



## Introduction to Disability Studies:

### The Social Context of Disability

SW 360K/387R (61900/62135)

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**Instructor:**

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*Please read through the entire syllabus; this provides the course schedule as well as other relevant information.*

**TEXT:** You will have readings for this course that will be made available to you on Canvas.

### ACCESSIBILITY

This course will be conducted entirely on the web, using Canvas. This software is fully accessible, but if you have difficulty in using a screen reader to access any information on the website, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. This class seeks ways to become a working and evolving model of inclusion and universal design for **all** students. As is University policy, if you need instructional, curricular, or assignment/project accommodations to complete this course, you must notify the instructor in advance of your needs. Every possible effort will be made to accommodate students in a timely and confidential manner. Students are encouraged to approach the instructor with any other life circumstances that may affect their participation in the course. These may be personal, health-related, family-related issues or other concerns. The sooner your instructor knows about these, the earlier he

can discuss possible adjustments or alternative arrangements as needed for homework, assignments, or class.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this course is to introduce psychosocial topics from an empowerment model as they relate to Disability Studies. To that end the student will:

- ❖ Learn and critically evaluate current definitions and theories of disability.
- ❖ Understand disability as a socially conferred status, not a fixed attribute of the individual.
- ❖ Identify how attitudes and beliefs about people with disabilities may impact the personal and social view of disability.
- ❖ Identify and discuss some of the issues that influence people with specific disabilities.
- ❖ Examine the complex interplay of social, political, and economic forces as they relate to disability.
- ❖ Examine the impact of cultural values in conceptualizing individual difference.
- ❖ Understand the longstanding social oppression of the disability community and consider ways to initiate social change.

## **COURSE FORMAT**

This class uses a form of blended learning where students learn content online through reading online content, analyzing readings and articles, watching videos and completing exercises on the discussion board. Students may be required to work in small groups for some activities. Students will need to have access to a computer with reliable internet connection to complete this course.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

This course is designed in a web-based environment that gives us a certain kind of flexibility in creating learning opportunities for you. The course aims to give you some flexibility in choosing how you best learn, and what topics are of primary interest to you, within a structure. There

are six lessons in this course (not counting what you will do this week). Each lesson will last about two weeks.

One of the biggest hazards in a distance learning environment is getting behind, and although I do create some flexibility within this course, you must complete your lessons on time! The lessons will be open for a period only, and you must complete the activities within that time limit to get credit. If you find yourself getting behind, due to unexpected circumstance or poor planning, let me know as soon as possible. An online course such as this one is not a course where you can ignore everything till mid-term and still expect to catch up. The content will be measured out and spaced. Before you start, ask yourself whether you are willing to devote time each week to this course, just like you would if you were going to a classroom and sitting down there. You have to make yourself sit down; even though you get to choose the time, you still have to put in the time. If you are self-disciplined, and learn best by reading, writing, thinking, and discussing, you will probably love this class. If you don't, you won't, and it's better to know that now than at mid-term. **I will not grant any incompletes in this course**; you must keep up with the work.

**Each lesson is broken down into learning activities. These are the parts:**

### **The Map**

At the beginning of each lesson, there is a map of the tasks and assignments. The map will list the tasks, give you estimated times to complete the task, and give you the number of points you can earn for doing it. That way everyone knows what to expect for any given lesson. You should review the map of every lesson at the beginning, with your day planner, so you can plan when you will work on the class that week. The map will also specify which assignments are REQUIRED and which are optional. Within each lesson module, you will have options about the activities you engage in to get information. Some activities will be required, and the optional activities will (obviously) be your choice.

## The Lesson

The lesson would be the lecture I would deliver if I were standing in front of you in class. Read it, and imagine me talking to you. You will notice that I pose a lot of questions when I teach; that's just how I teach, and I do that because I want you to think, to stay engaged in the material. **The lessons are always required**, along with the "think" document that you produce with each lesson.

## Activities

These will be things I'll ask you to do to support your learning in the class. Most are required, some will be optional, but you will know each time by looking at the map. These tasks will involve you "doing" something.

## Readings

You will have a reading packet for this class of articles, book chapters, etc. I will supply this to you online; you don't have to buy it somewhere. You will write a summary/reaction paper for the items you read. There will be specific instructions for each reading, but in general, what you will do is write a 200 – 250-word summary of what you have read, and then react to it. Summary should be directed toward imagined readers who have not read the article being summarized. The purpose of the summary is to give these persons a clear overview of the article's main points.

### Summary criteria:

- Accuracy of content
- Comprehensiveness and
- Balanced with clear sentence structure and good transitions – i.e., clarity, readability, and grammatical correctness.

## Readings on the Web

I'll also ask you to read documents that are on other websites and react to them. Again, you will have specific instructions for each of those readings, and a link within Canvas to get there.

## Listen On the Web

These are audio documents, usually from National Public Radio. You need Real Player to listen to them, so you'll want to make sure it's loaded on your computer. You'll have a link to get there, and will summarize and comment on what you hear.

## Web Hunt

This activity allows you to review websites. Sometimes you'll review ones I've found, at times you'll look for your own.

## Discussion Questions

Each lesson we'll have some issues to discuss on the bulletin board. Your participation there will be **required**, just like class participation. Canvas counts the number of times you read and post messages, so I have a numeric gauge of your class participation. As the class progresses, you also may be asked to develop your discussion questions. This is an important part of our learning. I expect full participation on the discussion board. And yes, you can lose points for not participating.

## Quiz

We'll end each lesson with a quiz. The questions will be short answer ones, and you'll have them in advance. The quiz will be a concise way to wrap up a particular lesson.

## Project Weeks

There will be some weeks when we forgo new information so that you can apply the information you already have learned. During those weeks, you will have the assignment to help you apply your learning. For the first project will watch a movie, and apply some of the concepts we have discussed already to it. For the final project, you will do two things. First, you will do "a pick it apart" event using a TV show instead of a movie, and second, you will write a 3 – 5-page integrative essay in which you will reflect on what you learned and accomplished through

this course. This essay is your opportunity to draw links between this course, your experiences with disability, and your field of study.

**If you have other ideas for assignments, see the course instructor.**

## **SUBMITTING WORK**

Submit your work to me no later than midnight on the due date, unless you have specifically gotten permission to turn it in late. Your job should all be in one document, saved in Microsoft Word as .doc. If you don't use Word, and can't save as .doc, save as .rtf (rich text format). If that doesn't make any sense to you, call the help desk, and they will explain it to you. Put your NAME in the title of the document at the top of the paper, so I know it's yours. You should make a list of what you are submitting to me, with a point total, and your anticipated grade on the first page of your submitted document. Please, please, please follow these simple formatting guidelines.

## **GRADES**

You will acquire points by doing the tasks associated with each lesson. Each lesson has basic requirements equivalent to the time you would spend in a classroom, plus the time you would usually spend outside the class doing readings or working on papers. Each lesson clearly states how many points you can earn, and what grade you could get for that number of points. There will be points for doing the project, during the project week. There are no mid-terms or finals, only quizzes at the end of each lesson, and activities to do to support your learning. **You won't memorize a bunch of stuff in this class; you will read, write, and think.** We will be done with **all** of the work for the course by the last day of class. Everything must be turned in to me by the last class day to get credit for it.

## **COURSE DROP DATES**

February 1, 2017, is the last day to drop and still get a refund, according to the course catalog. If you start this course and realize that learning online is not for you, don't hesitate to drop it. It's torture for

both of us if you don't. Working like this is not for everyone; if it's not a good match for you, don't force it.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

The course will be evaluated according to university guidelines. I'll also ask for feedback that you will be able to provide anonymously on the course website.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICY AND THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK (SSW) POLICIES**

### **The University of Texas Honor Code**

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **Professional Conduct and Civility in the Classroom**

The instructor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means that students should be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These problems may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the views expressed by others. Nevertheless, the instructor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

## **Documented Disability Statement**

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. More information may be found at <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

## **Unanticipated Distress**

Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the instructor. The instructor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471- 3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

## **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty**

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/>).



## **Policy on Social Media and Professional Communication**

Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional student in training. Because of this, students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including any information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in any way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain content could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

## **Use of Course Materials**

The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

## **Religious Holidays**

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the instructor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the instructor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

## **Campus Carry Policy**

The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

## **Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the University informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at

<https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

### **Classroom Confidentiality**

Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters are considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and are protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and of the Standards for Social Work Education.

### **Title IX Reporting**

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Faculty, instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be communicated to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Deputy for the SSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty, and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

### **Safety**

As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these tasks may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and

practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the instructor regarding any safety concerns.

### **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://operations.utexas.edu/units/csas/bcal.php>.

### **Emergency Evacuation Policy**

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instructor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

**GRADING SCALE** - the final course grade will be based on the following scale:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Remark</b>
94.0-100=A	Work is exceptional on all criteria
90.0-93.999=A-	
87.0-89.999=B+	Work is good/very good on all criteria
84.0-86.999=B	
80.0-83.999=B-	
77.0-79.999=C+	Work is adequate on all criteria
74-76.999=C	
70-73.999=C-	
67-69.999=D+	Work is inadequate on some criteria
64.0-66.999=D	
60.0-63.999=D-	
59.999 & below=F	Work is inadequate on most/all criteria

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## SYLLABUS SPRING 2017

### Syllabus Lesson

Date January 17- January 24, 2017

Goals We will go over the information you need to be successful with on-line learning, how to use the Canvas software, and helpful on-line resources. **Assignment Due Date: January 24, 2017**

### Lesson 1: What is Disability?

Date January 24 – February 7, 2017

Goals We'll go over the variety of definitions that can apply to the word "disability"; examine different frames of reference for understanding disability, and the relationship between the disability industry and the various definitions of disability. **Assignment Due Date: February 7, 2017**

### Lesson 2 Language and Disability

Date February 7 – February 21, 2017

Goals In this section, we examine the effect of language we use to discuss disability. First, we'll talk about the power of words, then talk about categories of the language used to describe people with disabilities. **Assignment Due Date: February 21, 2017**

### Lesson 3 Attitudes About Disability

Date February 21 – March 7, 2017

Goals The goal here is to understand the importance of attitudes and values about disability; to explore issues of paternalism and power as they relate to the oppression of people with disabilities. **Assignment Due Date: March 7, 2017**

## Movie Project Lesson

Date March 7 – 21, 2017

Goals And now for something different! You'll watch a movie and discuss it as one of the primary ways people in the world, average people, learn about disability and disability-related issues. The objective here is to understand how movies shape attitude towards people with disabilities. **Assignment Due Date: March 21, 2017**

## Lesson 4 More Attitudes About Disability

Date March 21 – April 4, 2017

Goals We will examine the importance and impact of cultural attitudes and values about disability, and the effects of negative attitudes on individuals with disabilities from a socio-cultural perspective. **Assignment Due Date: April 4, 2017**

## Lesson 5 Yet More Attitudes About Disability

Date April 4 – April 18, 2017

Goals In this section, we will use what we know about attitudes towards disability to understand the attitudes of people with disabilities towards people without disabilities. We will also explore the views people with disabilities have towards their disability **Assignment Due Date: April 18, 2017**

## Final Project Lesson

Date April 18 – May 2, 2017

Goals For this "pick it apart" event, you'll watch a favorite TV show and analyze it as one of the primary ways people in the world, average people, learn about disability and disability-related issues. The objective here is to understand how TV shows shape attitude towards people with disabilities. Assignment **Due Date: April 21, 2017**. Integrative Paper **Due Date: May 2, 2017**.

**So, let's get started!** Your first task is to learn about the Syllabus, Canvas and become familiar with its organization and features. Click on the **Syllabus Lesson** and begin!

