

Sociology of Disability Graduate Level

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar is intended to introduce students to the sociological study of disability. In this course students will study sociological understandings of disability and explore the experiences of people with bodily and mental differences. We will cover how disability is constructed and comprehended via social structure and discourse. Students will examine disability through understandings of identity (personal and collective), inequalities, social movements, social experience, sexualities, gender, race, class, intersectionalities, and physical and mental variation.

We will examine the ways in which people with bodily and mental differences construct personal and collective identities and develop, support, and maintain communities; the effects of stigma on experiences of disability; and how disability is constructed by the cultural and structural demands of global capitalist societies. We will also explore the ways in which the experience of disability and disability studies can be used to further sociological understandings and to reexamine and re-conceptualize taken for granted ideas about social life and experience, the social structure, and sociological theories and methodology.

Course Objectives: The specific objectives of this course are:

1. To develop knowledge and understanding of the major theories, key concepts, and important issues currently debated in sociology of disability and to critically evaluate their usefulness for analyzing various aspects of disability and society.

2. To critically understand the origins, forms, and consequences of human (social and cultural) diversity of bodies and minds in local, national, and global contexts.
3. To critically examine sociology of disability and disability studies within historical contexts.
4. To evaluate the usefulness of multiple theoretical perspectives in understanding the social experience of disability.
5. To evaluate a range of research methods in understanding the social experience of disability.
6. To critically evaluate the body of research related to a specific aspect of the disability experience.
7. To develop tools useful for future research and teaching in the area of disability.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the origins, forms, and consequences of the social implications of disability.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the major theories, key concepts, and important issues currently debated in sociology of disability and critically evaluate the usefulness of various theories and concepts for the investigation of real world social issues focused on disability.
3. Discuss the current body of scholarship and empirical research related to disability.
4. Critically evaluate this body of research and identify gaps in our understanding of the disability experience.
5. Design a research project or a set of course materials related to the sociology of disability.

Course Requirements/Grading:

1. Discussion facilitator and presentation of core reading (20%, 20 points)
2. Attendance and Participation (20%, 20 points)
3. 3 Empirical Articles (10%, 10 points)
4. Project Proposal (10%, 10 points)
5. Project Presentation (10% 10 points)
6. Final Project/Paper (30%, 30 points)

Total = 100 Points

90- 100% =A,	80-89% =B,	70-79% = C,	0-69% = F
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Assignments and Requirements:

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20%)

Students will be expected to attend every class prepared to discuss the material for the week. Students should be prepared with questions, comments, and/or

discussion points from the week's readings. Participation requires that students are alert and engaged and not distracted by non-course related issues or materials (no texting, facebooking, emailing, gmail-chatting...etc.). If a student cannot attend class, they must write a 1500 word reflection of the reading to receive credit for the missed class period. Students can only do this twice a course.

PRESENTATIONS OF READINGS AND DISCUSSION LEADER (20%)

Students will be required to facilitate class discussion about one reading during the semester. You will choose which readings on the first day of class. Depending on the size of the class you may be partnered up. On the day of your facilitation, come to class prepared with a 20-minute presentation (which can include a handout or power point) and multiple discussion questions.

EMPIRICAL ARTICLES

Students are required to find 3 empirical articles throughout the semester showcasing work within the model or theoretical paradigm of the week (they can not submit an article for the topic/section they present). They should email their articles to the entire class and myself a week before discussion of the articles. On the day of the discussion of empirical articles, students should have read all (including their own) and be prepared to discuss them. Students will be graded on how well their article represents the topic/section of the week.

a. Rationale:

Much of the work in disability studies is theoretical and it is imperative that students are able to find, recognize, understand, and use empirical work to better their scholarship. By being required to find and read empirical articles within sociology of disability, students will develop a better grasp on how they can study and use disability studies in their own work.

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL (10%)

You will write a one-two page proposal (minimum of 500 words) for your final paper. Additionally, you will attach your tentative annotated bibliography with a minimum of six sources, four of which must be from readings outside of class.

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATION (10%)

Students are required to present a 15-minute presentation of their final project conference-style. Students are required to use power point or handouts and should be prepared to answer questions about their projects.

FINAL PAPER/PROJECT (30%)

The final for this course should be a major project or paper that is expected to be of use to the student beyond the end of the semester. Students have two options to choose from: (1) A paper of publishable quality or (2) a major project.

(1) Paper option:

This paper is designed to be of publishable length and quality dealing with the sociology of disability or disability studies. Papers should be 17-20 pages in length. It is recommended that students write either an advanced theoretical paper addressing an inconsistency or gap in the current research or about a data set they already have, one they are collecting, or secondary data. At the very least, you should be able to use this paper for a conference presentation.

(2) Project Option:

Projects may include: Complete IRB applications with supporting materials; polished drafts of grant proposals; a portion of a thesis, dissertation or proposal; a “course packet” for an undergraduate class in the Sociology of Disability; or another significant product.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Core Readings:

2. Berger, Ronald (2013). *Introducing Disability Studies*. Lynne Reinner Publishers, Inc. (9781588268914)
 - a. Rationale:

Introducing Disability Studies is an instrumental and comprehensive introductory resource. By reading this book students (especially those who have never taken a course in or have little knowledge of disability studies) will develop an understanding for central vocabulary and terminology with which to contextualize sociology of disability and disabilities experiences. This book addresses significant themes and controversies within disability studies through historical contexts imperative to the understanding of sociology of disability. It addresses disability from medical, social, feminist, and queer models, as well as provides a rich historical analysis of disability from ancient times on through to modern day. Great attention is paid to disability experience through the life course and bodily experience. This type of reference is imperative to developing sociological imagination of disability and will be an asset to students as they navigate the rest of the course and their graduate education. Since the book is structured in a way that allows students to develop an understanding of different models and theories, historically, they will find this type of resource invaluable when choosing and reading empirical work on disability. The book concludes with possible future outlooks of and implications of social issues on disability. Students will engage with this book in a way that allows them to start seeing the gaps within the literature of disability studies and understandings of disability. The possible future implications addressed in this book will help students develop their own work as members of the future of disability studies.

3. Goffman, E. (1986). *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
 - a. Rationale:

This book takes an in-depth look at the notion of stigma and what it means

to be a stigmatized person. This book is an examination of how one understands themselves in relation to 'normal' people. Building off of his work in *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman addresses issues of the self. Stigma is still a central theme in current literature on disability studies and it is imperative that students develop a comprehensive understanding of it in order to fully participate within the discussion of disability experiences. Using autobiography and case studies, Goffman addresses the stigma those who are physically deformed, disabled, mentally ill, drug addicted or excluded for other reasons experience due to their inability to conform to societal standards of normality. This book is foundational in disability studies as it is the premise on which the social model and much of the current literature on disability in society is built. By reading this, students will be able to participate in the conversations centered on the ostracization of disabled persons more fully.

4. Oliver, Michael & Barnes, Colin (2012). *The New Politics of Disablement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (9780333945674)
 - a. Rationale:

The New Politics of Disablement introduces the social model of disability via a historical analysis of disability and is the second edition to *The Politics of Disablement*. This book takes an in-depth look at how disability is both individualized and medicalized and produced within capitalist structured societies. In describing impairment and disability as distinct yet related aspects of society and the body this book will push students to question taken-for-granted understandings of disability as well as further their understanding of how disability is constructed within society via medical and cultural discourses. It also addresses the potential for social and political change concerning disability via disability social movements. This book will encourage students to examine real life experiences of disability in relation to public and political structures. When reading this book, students should be able to place its historical and topical relevance with in Berger's understanding of disability studies as outlined in *Introducing Disability Studies*. *The New Politics of Disablement* is an essential resources for anyone working and writing within disability studies and in doing a comprehensive reading of students will be able to better contextualize the medical and social model as well as start rigorously developing their own notions of disability experience and disability studies.
5. Shakespeare, Tom (2013). *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited* (2nd edition). London: Routledge. (9780415527613)
 - a. Rationale:

In *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited*, Shakespeare (a disability rights activist and disabled person) critiques both social and medical model understandings of disability arguing that disability studies needs a stronger empirical and theoretical structure. Citing current research on personal

assistance, sexuality, family, relationships, and violence he develops and contributes to what he calls “Critical Realist approaches to disability”. In reading this book students will engage with a critical critique of both the medical and social model and develop new understandings of how aspects of both models could create new understanding of disability experiences and disability studies. In engaging with a critique of these models students will be able to challenge their developing understandings of disability. Furthermore, students will develop their critical eye in both understanding Shakespeare’s critique of developed models as well as creating their own critiques of Shakespeare’s work on the contentious and often debated Critical Realist model. Shakespeare delves into issues of dichotomies of able-bodied/disabled, identities and identity politics, bioethics, and relationships. This will open the door for students to participate in debates centered on these topics and to start developing critical understandings of disability needed to engage with the rest of the literature in this course.

6. Garland-Thompson, R. (2010) “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory.” In *The Disability Studies Reader*, 3rd ed. New York; Routledge.

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Garland-Thompson, R. (2005). *Feminist Disability Studies*. *Signs*, 30(2), 1557-1587/

- a. Rationale:

In these readings Garland-Thompson provides readers with a new conception of disability building off of the social model in a critical critique of disability studies. Garland-Thompson’s articles are imperative in teaching and understanding feminist theories of disability. Feminist disability study’s aim is to confront dominant notions about what it means to live with a disability and examines experiences and understandings of disability in the context of power and social inclusion. Furthermore, these articles are concerned with the rights of disabled people and when and how they are excluded from society and capital. Similar to most critical/feminist researchers, these articles focus on emancipation through research and Garland-Thompson attempts to represent dismissed and often unheard or ignored voices and experiences of disabled. After being introduced to the dominant models of disability students will expand their understanding of disability experiences by engaging with this critical feminist work.

7. Excerpts from McRuer, R. (2006). *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

- a. Rationale:

Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability (similar to Garland-Thompson’s work) builds off of and critiques the social model.

Crip theory offers a rare fresh eye in understanding both the medical and social model as well as in constructing new comprehensions of disability. Crip theory emerged out of queer critiques of disability and is focused on how bodies and minds, identity, and pleasure are understood as normal or abnormal. This book will introduce students to new conceptions of disability through queer and postmodern lenses, pulling from research in both disability studies and sociology of sexualities. Crip theory attempts to de-normalize hegemonic beliefs about bodies and disability. Some individuals identifying with crip theory attempt to deconstruct boundaries while others just wish to de-normalize the dominant understandings of disability. In contrast to social model understandings of the problem of disability, marginalization is not just a result of physical and environmental barriers and, in contrast to feminist understandings of power, oppression of disabled persons is not just a result of interaction and social structure. Disability is only recognizable and given meaning via discourse and power is executed over disabled individuals via these discourses. In this vein, disability is not a problem. By being introduced to these new conceptions of disability students will develop new understandings about activism, the role of discourse, and the bodies and minds of disabled persons. Students will be able to consider how critical perspectives of disability may affect disability studies, sociology, and society.

8. Kafer, A. (2013). *Feminist, queer, crip*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

a. Rationale:

Feminist, queer, crip provides a unique perspective of the experience and future of disability and disabled persons. Using the concept of how bodies and minds may be understood in the future, Kafer builds off of both and ties together Garland-Thompson's and McRuer's work. In framing her book within crip theory Kafer understands disability as not having a predetermined limit and as not a necessarily problematic. Kafer focuses on discourses, social structure, and cultural meaning of disability. It is this interdisciplinary, multi-paradigm, and multi-model approach to disability that will be a great way to end the course. In ending with this book students should leave this class with fresh understandings of what is possible for the future of disability, society, and sociology of disability.

Disability statement/equal access statement: I strive to make the classroom an inclusive space for students with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Students with Disabilities Services in order to receive academic accommodations. SDS encourages students to notify instructors of accommodation needs at least 5 business days prior to needing the accommodation. A letter from SDS must accompany this request.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OF STUDENTS USF3.027: Students attending USF are awarded degrees in recognition of successful completion of coursework in their chosen fields of study. Each individual is expected to earn his/her degree on the basis of personal effort. Consequently, any form of cheating on examinations or plagiarism on assigned papers constitutes unacceptable deceit and dishonesty. USF maintains a contract with a plagiarism detection service, and faculty members are encouraged to use this service. Academic dishonesty cannot be tolerated in the University community and will be punishable, according to the seriousness of the offense, in conformity with regulation USF3.027.

PENALTIES FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Penalties for academic dishonesty will depend on the seriousness of the offense and may include giving the student an "F" or "Zero" on the subject paper, lab report, etc.; or an "F" or "FF" grade in the course. If the offense is serious enough, it may warrant the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. The University drop and forgiveness policies may not be used for a course in which the student has been accused of academic dishonesty. The internal transcript of a student who is awarded an "F" for academic dishonesty will read "FF." Note: A grade of "F" for academic dishonesty, resulting in a grade of "FF" in the student's record, requires notification of the intent to award the grade to the student and subsequent approval by the Graduate Dean or Undergraduate Dean as appropriate. Notice that a student has been dismissed for reasons of academic dishonesty is reflected on the student's transcript as "Dismissed for Academic Dishonesty." See regulation USF3.027.

Turn it in: The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service that allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. I reserve the right to submit assignments to this detection system. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student's paper was plagiarized.

Sensitivity and Etiquette: The topics we discuss in this class often are of a sensitive nature and it is imperative that we recognize the complexities of these issues. All students must be respectful of both the students and instructor.

ELASTIC CLAUSE

The course syllabus is a contract between the instructor (myself) and the students (you). However, I reserve the right to revise the readings and assignments as I see appropriate.

GRADING POLICY

Your success in this course requires that you allot the necessary time and effort for all readings and assignments and that you come to class prepared.

If your performance in the course is not where you want or need it to be, it is your responsibility to address your concerns with the instructor promptly while there is still time for corrective action to be taken. I WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY ASSIGNMENTS VIA EMAIL OR CANVAS. If you do not come to a class you will not receive credit for any assignment or work due that day.

Course Schedule

Week	Reading	In-class	Assignment Due
1.		Introduction/Syllabus	
2. Early Disability Studies	Berger, 2013	Student facilitation	
3.	Goffman, 1986	Student facilitation	Empirical articles due to class
4.		Class discussion of early disability studies and Empirical articles	
5. The Social Model	Oliver & Barnes, 2012	Student facilitation	
6	Shakespeare, 2013	Student facilitation	Empirical articles due to class
7		Class discussion of Social Model and critiques and Empirical articles	Project Proposal
8. Critical/Feminist Disability Studies	Garland-Thompson, 2005 & 2010	Student facilitation	Empirical articles due to class
9		Class discussion on critical/feminist disability studies and Empirical articles	
10. Queer/Crip Theories of Disability	McRuer, 2006	Student facilitation	
11	Kafer, 2013	Student facilitation	Empirical articles due to class
12		Class discussion on crip/queer/postmodern disability studies and Empirical articles	
13		Project Presentations	
14		Project Presentations	
15			Final Project