

**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

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

**Fall 2008**

**Tues & Thurs, 1:00 - 2:30**

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***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. With particular attention to disability throughout the life course, 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.**

**Required Readings**

1. Priestley, Mark. 2003. ***Disability: A Life Course Approach***. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
2. Stone, Sharon-dale. 2007. ***Sociology 4511 Readings Package, Fall 2007***.
3. **EITHER:**  
Shannon, David W. 2007. ***Six Degrees of Dignity: Disability in an Age of Freedom***. Ottawa: Creative Bound International Inc.
- OR:**  
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 WebCT site for this course.

**Recommended (not required):**

***A Profile of Disability in Canada, 2001***. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Available on the internet at <<http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/listpub.cgi?catno=89-577-XIE2001001>>.

Susan Wendell. 1996. ***The Rejected Body***. NY: Routledge.

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

| <b>Assignment</b>               | <b>Due Date</b> | <b>Weight</b> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Comment Papers (4)*             | Variable        | 40%           |
| Book Review due Nov. 6          | Nov. 8          | 20%           |
| Final take-home exam due Dec. 9 | Dec. 11         | 20%           |
| In-class participation          | Each class      | 20%           |

**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/uacc/plagiar.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**

Thurs Sept. 4: Introduction to course.

In class documentary: Small Differences.

1. Sept. 9-11: The significance of disability.

- Simi Linton, "Reassigning Meaning" Readings Package #1
- Irving Zola, "Disability Statistics, What We Count and What it Tells Us" Readings Package #2
- Lennard J. Davis, "Constructing Normalcy," Readings Package #3

2. Sept. 16-18: Definitions of disability.

- Mark Priestley, Ch. 1 of *Disability: A Life Course Approach*
- Sally French and John Swain, "Whose Tragedy? Towards a Personal Non-tragedy View of Disability" Readings Package #4
- Bill Hughes, "Disability and the Body" Readings Package #5
- John Swain, Sally French & Colin Cameron, "Whose Model" Readings Package #6

Recommended:

- Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body*: Ch 1, "Who Is Disabled?" pp 11-34; Ch 2, "The Social Construction of Disability" pp 35-56; and Ch 3, "Disability as Difference" pp 57-84
- Liz Crow, "Including All of our Lives" Available on the internet at:  
 <<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/book1.htm>>

3. Sept. 23-25: Attitudes as disabling.

- Sally French, "Can you see the rainbow? The roots of denial" Readings Package #7
- Robert Murphy, "Encounters: The Body Silent in America" Readings Package #8
- 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

Recommended:

- 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
4. Sept. 30-Oct. 2: The built environment as disabling.
- Sally French, "What's so great about independence?" Readings Package #9
  - Brendan Gleeson, "Can Technology overcome the disabling city?" Readings Package #10
  - Rob Imrie, "Oppression, Disability and Access in the Built Environment" Readings Package #11
- Recommended:
- Isabel Dyck, "Body troubles: women, the workplace and negotiations of a disabled identity" Readings Package #12
5. Oct. 7-9: Issues in Bioethics and Human Rights.
- In-class documentary: The Sterilization of Leilani Muir
- Adrienne Asch, "Disability, Bioethics and Human Rights" Readings Package #13
  - Mark Priestley, Ch. 2 of *Disability: A Life Course Approach*
- Recommended:
- Wendell, *The Rejected Body*, Ch 5, "The Cognitive and Social Authority of Medicine pp 117-38
6. Oct. 14-16: Disabled Youth.
- Mark Priestley, Ch. 4 of *Disability: A Life Course Approach*
  - Barron, Karin. 1997. "The Bumpy Road to Womanhood." *Disability & Society* 12 (2): 223-239
7. Oct. 21-23: Relationships.
- In-class documentary: Towards Intimacy
- Berenice Fisher & Roberta Galler, "Friendship and Fairness: How Disability Affects Friendship Between Women" Readings Package #14
  - Allison Rowlands, "Acquired Disability in Young Adulthood" Readings Package #15
  - Tom Shakespeare, "Power and Prejudice: Issues of Gender, Sexuality and Disability" Readings Package #16
8. Oct. 28-30: Independent Living.
- In-class movie: Rory O'Shea Was Here
- Sally French and John Swain, "The Relationship between Disabled People and Health and Welfare Professionals" Readings Package #17
9. Nov. 4-6: Disability and Conceptions of Adulthood.
- In-class documentary: When Billy Broke His Head
- Mark Priestley, Ch. 5 of *Disability: A Life Course Approach*
  - Colin Goble, "Dependence, Independence and Normality" Readings Package #18
- Recommended:
- Wilton, Robert D. "Working at the Margins: Disabled People and the Growth of Precarious Employment" Readings Package #19

**Book Review due Nov. 6**

10. Nov. 11-13: Disability and Old Age.

- Mark Priestley, Ch. 6 of *Disability: A Life Course Approach*
- Gilson, Stephen French and F. Ellen Netting. 1997. "When People with Pre-existing Disabilities Age in Place." *Health & Social Work* 22 (4): 290-298
- Sheets, Debra J. 2005. "Aging with Disabilities: Ageism and More." *Generations* 29 (3): 37-41

11. Nov. 18-20: Claiming a disabled identity.

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

- John Swain and Colin Cameron, "Unless otherwise stated" Readings Package #20
- Carol Thomas "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. Nov. 25: The Independent Living Movement and disability rights.

- Course wrap-up and discussion of take-home exam

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## ASSIGNMENTS

### *Critical Reading Towards Critical Writing*

Your written assignments in this course are expected to be **critical**. This means that 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. An excellent resource that will help you with this is the webpage published by the University of Toronto Writing Support Centre: <<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/critrdg.html>>. You are strongly encouraged to download the superb advice on this page and follow it (even if you think you already know how to write critically). There are also links on this page to other pages with writing advice.

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| <p><b>Note that all written assignments MUST follow the Guidelines For All Written Work posted on WebCT</b></p> |
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#### ***Participation: In-Class (20%)***

**In class:** 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.

#### ***Comment Papers (40%)***

You are required to write 4 comment papers (1 1/2 – 3 pp. ea., typed, double spaced) each to critically comment on required readings for one week. Each comment paper is worth 10%. You are encouraged (but not required) to 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 write an extra comment paper, and your mark will be based on the highest four marks.

You may comment on any week's readings, but in all cases the papers will be **due at the beginning of the Tuesday class during which we discuss the readings. Late papers will not be accepted.** You are encouraged to submit your comment papers by email at least one hour before class begins. Details will be discussed in class.

In your comment papers, you must:

- give full bibliographic information on the readings at the top of the 1st page (ASA style)
- identify ways in which the readings relate to each other, and how they support or contradict each other
- evaluate the usefulness of each reading for adding to an understanding of the subject of disability and justify your evaluation with specific examples

### ***Critical Book Review (20%)***

Length: 5-7 pp. typed, double spaced. The goal of this assignment is not to summarize what the book says, but to:

- ⇒ identify the author'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 the author succeeded in fulfilling her or his 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 the author make her or his 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 following internet resources:

A Concise Guide to Writing a Critical Book Review:

<<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/bookreview/index.cfm>>;

Writer's Handbook: <<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/CriNonfiction.html>>;

Writing Book Reviews: <<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/bookreview.html>>;

How to Write a Book Review: <<http://www.bluegrass.kctcs.edu/LCC/HIS/review.html>>.

**Due Thursday, November 6. Late reviews will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day (including weekends)**

## READINGS PACKAGE REFERENCES

- Asch, Adrienne. 2001. "Disability, Bioethics and Human Rights." Pp 297-326 (Ch. 11) in *Handbook of Disability Studies*, edited by Gary Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman, and Michael Bury. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Davis, Lennard J. 1997. "Constructing Normalcy." Pp 9-28 in *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Lennard J. Davis. NY: Routledge.
- Dyck, Isabel. 1999. "Body Troubles: Women, the Workplace and Negotiations of a Disabled Identity." Pp 119-37 in *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability*, edited by Ruth Butler and Hester Parr. N.Y.: Routledge.
- Fisher, Berenice and Roberta Galler. 1988. "Friendship and Fairness: How Disability Affects Friendship Between Women." Pp 172-194 in *Women With Disabilities: Essays in Psychology, Culture, and Politics*, edited by Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- French, Sally. 1993. "What's so great about independence?" Pp 44-48 in *Disabling Barriers — Enabling Environments*, edited by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver. London: Sage.
- French, Sally. 1993. "Can you see the rainbow? The roots of denial." Pp 69-77 in *Disabling Barriers — Enabling Environments*, edited by John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver. London: Sage.
- French, Sally and John Swain. 2001. "The Relationship between Disabled People and Health and Welfare Professionals." Pp 734-753 (Ch 32) in *Handbook of Disability Studies* edited by Gary Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman, and Michael Bury. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- French, Sally and John Swain. 2004. "Whose Tragedy? Towards a Personal Non-tragedy View of Disability." Pp 34-40 in *Disabling Barriers — Enabling Environments, 2nd Edition*, edited by John Swain, Sally French, Colin Barnes and Carol Thomas. London: Sage.
- Gleeson, Brendan. 1999. "Can technology overcome the disabling city?" Pp 98-118 in *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability*, edited by Ruth Butler and Hester Parr. N.Y.: Routledge.
- Goble, Colin. 2004. "Dependence, Independence and Normality." Pp 41-46 in John Swain, Sally French, Colin Barnes and Carol Thomas (eds.). *Disabling Barriers — Enabling Environments, 2nd Edition*, edited by John Swain, Sally French, Colin Barnes and Carol Thomas. London: Sage
- Hughes, Bill. 2004. "Disability and the Body." Pp 63-68 in *Disabling Barriers — Enabling Environments, 2nd Edition*, edited by John Swain, Sally French, Colin Barnes and Carol Thomas. London: Sage.
- Imrie, Rob. 1998. "Oppression, Disability and Access in the Built Environment." Pp 129-46 in *The Disability Reader: Social Science Perspectives*, edited by Tom Shakespeare. London, Cassell.
- Linton, Simi. 1998. "Reassigning Meaning." Pp 8-33 (Ch. 2) in *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity*. NY: New York University Press.
- Murphy, Robert. 1995. "Encounters: The Body Silent in America." Pp 140-58 in *Disability and Culture*, edited by Benedicte Ingstad and Susan Reynolds Whyte. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rowlands, Allison. 2001. "Breaking My Head in the Prime of My Life: Acquired Disability in Young Adulthood." Pp. 179-191 in *Disability and the Life Course*, edited by Mark Priestley. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Shakespeare, Tom. 1996. "Power and Prejudice: Issues of Gender, Sexuality and Disability." Pp 191-214 in *Disability & Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*, edited by Len Barton. London: Longman.
- Swain, John and Colin Cameron. 1999. "Unless otherwise stated." Pp 68-78 in *Disability Discourse*, edited by Mairian Corker and Sally French. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Swain, John, Sally French & Colin Cameron. 2003. "Whose Model?" Pp 20-29 in *Controversial Issues in a Disabling Society*, edited by John Swain, Sally French and Colin Cameron. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Thomas, Carol. 1999. "Narrative identity and the disabled self." Pp 47-55 in *Disability Discourse*, edited by Mairian Corker and Sally French. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Wilton, Robert D. 2006. "Working at the Margins: Disabled People and the Growth of Precarious Employment." Pp 129-150 in *Critical Disability Theory: Essays in Philosophy, Politics, Policy, and Law*, edited by Dianne Pothier and Richard Devlin. Vancouver: UBC Press.