DIS 500- Interdisciplinary Seminar in Disability Studies

Semester: Fall 2013
Time and Location: On-line course. First Class Conference Folder “DIS500

Instructors:
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* E-mail is the most effective way to reach us during this course.

Overview: This course critically examines disability history, theory and current thinking in the field of disability studies. Through critical analysis and scholarly exchange, students will examine the content and differential application of the principles and tenets of contemporary disability theory, progressive diversity theory, and universal principles.
**Course Objectives:**
In this course, students will:

- Critically examine multiple definitions of disability;
- Develop in-depth knowledge of the principles and tenets of contemporary disability theory, progressive diversity theory, and universal principles;
- Analyze the historical and current trends that shape theory and its application;
- Use critical thinking and scholarly exchange to examine personal values and philosophical perspectives related to disability;
- Identify the differential application of contemporary theory to disability rights, to disability as human diversity, and to related scholarship, policy and practice.

**Course Design**

This is an asynchronous online course allowing you to log on and complete your work according to your own daily schedule. This structure will facilitate “on-line discussion” and the development of a virtual scholarly community. Please keep in mind that this course is interactive, and so you will derive the most benefit from the interactive nature of the course if you designate time for your thinking and for your timely responses to other students.

The assigned readings and resources will be available on-line in the DIS 500 subfolder titled “Course Documents”.

There are five assignments for this course detailed below: 1. Posting of your responses to readings to your study group folder 2. Participation (in text, Mp3, video or image formats) in instructor guided on-line dialog, posted to the your study group folder; and 3. Regular discussion about the material and postings of others in your study group; 4. A fully accessible class lecture on a topic to be selected posted to your study group folder, 5. Final accessible lecture on healing disjuncture.

**Course Format**

This course will use a variety of instruction methods.

1. Recorded audio and visual lectures – instructions regarding how to access the video and audio lectures will be provided on the class conference folders. Some of the videos will be on YouTube (the address and names to be provided); other audio-visual lectures will be linked to a site identified in an email on the Course Documents folder.
2. Some of the lectures will be in the form of narrated PowerPoint Lectures posted to the Course Documents folder.
3. Some of the sessions will be in the form of word document outlines to guide your thinking and discussion.
4. Each student will submit two lectures in written, audio, and video format (if you do not have the hardware or software for multiple formats please contact us and we will assist you). Due dates for these assignments can be found in the course schedule.

Contacting us: Please feel free to contact us in several ways. If you have a general question about the class material, processes and assignments, please post it on the Discussion folder so that all students can benefit from your inquiry. If you have a specific question that does not concern others, please write to us on the Assignment Drop Box.

**Technology Needs**

**Reliable Internet Access.** Since this is an on-line course, you will need reliable access to the Internet. You will also need to be able to access the World Wide Web.

1) To be successful in an online course you will need access to an Internet-ready computer (PC or Mac) with the capacity for viewing video and other images.

2) Please establish a First Class Account. For help with this please contact [http://www.umaine.edu/it/software/firstclass/](http://www.umaine.edu/it/software/firstclass/).

3) Please remember there are technical support people who are helping with this course. We understand that there can be technical problems or computer “glitches”. If you experience a technical problem, please DO NOT PANIC. These types of problems can be solved and we can make allowances for such problems. Just let us know early on if you cannot resolve a problem.

4) For content-related problems such as broken links, content or tables not available: post a note on the discussion folder or contact us directly via First Class.

**Course Policies**

**Announcements/E-mails**

It is your responsibility to check the conference folder regularly and to keep a functioning e-mail account. We will post all important e-mail messages on the conference folder. You are responsible for all information contained in the announcements.

**Academic honesty (plagiarism, etc.):**

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism and all forms of misrepresentation in academic work, and is unacceptable at The University of Maine. As stated in the University of Maine’s online “Student Handbook,”
plagiarism (the submission of another’s work without appropriate attribution) and cheating are violations of The University of Maine Student Conduct Code. An instructor who has probable cause or reason to believe a student has cheated may act upon such evidence, and should report the case to the supervising faculty member or the Department Chair for appropriate action.

Student Accommodations:

Any student who may need special arrangements or accommodations to meet the requirements of this course is encouraged to contact us at your earliest convenience.

Course Grading:

The course grading scale is based on percentage points, so that 91-100% = A, 81-90% = B, 71-80% = C, 61-70% = D, and below 60% is failing.

Grading is on a plus/minus basis.

Requests for a grade of I (Incomplete) will be considered consistent with University Policy.

Required readings:

All course readings will be posted to the class folder either in complete text form or via a web/URL address. Please see the course schedule for reading assignment completion dates.

We do not have an assigned textbook for this course.

Assignments

Assignment 1: Each student will read and post regular responses to each reading on your study group folder …20%

Each post should include the following paragraphs:
   - Your summary of the readings
   - Your critical analysis of the materials presented
   - Insights gained
   - Areas of disagreement
   - Areas of needed clarification, if any

In the subject heading, please indicate the session number for which the reading is due (Example: Reading response for Session X). Please post your response prior to the day scheduled for each session. Reading and responding in a timely manner will allow us to tailor our lectures to your questions and comments.

Assignment #2: Each student will engage in instructor guided on-line discussion and thinking. …20%
Please post to your study group folder the day following the instructor posted question. In the subject line, please indicate the session and topic (Example: Response to Guided Discussion for Session X).

**Assignment #3** Each student will read and respond to the posts of other students for Assignments #1 and 2. Please identify the post and topic which you are addressing in the subject line (Example: Response to Joe, Session 1 reading)...20%

Please post well-reasoned and supported responses to your study group. This assignment asks not for agreement or praise but for substantive, documented discussion.

**Assignment #4**: Create a virtual lecture: How does theory shape conceptualizations of disability, humanness, and the boundaries beyond humanness?...20%

In addition to the perspectives that we have read, select one of the following theoretical categories (Please select your topic by the end of week one (negotiate so that each topic is addressed by one student and all are covered). Begin to post readings by the end of session 5 to the discussion folder and complete posting all readings before session 10. Analyze disability and responses to it through this lens.

- Disability as technology limitation
- Disability as media construction
- Disability as literary construction
- Disability as Identity politics

For this assignment cover the following points

1. Brief summary of the perspective or part of the perspective that you will use for analysis
2. How is desirable “humanness” described through this lens? Undesirable elements of humanness (those that are targeted for change or revision)?
3. How is disability described and explained through this lens? Where does disability fit on the continuum of desirable to undesirable humanness?
4. Through this lens, what are the limits of humanness beyond which an individual is no longer viable and then what is the proposed response (e.g. prevention of birth, assisted suicide, institutionalization, etc.).

Provide a rationale for your points and claims from the literature or other sources that you have used to think critically.

**Assignment #5**

Create a virtual lecture to propose how disjuncture would be healed using the lens that you presented in assignment #4...20%

Cover the following points:
1. What is proposed as the locus of change to restore, revise, or reinvent humanness and create juncture
2. What strategies (be inventive) would be suggested through your theoretical approach
3. What are the limitations of using just this approach for healing disjuncture?

Course Outline

Session 1 - September 5
Introductions and Rethinking Disability

Introductions
Watch hello video from us

Please post to the Discussion Folder:
• Your name and discipline or academic background
• What you hope to learn from this class
• Your current definition of “humanness” and “disability” and the source/s for these definitions (e.g. citations from scholarly literature, a specific piece of policy or legislation)
• Anything else you want to tell everyone about yourself that is relevant to your studies

Lecture and Exercises: Rethinking through the visual body

#1: Read: http://www.humanjourney.us/universals.html
Post responses to the following instructor guided questions:
   How does posture define humanness? Not humanness?
   What if one cannot stand straight?
   What if one cannot communicate in words?
   How would each visual in the photos below be categorized according to the postural definition of humanness?

#2: Film clip analysis: Watch the film clips from Shrek.
Shrek Segment 1 http://ccids-umaine.ca4.acrobat.com/p10922983/
Shrek Segment 2 http://ccids-umaine.ca4.acrobat.com/p34225313/
Shrek Segment 3 http://ccids-umaine.ca4.acrobat.com/p66848575/

Post responses to the following questions:
• What do the three film clips have to do with disability?
• How is Shrek’s appearance interpreted through the postural discussion in
• Despite the rhetoric, what messages about humanness and disability does the visual of Shrek transmit through the lens of posture?

Now look at the following photographs and think about how each visual can be interpreted through insights in the reading above. Post your thoughts.

Elizabeth Taylor: “I was born with scoliosis, but it has finally caught up with me. My body’s a real mess. If you look at it in the mirror, it’s just completely convex and concave. I’ve become one of those poor little women who’s bent sideways.

“My X-rays are hysterical. The bone doctors just throw up their hands and say, ‘Sorry, there’s nothing we can do!’ Which is so cheery.”
Now post your thoughts about why we began the class with this set of exercises and what this work has to do with disability theory?

**Session 2 September 12**
Recent History
Read: Nazi Eugenics and the T4 Program
http://www.disabilityhistory.org/t4prog.html

Read: Chapter One, Johnson (2003) Make Them go Away. Louisville, KY: Avocado Press. You can access this on Amazon at http://www.amazon.com/Make-Them-Away-Christopher-ebook/dp/B00A284SFI/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1370035977&sr=1-1&keywords=make+them+go+away (click to look inside)

Listen to: http://www.npr.org/2012/10/16/163018620/disabled-kids-living-isolated-lives-in-institutions

Narrated PowerPoint and Instructor guided questions

**Session 3 September 19**
History continued? Longitudinal/ Developmental Theory?
Read: Davis (2013)
DePoy & Gilson (2011), Chapter 6
http://www.disabilityhistory.org/freak1.html How’d You like to be a Giant?

Narrated PowerPoint and Instructor guided questions

**Session 4 -September 26**
Contemporary theory
Read: DePoy & Gilson (2011), Contemporary and Emerging, pp. 115-138
Palmer (2011)

Narrated PowerPoint and Instructor guided questions

**Session 5- October 3**
Read: Davis in L. Davis (2013) Chapter 20
DePoy & Gilson in L. Davis (2013) Design and Branding

Narrated PowerPoint and Instructor guided questions

**Session 6- October 10**
Disability as Quasi or Not Human
(download from this cite)
N.A. (n.d.) Are Disabled People Human?

Session 7 -October 17
Disability as Quasi or Not Human

Watch Million Dollar Baby
http://www.umaine.edu/it/streaming/index.php?file=WebCT/stephen.gilson/Million_Dollar_Baby.flv

Read: Koch (2004)

Sessions 8 -9 October 24 and 31
Student Presentations and Responses: Assignment #4

Access student lecture and follow guided discussion and analysis questions to be posted

Session 10 –November 7
Disjuncture and Healing Disjuncture: Overview

DePoy & Gilson (2011), Chapters 16 and 17

Narrated PowerPoint and Instructor guided questions

Session 11 – November 14
Healing Disjuncture Through The Market Economy

Read Eide & Ingstad
DePoy & Gilson (in press)
Donovan (2010)
Abbott (2011)
http://positiveexposure.org/about-the-program-2/

Narrated PowerPoint and Instructor guided questions

Sessions 12 and 13 November 21 and December 5
Student Presentations and Responses- Assignment #5

Access student lecture and follow guided discussion and analysis questions to be posted

Session 14-December 12 Wrap up