



DIST250

Disabilities Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction

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1. Instructor Information and Introduction

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor name: Kate Fialkowski
Instructor pronouns: (she/hers)
Email address: katefial@udel.edu
Phone number: TBD

Student Office Hours

Office hours are a dedicated time during the week for you to ask questions or engage in discussion about course content with the instructor. There are specific office hours listed at the top of this syllabus and times are available to meet in person or via Zoom video conference. Office hours are a great way to develop community and are an opportunity to advance your learning and challenge your understanding of disability constructs. They are also an opportunity to speak with the Instructor privately about any accommodations requests or special circumstances for excused absences.

2. Course Description

Course Catalog Description

Introduces the multidisciplinary field of disability studies. Explores historical and critical perspectives on the definition and construction of disability. Examines current societal and environmental contexts for disability, including students' own relationships to disability.

Course Overview: Format, Outcomes, and Assessments

This course introduces the multidisciplinary field of disability studies. In this course we will explore historical and critical perspectives on the definition and construction of disability. Together we will examine and question current societal and environmental contexts for disability, including students' own relationships to disability.

- **Course Format and Learning Outcomes.**

The course is organized into three units. Each unit is aligned with an expected learning outcome:

- **Unit 1: What is disability studies?**

Outcome: students will be able to locate disability studies origins within historical and multidisciplinary contents, including connection to students' major or related disciplinary fields

- **Unit 2: What is disability?**

Outcome: Students will demonstrate their ability to critically examine various perspectives on the definition and construction of disability. (e.g., models of disability, US/International contexts, language)

- **Unit 3: Why does the societal context for disability matter?**

Outcome: Students will examine their own relationship to disability and the life

experiences of a range of people with disability and articulate their social identities or worldview related to disabilities.

- Note that across all units, we will ask: How does the diversity of disability experience matter? Content related to the fourth outcome, individual relationships to disability, is threaded through each unit. Also there will be some central concepts (e.g., accessibility, ableism) revisited across all three units.

Whether an individual student may have previously considered these questions, this course will introduce a variety of disciplinary perspectives on disability and students will have many opportunities to critically examine key concepts, perspectives, and current challenges affecting the lives of disabled people. It's important to understand that this class focuses on asking questions about disability, for example: questions about context, hidden meanings, biases, fit and environment, etc.

- **Assessments**

There are three main methods of assessment for this course. 1) engagement with reading materials through reading annotations, 2) individual application activities (IAA), 3) individual unit exams, and 4) end of unit group presentations. More information on each of these appears below in Section 5, Learning Assessments. Note that various supports and resources are available to students. Please avail yourself of these resources for example office hours, references, library supports, student wellbeing etc. This syllabus provides many examples of supports to facilitate success.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites to this course.

Course Delivery

Within each unit, you can expect a combination of activities: required readings, videos, lectures, brief individual assignments in which you apply key concepts, and guided group discussions. You will actively engage with others about the course material and shared learning helps deepen everyone's understanding of concepts.

All materials and content pertaining to this course is available on the Canvas site from the beginning of the semester until the end of the semester. The best way to use Canvas for this course is using the MODULE view.

University/College/Department Requirements this Course Meets

This course fulfills the following UD's General Education Objectives:

- GE1A: Read Critically
- GE1B: Analyze Arguments and Information
- GE1C: Engage in Constructive Ideation
- GE3A: Work Collaboratively Across Cultures
- GE3B: Work Independently Across Cultures
- GE4: Critically Evaluate Ethical Implications
- Finally, UD actively supports the United Nations sustainable development goals which identify actions that lead toward a sustainable future and address global challenges such as poverty,

inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. When appropriate, this course will include the intersections of disability and sustainable development.

3. Learning Resources

There are numerous resources available to and required for students to enhance the learning and participation experience in this class. Some of the tools and resources may be new and all will enhance and perhaps extend your professional and academic skills. Please note that if you have additional resources or exceptions approved by Disability Support Services, be sure to share your accommodations plan with the Instructor at the beginning of the semester so that these accommodations take effect immediately.

Required Learning Materials

Note that there will be assigned readings and related course materials. These materials will be identified in the appropriate course modules in Canvas.

Required Style Format: Citing Sources

This class uses the American Psychological Association (APA) Style (7th edition) for all in-text citations and reference lists. The Purdue OWL site provides a comprehensive set of pages about how to do [in-text citations](#) and [reference lists](#). Please note that you do NOT need to format papers in complete APA style (e.g., don't worry about title pages). Importantly, the APA Style guide also provides suggestions for the use of [bias-free language about disability](#). The APA recommendations describe two common approaches to writing and speaking about disability: "person-first" and "identity-first." The guide also identifies the types of words and phrases that should be avoided.

Technology

The following technology may be employed during this course.

- **Canvas:** In this class, Canvas, UD's online learning management system, will be used for all course activities and communication channels. All assignments will be posted through the Canvas course site unless otherwise directed. Information on how to use Canvas is available through the [Canvas Student Guide](#). Canvas can also be accessed via [MyUD](#). **Canvas Inbox:** Note that this instructor relies on Canvas messaging, "Inbox" for all student communications. This ensures that the Instructor will have a timely response. Therefore, if you want to correspond with the Instructor, please do so through Canvas Inbox. Students will need to be able to access Canvas during class hours as well as outside of class.
- **Perusal:** The Perusal app allows students to help each other learn by collectively annotating readings in threads, responding to each other's comments, and interacting. Comments are automatically graded and passed back to Canvas assignments where all grades are recorded. Note that this course has a practice assignment in which students can become familiar with the Perusal tool. This [YouTube Video](#) may also prove useful.
- **Zoom:** In rare and exceptional circumstances, for example if the University designates that all classes are temporarily moved online, Zoom will be used for video conferencing. If zoom is employed for a specific class meeting time, students will receive a notification from Canvas with Zoom details. Zoom is a web-based application that can be used from a computer, tablet, or phone. From a computer, click the class web link and be sure to install the small program that will download to your computer. You only need to install the program once. From a

mobile device, download the free Zoom app and type in the class meeting ID number. A microphone and camera are recommended for online meetings. Information on how to test your computer's audio and video can be found on [Zoom's website](#). Learn more info about [Zoom at UD](#).

- Note that individual students may also employ digital e-readers, annotation tools, voice-to-text converters, mindmapping tools, time management apps, etc. More information and a sample of this technology is available via the [Disability Support Services Assistive Technology site](#).

Additional Learning Resources

This course uses a plethora of learning and participation modalities. The following resources and supports may be helpful.

- This course relies heavily on the use of critical thinking skills. For an introduction on Critical thinking, See the Forbes article, "[13 Easy Steps to Improve Your Critical Thinking Skills](#)." Also, for writing or presentation assistance, students can make an appointment with, or attend a workshop at [UD Writing Center](#)
- This course will require short classroom presentations. You may wish to seek advice from an [Oral Communication Consultant \(OCC\)](#). OCCs provide free one-to-one and group consultations specific to the goals, challenges, and skills necessary for students to be successful with the assignment.
- If you need assistance with note-taking, time management, or study strategies contact the [Office of Academic Enrichment](#) for one-on-one academic coaching, tutoring, and study skills workshops.
- You may want or need to use UDEL's online library resources. Creating queries for research can be tricky. Students can consult with a librarian through the library's [chat tool](#). The librarian for Disability Studies is Maria Barefoot who can be reached by email (mbar@udel.edu) or making an appointment directly with the [scheduling calendar](#)
- Disability studies intersects with the United Nations sustainable development goals. For more information about these goals and their intersections with disability, The UN provides a resource entitled "[SDGs and Disability](#)."

4. Learning Assessments, Grading, and Timeliness

Brief explanations of each type of assignment are provided below. Complete descriptions of assignments and grading rubrics are provided in Canvas. We encourage you to speak with the Instructor if you have any questions. Your questions about course assignments helps us to refine descriptions in Canvas, which will be helpful to you, other students, and future students.

Reading Annotations: For several required readings, we will use Perusall, which is a "social" application that allows multiple people to annotate (e.g., comment on and ask questions about) shared readings. The purpose is to engage everyone in the readings, generate ideas for discussion, and identify points for clarification.

- **Book Chapter Responses:** There is an assigned text for this course. Assignments will provide opportunities for reflection about the chapters and the opportunity to connect the chapter with social identities or individual worldviews related to disabilities.
- **Individual Research Activities:** These activities provide opportunities for you to apply course concepts to areas of interest or relevance to you. Your responses are always completed before coming to class. Then, you will share your relevant and substantive responses with a small group as a way to compare and contrast different perspectives.

- **Unit Exams:** The purpose of the Unit Exams is to provide summative assessments of your knowledge about the content explored within each unit and your ability to analyze and reflect on related topics. Each unit exam will consist of two parts: 10 multiple choice questions and 4 short essay responses. The multiple-choice questions will be based on unit readings, videos, activities, and discussions. For the short essay responses, you will select a chapter from Disability Visibility as the basis for your responses to questions from the instructor and the book's discussion guide.
- **Group Presentations:** To culminate each unit, small groups will create and share a presentation about an assigned topic. The presentations will provide the whole class with a variety of applications and perspectives on unit concepts. Some class time will be allotted for the group work to prepare for the presentations.. Everyone will have the opportunity to review and provide feedback on other group presentations, followed by whole class discussion of highlights.

Final Grade Breakdown

The final course grade will be calculated based on the respective assignments and their possible points, the student's score, and the weight of each assignment category. The table below details the grading structure:

Individual Assignments	Score	Weight
Reading Annotations on Perusall	5 @ 3pts	20
Book Chapter Responses	3 @ 10pts	20
Individual Research Responses	2 @ 10pts	20
Unit Exams (Part 1 MC; Part 2 Essay) Note that 2-3 optional bonus assignments will be available worth 1 pt each. The bonus points will be added to the Unit exam.	3 @ 20pts	25
Group Assignments		
Unit Presentations	3 @ 10pts	15

Grading Scale

Instructor feedback on assignments can be seen by going into Canvas, selecting Grades, selecting the assignment of interest, and clicking the icons on the right side of the page to review the individual score on each rubric element and/or an overall comment below the rubric. After reviewing the feedback, if you have questions about how to improve or maintain your performance on assignments, please contact the instructor and come to student office hours.

Final letter grades are assigned based on weighted percentages of total points earned, as indicated in the table above.. Percentages will be rounded up to the next value at xx.50 or higher. Student percentages will be assigned the following letter grades as follows:

(100–94) = A; (93–90) = A-;
(89–87) = B+; (86–84) = B; (83–80) = B-;
(79–77) = C+; (76–74) = C; (73–70) = C-;
(69–67) = D+; (66–64) = D; (63–60) = D-;
(<60) = F

Note that, in accordance with University policies, an “Incomplete” course grade will be given only under extreme circumstances supported by relevant documentation. The grades for this course will be calculated into your overall Grade Point Average (GPA). The University explains this calculation on the website: [Maintaining Good Academic Standing and the GPA](#).

Late Assignments

If you are experiencing a situation that is interfering with your ability to complete work in a timely fashion, please contact the Instructor to discuss requesting an extension. Late submission requests must be completed before the date the assignment is due (e.g., a late request for an assignment due on Tuesday must be submitted by Monday). Late requests may be denied if you have made multiple requests, requested after the due date, if the request is unreasonable, or if turning in the work late will interfere with your ability to participate in class. Unexcused late work will result in a loss of points proportionate to the time overdue; at the instructor's discretion, unexcused late work may receive a zero grade.

5. Course Calendar/Schedule

For a complete view of the course structure and assignments with due dates, and necessary links and tools, please refer to the Canvas site which will be maintained with the most up-to-date information.

For your reference: the [official UD academic calendar](#) . Drop/Add Dates, Final Exam Dates, Spring and Winter Breaks are all noted on the UD Academic Calendar.

6. Course Policies

UD has an extensive set of policies which dictate expectations of membership in the Blue Hen community. These policies are available on the [Student Guide to University Policies](#) webpages.

Accessibility as a Pathway to Equity and Welcome/Belonging

Accessibility is a feature of equity as well as a cultural marker of welcome and belonging. Every attendee contributes to the accessibility of this class, ensuring that all course activities and materials are accessible:

- If you encounter material in a format that is not accessible to you, please alert the instructor.
- When you share materials for class assignments, please make them as accessible as possible. For example, provide alt text for images and use the accessibility checkers that are built into common software programs such as Word. The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) offers several [resources](#) for making presentations and materials accessible and inclusive. Scroll down the AUCD page to get links to ideas for specific formats (e.g., handouts, oral presentations, powerpoints, posters). The University of Delaware also offers a set of ["how to" pages](#) to increase accessibility across a variety of common formats.
- If you require accommodations, please be sure to register immediately with the Office of Disability Support Services. The instructor is notified by the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) when students have access to certain accommodations; however, it is helpful when the student discusses with the instructor if/how/when/where those accommodations will be most useful. Please take advantage of Office Hours for discussions with the Instructor. For more information about disability-related accommodations, see the [Disability Support Services](#) office website.

Academic Honesty and the Use of Advanced Automated Tools

The University's Academic Honesty code applies to all activities of this course. Plagiarism will result in loss of points on an assignment and referral for a Student Code of Conduct violation.

The short version of how to avoid plagiarism:

- Do not quote, copy, and paste sources directly. Instead, summarize and paraphrase in YOUR OWN WORDS.
- Even when paraphrasing, give credit where credit is due. ALWAYS CITE YOUR SOURCES.
- Do your own work. Although we will collaborate often, your individual contributions must be clear. Only SUBMIT WORK THAT *YOU* CREATED for this class.

You are not allowed to use advanced automated tools (such as ChatGPT) to generate content for assignments in this course. You are expected to complete individual assignments without substantive assistance from others, including automated tools. Please note that you may use spellcheck and grammar check tools for general editing of your work. Most assignments in this course require you to use specific course concepts, cite course materials, analyze and apply ideas to personal or professional contexts, and reflect on your individual experience. You are likely to perform much better on such tasks than ChatGPT! This guide, [How to Avoid Plagiarism](#), from Western Carolina University has practical ideas, examples, and advice about how to ensure the integrity of your written work.

Commitment to Equity (*Adapted from the University of Delaware's Diversity Statement*)

The University of Delaware's educational mission is to prepare students to live in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. To do so, I am committed to fostering a robust educational environment that supports critical thinking, free inquiry, and an understanding of diverse views and values. I see diversity as a core value and guiding principle for our educational mission and thus must work to make diversity an integral part of everyday life on campus. To this end, I take diversity to mean both the recognition and appreciation of the different backgrounds, values, and ideas of those who comprise our campus, as well as a commitment to ensuring that all people on our campus are treated according to principles of fairness, civility, dignity, and equity.

I am committed to building an educational community that understands people from different backgrounds and economic circumstances, with different needs, and from diverse personal and philosophical beliefs. I believe each of us has a role in ensuring all of us feel welcome and valued in campus life.

Furthermore, the University of Delaware does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, disability, religion, age, or veteran status.

Commitment to Nondiscrimination (Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct)

The University of Delaware works to promote an academic and work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. As a member of the community, your rights, resources, and responsibilities are reflected in the non-discrimination and sexual misconduct policies. Please familiarize yourself with these policies at www.udel.edu/oei. If at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am obligated to inform the university's Title IX Coordinator. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in a paper assignment, or in office hours, I promise to protect your privacy--I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator. For more information on Sexual Misconduct policies, where to get help, and how to report information, please refer to www.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct.

You can report any concerns to the University's Office of Equity & Inclusion (302) 831-8063 or at titleixcoordinator@udel.edu. you can report anonymously through UD Police (302) 831-2222 or the [EthicsPoint Compliance Hotline](#).

Student Wellness

You are a human first!

If you are struggling with this class, please check-in with the Instructor during office hours.

The University of Delaware provides 24-hour crisis assistance and victim advocacy and counseling. Contact 302-831-1001, UD Helpline 24/7/365 if you are feeling anxious, depressed, overwhelmed, or victimized.

Students may also access UD's counseling and other virtual health and well-being resources on the TimelyCare website (<https://app.timelycare.com/auth/login>) or through the TimelyCare app. UD's Center for Counseling and Student Development provides a variety of services to support you in your academic work and with being successful. For more information, visit <http://www.udel.edu/counseling> or call the office at 831-2141. Additionally, UD can provide support for recognizing and managing drug and alcohol use.

The University of Delaware's Student Crisis Fund supports eligible students who face serious financial hardship due to any unanticipated crises. Contact the Dean of Students for more information. University services are available to students regardless of immigration or citizenship status.