mark. You are encouraged (but not required) to also incorporate comments on the recommended readings for the week.

You are strongly advised to plan to write papers earlier in the term rather than later, so that you will be sure to get them all completed. If you want to improve your marks you are allowed to hand in one extra comment paper, and your mark will be based on the highest five marks. You may comment on any week's readings starting January 12, but in all cases the papers will be **due 1 hour before the beginning of the Wednesday class during which we discuss the readings. Late papers will not be accepted.** In your comment papers, you must:

- give **full** bibliographic information (ASA style) for the readings at the top of the 1st page – see list of references for the readings package posted on Moodle
- very briefly explain the main point(s) of each reading and how it contributes to an understanding of the week's topic
- identify ways in which the readings relate to each other, and how they support or contradict each other
- critically evaluate the usefulness of the readings for adding to an understanding of the subject of disability and justify your evaluation with specific examples

Critical Book Review (15%)

Critically review Stone's book *A Change of Plans*. Length: 5-7 pp. typed, double spaced. The goal of this assignment is not to summarize what the book says, but:

- ⇒ identify Stone's central purpose in writing the book and analyze the significance of the book in terms of how it adds to an understanding of the subject of disability
- ⇒ identify and analyze the significance of important arguments made in the book
- ⇒ evaluate the extent to which Stone succeeded in fulfilling her purpose for writing the book
- ⇒ evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the book with regard to how it adds to an understanding of the subject of disability

You need to also address the following points in your review:

- ⇒ does Stone make her own perspective clear and does this add or detract from the value of the book?
- ⇒ what is your own relationship to the subject of the book and how does this affect your understanding of the book?
- ⇒ what in particular is valuable about the book?
- ⇒ would you recommend the book to someone who wants to understand the subject of disability? Why or why not?

In writing this review, **it is at all times crucial that you justify your analysis.** Whether you criticize or commend the author, you need to say **why** you do so and you need to give evidence to support what you say.

It is not necessary to do additional research for this assignment, but you might find it useful to consult the internet resources posted on Moodle.

Due Wednesday, March 16. Late reviews will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day (including weekends). Note that this assignment will be marked by a teaching assistant, rather than by the professor.

Final Take-Home Exam (20%)

To be handed out in the last class (April 1) and due April 15. Details to be discussed in class.