York University
Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies
CDIS 5040 3.0 Experience, Identity, and Social Theory
Winter 2016

Thursdays 11:30am-2:30pm in VH 1156 from January 4 to March 31, except February 18

Instructor: Prof. Rachel Gorman
Office: HNES 407
Hours: Thursdays from 2:30-4:00pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will engage with contemporary critical theory in disability studies, and trace the conceptual currents through which these theories have emerged. We will explore how contemporary disability theorists deal with questions of experience, identity, and the politics of race, gender, sexuality, disability, and class. We will highlight questions of ontology and epistemology within strands of critical race, feminist, and Marxist theory; and examine recent contributions of transnational, Native, and queer theory to disability studies. For critical social theorists, the point is not merely to understand the world, but to change it. The purpose of a close engagement with genealogies of contemporary theory is to help us to develop anti-racist, anti-colonial, queer- and trans-inclusive disability politics capable of challenging the political economic status quo. This seminar course requires close engagement with the readings, especially in the weekly seminar. In your first assignment you will investigate a concept that emerged in the first four weeks. In the second assignment, you will develop your approach to subjectivity. In your final paper you will produce a critical essay drawing on the theorists we studied in the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading and participation Ongoing 20%
2. Critique of a concept (6 pages) Due Jan. 31 20%
3. Reflection on subjectivity (6 pages) Due Mar. 6 20%
4. Theoretical framework (12 pages) Due Apr. 3 40%

REQUIRED READINGS

I will email the sixteen articles we will be reading for the first four classes. For the following eight classes, we will read a monograph in preparation for every other class. The monographs are available as e-books through York’s library; or in hardcopy new or used on-line, or at the Scott library. Participants are encouraged to share pdf versions of the books.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE

PART ONE: Investigating Themes and Concepts

January 7 Theme—Nationalism


January 14 Concept—Affect


January 21 Theme—Colonialism


PART TWO: Theorizing Subjectivity

February 4 Disabling Worlds—Thematic Investigation


February 11 Disabling Worlds—Conceptual Investigation


February 25 Racial Mattering—Thematic Investigation


March 3 Racial Mattering—Conceptual Investigation

REFLECTION DUE 6th

PART THREE: Theorizing the Social

March 10  Therapeutic Nations—Thematic Investigation


March 17  Therapeutic Nations—Conceptual Investigation


March 24  Global Difference—Thematic Investigation


March 31  Global Difference—Conceptual Investigation  FRAMEWORK DUE


NOTE ON LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As an instructor, it is my responsibility to foster a supportive, inclusive learning environment that will encourage both individual and collective growth. As emerging scholars, organizers, and policy-makers, it is your responsibility to become conscious of, and engaged in, the creation of a transformative, anti-oppressive collegial environment. Through collective reflection, discussion, and action, we become better researchers and activists.

POLICIES ON ASSIGNMENTS

1. Assignments one and two should be six pages (1500 words) minimum, and assignment three should be twelve pages (3000 words) minimum. Please cite at all relevant
references from the course reading list, as well as additional sources you may be applying to your work. Please **email assignments in Word format with subject line “CDIS 5040 Assignment 1 (or 2 or 3)”** by midnight on day they are due.

2. Assignments format and referencing must follow a style guide (APA, MLA, Chicago).

3. As an instructor, I am bound by the Faculty of Graduate Studies guidelines around grading practices, missed assignments, and late work (link to [Student Survival Guide](#) and see page 66 for policy details on the [Assignment Deferred Standing Agreement](#)). My desire is for all students to finish their course work in a timely manner, and in my experience, accommodation and modification before the fact is key to accomplishing this. Please approach me with your hopes, fears, and concerns for completing this course, and we can work out a solution.

4. Please also see pages 65-66 & 73-81 of the Student Survival Guide set out York policies on [Grading Systems](#), [Academic Honesty](#), and the [Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).