## **Disability and Gender**

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**Course Description**

This course explores the complex and dynamic intersections of disability and gender through sociological and interdisciplinary perspectives. Centering the social construction of both concepts, we will examine how disability and gender shape—and are shaped by—institutions, cultural norms, public policies, and everyday experiences. Drawing from critical disability studies, feminist theory, and lived narratives, students will engage with topics such as caregiving and dependence, reproductive justice, stigma, family and kinship, sexuality, and activism. By combining theoretical readings with personal reflection and case-based analysis, this course invites students to critically rethink dominant understandings of embodiment, power, and identity.

**Course Objectives**

1. Discuss disability and gender from social constructionist perspectives.
2. Understand social, cultural, and political entanglements surrounding disability and gender.
3. Discuss various lived experiences sitting at the intersection of disability and gender.

**Course Learning Outcome**

1. Students can understand the fluid characteristics of the concepts of gender and disability in social, cultural, political, and economic settings.
2. Students can demonstrate theoretical debates at the intersection of disability and gender.
3. Students will enhance their understanding of the lived experiences of people with disabilities and their families.
4. Students will obtain critical lenses to interpret social phenomena and issues related to disability and gender.

**Course Assignments and Grading**

Self-reflection is important to develop what students learn. Therefore, this course will allow students to develop their own thoughts by writing three different types of essays. Students are highly recommended to meet an instructor during office hours to discuss what and how to write assignments.

1. Weekly note: Students will submit a weekly note every Friday. In this note, students will write about (a) the summary of the readings of the week, and (b) thoughts on the readings. The length of the note will not exceed no more than two paragraphs.
2. Essay #1 (Essay): Students will respond to one of three prompts in a 3-page analytic essay. This assignment encourages students to synthesize key theories and apply them to contemporary or historical examples relevant to disability and gender.
3. Essay #2 (Autobiography): Students will write a short autoethnographic essay that reflects on personal experiences related to disability and/or gender. Using sociological language and theoretical frameworks learned in class, students will analyze how structures of power shape personal narratives. Students are required to cite at least three sources outside the course readings. (\*Recommend reading: Adams, T. E., Ellis, C., and Jones, S. H. 2017. “Autoethnography.” Pp. 1-11 in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. A PDF file will be available through CANVAS.)
4. Essay #3 (Research Proposal): Students will write a proposal for disability and gender research. This proposal will include a research question, a brief literature review, methods, expected results, and the significance of the research. Students who choose to present their proposal during the final week will receive up to 5 bonus points.

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| Participation | 10% |
| Essay #1 (Essay) | 20% |
| Essay #2 (Autobiography) | 20% |
| Essay #3 (Research Proposal) | 30% |
| Weekly Note | 20% |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A0 | 94-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D | 60-69 |
| A- | 90-93 | B0 | 83-86 | C0 | 73-76 | F | below 60 |
|  |  | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 |  |  |

**Expectations**

Understanding other people’s lives comes from listening and trusting. Students are expected to participate in this course to learn knowledge, but they are also expected to learn how to respect and communicate with others. Therefore, students are asked to actively participate in class with open mindsets, being encouraged to share their life experiences, thoughts, and feelings as well as listen to others.

***Late Policy:***

Students are expected to submit assignments on due dates on the syllabus. Students will not get full points for their assignments if they submit theirs after the due dates. Assignments submitted more than 2 days after will not be accepted. Students should inform an instructor if they are in situations requiring additional days for completion (e.g., emergency, etc.).

***Attendance Policy:***

Students can miss classes without an excuse up to two times; after that, students will lose 1% per absence. If students miss classes more than five times, they will lose all credits for participation (10%).

***Academic Integrity:***

Students are asked to abide by the Code of Academic Integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and assistance from others (human/nonhuman support) will all count as violations of academic integrity. Keeping academic integrity is one way that students can show their trustworthiness to an instructor. A better score does not indicate students’ improvement through this course. Please consult with an instructor if students want to know more about academic integrity.

***Accommodation:***

If any accommodation is needed, please feel free to contact an instructor before the course starts or anytime during the course. As this course prioritizes mutual interactions among the course participants, students are highly encouraged to consult with an instructor and seek accommodation if needed.

**Course Texts**

\* All required readings other than the textbook will be uploaded on CANVAS.

**Course Schedule**

**Introduction**

* Goodley, D. (2013). Dis/entangling critical disability studies. *Disability & Society*, *28*(5), 631-644.
* I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much | Stella Young (Ted talk)   
  https://youtu.be/8K9Gg164Bsw

**Theorizing Disability and Gender**

How are gender and disability socially constructed? In this section, we will discuss how gender and disability have been constructed by society. We will read classic theoretical debates to build a foundation for the following sections.

**Gender as a social construct**

* Lorber, J. 1994. “Night to His Day”: The Social Construction of Gender. *Paradoxes of Gender.*
* West, C. and Zimmerman, H. D. 1987. Doing Gender. *Gender and Society* 1(2): 125-151.

**Disability as a social construct — The social model and beyond**

1. **The social model**

* Oliver, M. 2013. The Social Model of Disability: Thirty Years On. *Disability & Society*, *28*(7), 1024-1026.
* Shakespeare, T. 2006. The Social Model of Disability. Pp. 197-204 in *The Disability Studies Reader 2nd edition.*

1. **The critique of the social model and beyond**

* Shakespeare, T., and Watson, N. 2001. The Social Model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology? Pp. 9-28 in *Exploring Theories and Expanding Methodologies: Where We Are and Where We Need to Go*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
* Owens, J. 2015. Exploring the Critiques of the Social Model of Disability: The Transformative Possibility of Arendt’s Notion of Power. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 37(3): 385-403.

**Stigma and prejudice**

* Susman, J. 1994. Disability, Stigma and Deviance. *Social Science & Medicine* *38*(1): 15-22.
* Grue, J. 2016. The Social Meaning of Disability: A Reflection on Categorisation, Stigma and Identity. *Sociology of Health & Illness* *38*(6): 957-964.
* Bogart, K. 2010. How Disability Pride Fights Ableism. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/disability-is-diversity/202008/how-disability-pride-fights-ableism

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| **== Essay #1 Due Date ==** |

**Disability and Care/Assistance**

Are the disabled a subject of *care*? Or *assistance*? In this section, we will explore the concepts of care and assistance—the concepts that center on the disability rights movements. By tracing the legacy of the concept of care and the advent concept of assistance, we will discuss how care and assistance have been discussed in relation to the gendered nature of caregiving.

**Independent Living movement**

* Dejong, M. P. A. 1979. Independent living: From social movement to analytic paradigm. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, *60*(10): 435-436.
* Netflix: *Crip Camp.* 2020

**Personal Assistance model vs. The hierarchy of care**

* Morris, J. 1994. Community Care or Independent Living?. *Critical Social Policy* *14*(40): 24-45.
* Kelly, C. 2013. Building Bridges with Accessible care: Disability studies, Feminist Care Scholarship, and Beyond. *Hypatia*, *28*(4): 784-800.
* Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. 2018. *Care work: Dreaming disability justice*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press. (excerpts)
* Optional:
* Watson, N., McKie, L., Hughes, B., Hopkins, D., and Gregory, S. 2004. (Inter) dependence, Needs and Care: The Potential for Disability and Feminist Theorists to Develop an Emancipatory Model. *Sociology* *38*(2): 331-350.
* Kröger, T. 2009. Care Research and Disability Studies: nothing in Common? *Critical Social Policy* 29(3): 398-420.

**Disability and Social Reproduction**

The law protects people’s rights to social reproduction by providing welfare support for a healthy delivery. How about the rights of disabled women? Are their rights protected? Or are they excluded from social protection? How about mothers of disabled infants? In this section, we will examine the experiences of disabled women and women of disabled fetuses/infants.

**Disabled women’s reproductive rights and reproductive health care**

1. **Healthcare**

* Kallianes, V., and Rubenfeld, P. 1997. Disabled Women and Reproductive Rights. *Disability & Society* *12*(2): 203-222.
* Vaidya, S. 2015. Women with Disability and Reproductive Rights: Deconstructing Discourses. *Social Change* 45(4): 517-533.
* Wong, A. 2000. The Work of Disabled Women Seeking Reproductive Health Care. *Sexuality and Disability* 18: 301-306.
* Optional:
* Agaronnik, N., Pendo, E., Lagu, T., DeJong, C., Perez-Caraballo, A., and Iezzoni, L. I. 2020. Ensuring the Reproductive Rights of Women with Intellectual Disability. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability* 45(4): 365-376.

1. **Motherhood**

* Kocher, M. 1994. Mothers with Disabilities. *Sexuality and Disability* 12: 127-133.
* Thomas, C. 1997. The Baby and the Bath Water: Disabled Women and Motherhood in Social Context. *Sociology of Health and illness* 19(5): 622-643.
* Malacrida, C. 2009. Performing Motherhood in a Disabilist World. Dilemmas of Motherhood, Femininity and Disability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 22(1): 99-117.

**Disabled Fetus/Infant**

* Hubbard, R. 1997. Abortion and Disability: Who Should and Who Should Not Inhabit the World. Pp. 93-105 in *The Disability Studies Reader.*
* Rothenberg, K. H., & Thomson, E. J. (Eds.). 1994. *Women and Prenatal Testing: Facing the Challenges of Genetic Technology.* Ohio State University Press. (Chapter 1, 3).
* Johnson, H. M. 2003. Unspeakable Conversations. In *Moral Issues in Global Perspective*. (Also available in *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from Twenty-First Century).*
* Optional:
* Landsman, G. H. 1998. Reconstructing Motherhood in the Age of “Perfect” Babies: Mothers of Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* *24*(1): 69-99.

**Disability and Family**

What do the lives of families with disabilities look like? How do disabilities impact the lives of other family members? How does gender play when disabilities shape the families’ lives? In this section, we will discuss how disability and gender create another dimension of their lives while responding to the needs of care and assistance in everyday lives.

**Parenting**

1. **Disability and parenting**

* Green, S., Davis, C., Karshmer, E., Marsh, P., and Straight, B. (2005). Living Stigma: The Impact of Labeling, Stereotyping, Separation, Status Loss, and Discrimination in the Lives of Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families. *Sociological Inquiry* 75(2): 197-215.
* Scott, E. K. 2010. “I Feel as if I Am the One Who Is Disabled” The Emotional Impact of Changed Employment Trajectories of Mothers Caring for Children with Disabilities. *Gender & Society* *24*(5): 672-696.

1. **The gendered division of caregiving**

* Rowbotham, M., Carroll, A., and Cuskelly, M. 2011. Mothers’ and Fathers’ Roles in Caring for an Adult Child with an Intellectual Disability. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 58(3): 223-240.
* Traustadottir, R. 1991. Mothers Who Care: Gender, Disability, and Family Life. *Journal of Family Issues* 12(2): 211-228.

**Young caregivers**

* Newman, T. 2002. 'Young Carers' and Disabled Parents: Time for a Change of Direction?. *Disability & Society* *17*(6): 613-625.
* Stables, J., and Smith, F. 2005. “‘Caught in the Cinderella Trap': Narratives of Disabled Parents and Young Carers.” Pp. 253-265 In *Mind and Body Spaces*. Routledge.

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| **== Essay #2 Due Date ==** |

**Disability and Sexuality**

What do the lives of disabled people at the intersection with sexuality look like? In this section, we will visit narratives documented by disabled people who strive to overcome disability stigma as well as gendered prejudice.

* Koller, R. 2000. Sexuality and Adolescents with Autism. *Sexuality and Disability* 18: 125-135.
* Baril, A. 2015. Transnes as Debility: Rethinking Intersections Between Trans and Disabled Embodiment. *Feminist Review* 111(1): 59-74.
* Kim, E. 2011. Asexuality in Disability Narratives. *Sexualities* *14*(4): 479-493.
* Optional:
* Addlakha, R., Price, J., and Heidari, S. 2017. Disability and Sexuality: Claiming Sexual and Reproductive Rights. *Reproductive Health Matters* *25*(50): 4-9.

**Disability Feminist Activism**

**Disability feminism in feminism**

* Garland-Thomson, R. 2002. Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory. *NWSA Journal:* 1-32.
* Gerschick, T. J. 2000. Toward a Theory of Disability and Gender. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 25(4): 1263-1268.

**Parents’ activism**

* Runswick-Cole, K., and Ryan, S. 2019. Liminal Still? Unmothering Disabled Children. *Disability & Society* *34*(7-8): 1125-1139.
* Rapp, R., and Ginsburg, F. 2011. Reverberations: Disability and the New Kinship Imaginary. *Anthropological Quarterly* 84(2): 379-410.

**Research Proposal Presentation Week**

Our very last week! We will have time to share research questions and get feedback to improve one’s proposal before submitting final proposal.

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| **== Essay #3 Due Date ==** |