

Feminist Approaches to Disability Studies (GWS 207) Spring 2014
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:25am-11:40am
New London Hall 204

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Office Location: Department of Gender and Women's Studies, 740 Williams Street

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00pm-4:00pm in Coffee Grounds and by appointment.

Course Description

This course explores disability as both a social identity and category of analysis. The mix of feminist and disability-based scholarship provides an interdisciplinary and intersectional entrance into this innovative field. Our course materials include critical theory, historical and contemporary studies, as well as activist and artistic representations in order to provide multiple ways of connecting to our course topics. Together, we seek to gain an intellectual foundation as well as consider the importance that disability studies holds for our social and political lives.

Learning Goals

We explore the following questions throughout our course:

- How have social understandings and responses to disability developed and been challenged?
- What are the differing models of disability? What are their theoretical and political underpinnings?
- What are the theoretical and practical interventions made in feminist studies by disability studies?
- What are the varying forms of disability justice advocacy? What is the history of the movement?
- What are the possible meanings of "feminist disability studies" and its implications for praxis?

Universal Learning

I am committed to the principle of universal learning. All of us learn in different ways and our course can be organized to accommodate all students. For example, you may learn more effectively through oral, written, or visual renderings of course topics. In order to pursue universal learning, our classroom, virtual spaces, learning and communication practices should be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and thoughtful engagement are crucial to universal learning. If you have a disability that may require classroom, test taking, or other reasonable modifications, please be sure to register with the Office of Student Disability Services, if you have not already done so. You can do so by going to the Office of Student Disability Services which is located in Crozier Williams, Room 221, or by contacting the Office at Campus Extensions 5428 or 5240, or by email to barbara.mcllarky@conncoll.edu or lillian.liebenthal@conncoll.edu. Please meet with me as soon as possible to discuss your individual learning needs and how we can best accommodate them in this course. If you do not have a documented disability, please remember that other support services, including the Academic Resource Center, Writing Center, and Counseling Services are available to all students and offer a range of services that are helpful for everyone.

Course Texts

- ❑ Hall, Kim Q. *Feminist Disability Studies*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011. ISBN: 978-0253223401. Listed in Course Schedule as **FDS**.
- ❑ Kafer, Alison. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0253009340. Listed in Course Schedule as **FQC**.
- ❑ Nielsen, Kim E. *A Disability History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0807022047. Listed in Course Schedule as **DHUS**.

All other readings are available as PDFs or via URLs on our Moodle course site.

Office Hours

I hold office hours in order to provide you with an opportunity to discuss course-specific issues that we have not been able to address in class. Examples of reasons that you may visit my office hours include: you want to discuss a course topic further; you have questions or concerns about your work in this course; or a personal issue has begun affecting your work and you need to talk with me about possible ways to address this problem. Do not hesitate to meet with me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties with the course, because there is little we can do at the end of the semester.

Academic Resource Center (ARC)

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) offers services to support your academic work such as study skills workshops, time management, coaching and tutoring. Our offices are located in Main Street West, The Plex. Please visit us or call 860-439-5294 for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Roth Writing Center

The Roth Writing Center provides one-to-one peer tutoring (free of charge) to help student writers of all abilities during all stages of the writing process. To make an appointment, call x2173 or stop by the Writing Center at 214 Blaustein. If you're a confident, experienced writer we can help you to push your ideas and polish your style; if you're a relatively inexperienced and not-so-confident writer we can also help you, by working on grammar or organization or whatever you need. Writing Center tutors are trained to help you to discover what you think through writing. Working with a tutor gives you the opportunity to share your work-in-progress with an actual reader, so that you can get useful feedback on that work *before* you have to turn it in for a final grade. For further information, visit the Writing Center web page at <http://write.conncoll.edu/>.

Library Research Liaison

Our research and instruction librarian is Ashley Hanson, MLIS. She welcomes your research questions and is available to meet one-on-one to assist you with your developing projects. Ashley can be reached via e-mail at ashley.hanson@conncoll.edu and her campus phone is x2653.

Connecticut College Honor Code

It is crucial that you conduct yourself in a manner that is in line with our college's Honor Code (<http://www.conncoll.edu/at-a-glance/honor-code-shared-governance/the-honor-code/>). Academic integrity is of the utmost importance in maintaining the high standards of scholarship in our community. Academic dishonesty is considered to be a serious offense against the community and represents a significant breach of trust between the professor, the classmates, and the student. There are many forms of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, submitting the same work in two courses without prior approval, unauthorized discussion or distribution of exams or assignments, and offering or receiving unauthorized aid on exams or graded assignments. Students violating the Honor Code may be referred to the college's Honor Council for resolution.

Attendance

You are required to come to class on time. Lateness and unexcused absences will count negatively towards your grade. 3 unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade by one full letter. 4 or more unexcused absences will result in a failing course grade. Class discussion will stay closely aligned with the course readings, and you must come to class having completed all assigned reading to be considered in attendance. Attendance is mandatory on class presentation days and for required outside class events. You will provide proper documentation for unavoidable absences in order to not have them negatively impact your final grade in this course.

Grading

You will receive your final grade based on your performance in class and course work. The grading scale for this course is: A = 100-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D = 69-60; F= 59 and below. Late assignments will receive a deduction of one letter grade per 24-hour period they are late. Assignment extensions may be requested under extenuating circumstances and with timely notification.

	Participation	Moodle Posts	DS Journal Project	Midterm Exam	Accessing Conn Presentation	Accessing Conn Paper & Reflection	Final Exam
Due	n/a	n/a	March 6	March 27	April 29	May 1	Finals
Value	10%	20%	15%	15%	10%	15%	15%

Class Participation

Consistent, critically engaged class participation is crucial for a successful and productive classroom atmosphere. You are required to respectfully engage all members of the classroom and talk only in your turn. Interruptions and hostile remarks will not be tolerated. All cell phones or similar electronic devices must be turned off and put away in class. Use of a laptop or tablet in class is solely for work related to our course. Usage of your laptop or tablet for work in other classes or entertainment may result in laptop use being disallowed for the rest of the semester.

Moodle Posts

For each day of class that has assigned readings, one assigned student posts a substantive discussion question by noon the day before class to our Moodle reading forum. By 8:00am the day of class, everyone responds to the discussion question, drawing upon the day's readings for a minimum of 150 words. You will also look at other classmate's responses, and provide at least one comment to a post by 10:00am on the day of class. Please make sure to first write your posts via a word processing application as Moodle at times may erase posts inadvertently.

Disability Studies Journal Project

Each student will focus on a single disability studies-focused journal for this project. You will explore the journal's issues as well as research its history and organization. To focus your review, you will study in-depth two different articles from the journal as the basis for your project paper due on March 6. Further guidelines will be provided during the semester.

Accessing Conn Research Project

In small groups, you will develop a research project focused on accessibility within our community at Connecticut College during April. Your group will develop a plan for assessing accessibility based on existing research and advocacy work. Together you will conduct your assessment and analyze your findings. You will share your findings in-class on April 29. Your written assessment and an individual brief project reflection will be due on May 1. Further guidelines will be provided during the semester.

Midterm and Final Exams

Both exams will include key term definitions, short answer and essay questions. The midterm exam will take place in class on March 27. It will cover all course materials (readings, media, lectures, and discussions) from January 21 to March 25. The final exam will be self-scheduled during final week. It will cover all course materials (readings, media, lectures, and discussions) from the semester.

Course Schedule

Tuesday, January 21 Introduction

- Dobson, Miriam, "Intersectionality: A Fun Guide."
- Laurel, Shemaya Mountain, "Thing I Hear Too Many Times (Speaking of Fear)," 144-147.

Thursday, January 23 Conceptualizing Disability Studies

- Claire, Eli, "Stolen Bodies, Reclaimed Bodies: Disability and Queerness," 359-365.
- Linton, Simi, "What is Disability Studies?" 518-522.
- FDS** Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie, "Integrating Disability..." 13-47.

Tuesday, January 28 Pursuing Feminist Disability Studies

- FDS** Hall, Kim Q., "Reimagining Disability and Gender..." 1-10.
- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "Introduction: Imagined Futures," 1-24.

Thursday, January 30 Embodying Disability Studies

- Mitchell, W. J. T., "Seeing Disability," 391-397.
- Siebers, Tobin, "Disability in Theory: From Social Constructionism ..." 737-754.
- Leake, David W., "Self-Determination Requires Social Capital," 34-43.

Tuesday, February 4 Critiquing Ableism

- Schalk, Sami, "Metaphorically Speaking: Ableist Metaphors in Feminist Writing."
- FDS** Jung, Karen E., "Chronic Illness and Educational Equity," 263-286.

Thursday, February 6 Cultural and Medical Responses to Mental Health

- FDS** Donaldson, Elizabeth J., "Revisiting the Corpus of the Madwoman," 91-113.
- WNPR, "The Language of Mental Health" interview with Dr. Paul Summergrad.
- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Introduction," ix-xxiii.

Tuesday, February 11 Early American Disability History

- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 1: The spirit chooses the body it will occupy," 1-11.
- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 2: The poor, vicious, and infirm," 12-30.
- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 3: The miserable wretches were then thrown..." 31-48.

Thursday, February 13 Institutionalizing Disability in American Culture

- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 4: The deviant and the dependent," 49-77.
- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 5: I am disabled, and must go at something else..." 78-99.

Tuesday, February 18 Sexual and Disability Justice

- FDS** Wilkerson, Abby, "Disability, Sex Radicalism, and Political Agency," 193-217.
- The Icarus Project, "Interview w/Sins Invalid on Disability Justice Theory & Praxis."
- To Be Announced

Thursday, February 20 Theater and Disability Activism

- Snyder, Sharon L. and David T. Mitchell, "Re-engaging the Body..." 367-389.
- FDS** Fox, Ann M. and Joan Lipkin, "Res(Crip)ting Feminist Theater through Disability..." 287-310.
- To Be Announced

Tuesday, February 25 Eugenics and the Medicalization of Disability

- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 6: Three generations of imbeciles are enough," 100-130.
- FDS** Lamp, Sharon and W. Carol Cleigh, "A Heritage of Ableist Rhetoric," 175-189.

Thursday, February 27 Disability Advocacy in the Mid-Twentieth Century

- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 7: We don't want tin cups," 131-156.
- FDS** James, Jennifer C. "Gwendolyn Brooks, World War II, and the Politics of Rehab..." 136-158.

Tuesday, March 4 Disability Movement Building

- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Chapter 8: I guess I'm an activist. I think it's just caring," 157-183.
- DHUS** Nielsen, Kim E., "Epilogue," 184-185.

Thursday, March 6 Disability Studies Journal Project Paper Due

- ❖ In-class screening of *Lives Worth Living*, directed by Eric Neudel (2011).

Tuesday, March 25 Claiming Disability Studies and Politics

- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "Time for Disability Studies and a Future for Crips," 25-46.
- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "A Future for Whom? Passing on Billboard Liberation," 86-102.

Thursday, March 27 Midterm Exam

Tuesday, April 1 Assessing Access

- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "Accessible Futures, Future Coalitions," 149-169.
- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "Appendices," 171-178.

Thursday, April 3 Accessing Conn Preliminary Research Design

- Linton, Simi, Susan Mello and John O'Neill, "Disability Studies: Expanding..." 4-10.
- To Be Announced

Tuesday, April 8 Reproductive Justice and Disability Rights

- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "At the Same Time, Out of Time: Ashley X," 47-68.
- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "Debating Feminist Futures: Slippery Slopes, Culture Anxiety..." 69-85.

Thursday, April 10 Cyborg Crip-Feminisms

- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "The Cyborg and the Crip: Critical Encounters," 103-128.
- Haraway, Donna, "A Cyborg Manifesto," 291-324.

Tuesday, April 15 Disability Outside

- FQC** Kafer, Alison, "Bodies of Nature: The Environmental Politics of Disability," 129-148.

Thursday, April 17 Accessing Conn Research In-Class Work Day

Tuesday, April 22 Disability Studies and Performativity

- FDS** Samuels, Ellen, "Critical Divides: Judith Butler's Theory..." 48-66.
- FDS** LaCom, Cindy, "Revising the Subject: Disability as 'Third Dimension'..." 159-174.

Thursday, April 24 Complication Disabilities

- FDS** Herndon, April, "Disparate but Disabled: Fat Embodiment and Disability Studies," 245-262.
- FDS** Mintz, Susannah B., "Invisible Disability: Georgia Kleege's *Sight Unseen*," 69-90.

Tuesday, April 29 Accessing Conn Research Findings Discussion

Thursday, May 1 Accessing Conn Research Overview and Reflection Due

- Weich, Ivan, "The Role of Labor in My Life and in the Progress of the Organized Blind Movement."
- National Disability Rights Network, "Segregated and exploited: The failure of the disability..."
- Joly, Eduardo, "Disability and Employment in Argentina: The Right to Be Exploited?" 5-10; 42.

Tuesday, May 6 Disability Justice's Intersections

- FDS Erevelles, Nirmala, "The Color of Violence: Reflecting on Gender, Race..." 117-135.
- Selections from *The Feminist Wire* Disability Forum (November 2013).

Finals Period – Final Exam