Critical Disability Studies  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
York University  
Winter 2015

CDIS 6140 3.0: Health & Disability  
Mondays, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM  
Commencing January 5th 2015  
Classroom: VARI 1156

Calendar Course Description
What comprises disability? What comprises chronic illness? Health? This course analyzes the intersections of disability, health, and illness, and the ways in which these are distinct, yet interrelated. The course’s analysis is rooted in examining assumptions about where disability, illness, and health are located and how these are conceptualized through competing discourses.

We will investigate the construction and experience of disability, health, illness, and their relationships with each other. We will further investigate how systems of inequality produce illness and social suffering. The conflation of disability with ill health is rooted in a narrow definition of health based on the presence of disease or infirmity, the use of medical practitioners as gatekeepers to disability benefits and an inability to acknowledge the multiple ways in which disabilities are often created by societal norms. Students will develop an understanding of disability as a form of social disadvantage that is nested within larger systems of inequality.

Accommodation:
Students who need accommodations are encouraged to contact the course instructor as soon as possible.

Contact:
nancy viva davis halifax, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, Graduate Program Director  
Critical Disability Studies, Faculty of Graduate Studies, York University  
Office: Health, Nursing and Environmental Studies Building, Room 408  
Phone 416-736-2100, extension 22653  
Fax: 416-736-5227  
Email: nhalifax@yorku.ca  
Office hours: Wednesdays after 3:30 and before 6:30 or by appointment (unless otherwise posted)
Evaluation and Assignments:
All assignments must be typed and have one consistent citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago). Composition, spelling and grammar will be taken into account in the grading of your assignments. Be sure to paginate your assignments. All assignments must be properly documented and have proper citation form.

Plagiarism:
or the submission of work which you did not write, will receive a zero and may lead to formal charges of academic dishonesty, depending on the extent of plagiarism. Consequences for lapses in academic integrity are stringent. All students should access the full York policy on academic integrity and also complete the tutorial about how to respect these procedures at:
http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity
http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academicintegrity/

It is expected that students at the graduate level are versed in, and committed to the university’s academic standards of integrity. Every submitted assignment should be given great care as it reflects your scholarship and ongoing conversations with theory, practice and activism. Your work should be received without mechanical or technical errors, and edited for precision of language. All work you submit is considered complete.

Evaluation:
There are five passing grades: A+, A, A-, B+, and B; one conditional grade: C; and one clear failing grade: F. The Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar spells out the combinations of C's and F's, which require withdrawal. Students who run into difficulty in a course, should seriously consider withdrawing before the deadline.

Assignments:
Field Assignment/artefact analysis 25 – February 2, 2015
Proposal Final Paper 15 - February 23, 2015
Annotated Bibliography 20 – March 9, 2015
Final Paper 40 – April 6, 2015

EVALUATION CRITERIA
a) Substantive: The central purpose is readily apparent; engagement with CDS; sensitivity to language, metaphor. Integration of course content, application of theory where appropriate; critical thinking demonstrated through application of course content, synthesis, analysis, critique.
b) Understanding: demonstrates clear understanding of theoretical concepts from the course.
c) Clarity and organisation: logical flow of ideas to support the reader’s understanding.
d) Progression of analytic and written skills: constructive use of feedback regarding analyses and format of paper; integration of key course concepts.
e) Writing: sensitivity to word choice; consistent, scholarly tone; references support claims; grammatically correct sentences and paragraph structure; APA style format; paper of correct length.
Helpful hint: During this semester, if you don’t already know it, learn RefWorks! It will save you enormous amounts of time during your time at York! If you are having problems with your scholarly writing use the student resources available to you at York (www.yorku.ca/cds/lss/).

I encourage you to read books on writing, including *Writing analytically*, which is in the York library.
Rosenwasser, David, and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006. Though I note it is now in its 6th edition - York has the 4th. Also Strunk and White *The elements of style* and Stanley Fish *How to write a sentence and how to read one*. I hope you will find these to be of support in your journey to becoming a scholar and writer. The York library also has numerous writing resources.

Some of my favourite writing resources include:
Strunk & White, *The elements of style* (I am partial to the edition illustrated by Maira Kalman).
Stanley Fish's *How to write a sentence and how to read one* provides us with a guide that helps us develop precision within our writing. Natalie Goldberg's *Writing down the bones*, Annie Dillard's *The writing life*.

If you are writing for me, then please do not use scare quotes! If you do - I will be asking you to read the following:

**Assignments**

1: Assignment 1: The “Field” of Disability & Health – Artefact Analysis (25% of Final Grade)
During the first 4 weeks of the course each student will select a 2-3 hour “field experience” that illuminates the intersection of health and disability from a perspective that differs from and expands on their disciplinary norms. These field trips could include going to a hospital for a tour; observing a health care procedure; attending an opera; going to a reading; attending a lecture at a gallery. You will then write a brief (7-8 page) reflective account of how this relates to your understanding of disability and health. Did this experience open up this substantive area for you? If so, how? Your insights will be debriefed in class.

OR
You will be responsible for selecting an artifact related to disability and health and developing an analysis. This can be any artifact that allows you to “get inside” current conversations. You will describe it (construction, provenance, design, ornamentation), interpret it, placing it within a disability and health, historical, and social context and through this, further your understanding of how we engage with material culture as well as your understanding of this particular artifact. – 7-8 pages. Again a discussion of your understandings will be integrated into our seminar.

Due Date: **February 2, 2015**
2: Proposal for Final Paper/Project (15% of Final Grade)
Each of you will be writing a major paper or completing a major project in this class. Your topic will reflect your central concerns as they intersect with the course materials. You could consider developing a course curriculum for an undergraduate course in health and disability, a standard research essay, writing a draft manuscript for publication, conducting a literature review, analysing an artefact, engaging in arts-informed research, or analysing some aspect of health technology as it relates to critical disability studies.
Your proposal for this final paper/project must be 5 pages in length and descriptive. It must include your rationale for your work, what you want to learn, an overview of the content, and a preliminary list of readings and resources. You should be having meetings with me prior to this in order to commence your work early.
Due Date: **February 23, 2015**

3) Annotated Bibliography: 20%
This assignment will support your proposal and final paper. 10-12 pages with approximately 15-20 sources (1/2-3/4 page per source).
Due Date: **March 9, 2015**

4) Final Paper/Project 40%
Based on Assignment 2 this paper/project will be approximately 18-20 pages or equivalent for projects, including a bibliography with a minimum of 15 scholarly sources. Wikipedia and other similar sources are not acceptable. If you are confused about a source please consult with me.
Due Date: **April 6, 2015**

This course is a seminar and active participation from everyone is welcome. As an integral aspect of this seminar you will be asked at the beginning of the course to choose dates during which you will lead a seminar discussion on different occasions. This will consist of preparing remarks and critiques on a particular week’s readings, followed by two-three questions to discuss in seminar. In order to facilitate the readings please sign up for one in the first class. When it is your turn to present you may find it helpful to bring in an object, artifact, a review, in addition to a series of questions – something related/connected to the reading. If it is an object please bring in a history of it that you can present alongside how you feel it intersects with our reading. If you are bringing forward a passage/series of passages from the text that we are reading, please present these in your own language – tell us what is provocative, difficult, exciting about these. Remember the purpose is to move us along in our understanding of CDS as it intersects with our understanding of health and disability….

I expect that you will participate in class with thoughtful questions and contributions. We all exercise different levels of participation with which we are comfortable. However I expect you to be aware of these and to challenge yourselves to either further liberate or restrain your participation. Your final grade will be based on your participation throughout the entire course, including leading seminars as well as weekly seminar discussions; it will also be based on your discussion of your fieldwork. Students will be assessed on the quality of their contributions to
class participation, their ability to critically read and understand course materials, and their
capacity to translate their understandings to the field of critical disability studies. Persistent
absence from class prohibits your full participation in this class and will result in a lower grade.

We all have complex lives that surround our engagement in the academy and I expect there will
be times when one of us will need to take a call, leave the room for a break. Please just enter and
exit as needed, eat, stretch - remembering to do so quietly and with respect for others. I might
also state that the core issues in our field are difficult and elicit affect. We will be encountering
and discussing issues including but not limited to ableism, racism, poverty, class, sexual
violences, structural violences, social abandonment. As such our reflexivity and capacity to
engage content critically are key. As such I encourage you to read the following:
Rinaldi: http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/3711/3227
AND

Finally - together we will ensure a teaching and learning environment where we can respectfully
engage with diverse opinions, disagreements. Please come and have a chat with me if you feel
that I or others are not fulfilling the goals of respect for difference within our seminar.

TEXTS
There are 2 required books for this course, and a course kit, all of which are available in the York
bookstore:


**CDIS 6140 Course Outline and Readings:**
**THERE IS A COURSE KIT – all other readings are available through York eResources.**

1st seminar - January 5th 2015 - Introduction - in our introductory class we will review and
revise the syllabus as needed, the structure of the seminar, establish the frame for our teaching
and learning environment and begin our discussion of our varied understandings of health and
disability. I will present my understandings of this intersection and some of my current and past
research. I would encourage each of you to meet at least once with me over the semester for an
academic consultation.

Task: Develop groups and assign articles for 2nd seminar. You will work in small groups in order
to engage in close readings of the articles for the 2nd seminar.
2nd seminar - January 12th 2015 - How Do We/They/I Know?
Knowing in context - we will explore epistemology and our assumptions about knowing and what knowledge is.


3rd Seminar - January 19th 2015 - Total Institutions
By this week we hopefully have decided upon the best way to read articles - alone, together, in small and larger groups…This week we begin to have individual and small group presentations of texts and articles.


MEDIA
http://www.kmlaw.ca/huroniaclasaction
http://www.asylumbythelake.com/
http://www.historyofmadness.ca/
SUPPLEMENTAL
HV 3006 A4 B55 1966


4th Seminar - January 26th 2015 - Total Control


Willard Suitcase Project
http://www.willardsuitcases.com/

5th Seminar – February 2, 2015 - Body/s, Biopower and Biopolitics


6th seminar - February 9, 2015 - Health, Disability, Poverty, Social Abandonment
We will slowly begin to read our main text *Vita* by Biehl over a period of 3 weeks. As we read this ethnography of life and death in Brazil we will draw upon past and present readings.


READING WEEK - no class

7th seminar - February 23rd, 2015 - Social Abandonment


8th seminar - March 2nd, 2015 - Social Abandonment


9th seminar - March 9th, 2015 - Whose bodies? Animal Bodies and the Hidden Foundation of Health & Disability


Bill Burns, Safety Gear for small animals
http://safetygearforsmallanimals.com/

10th seminar - March 16, 2015 - Reading, Listening, Speaking, Making (slowly) about Witnessing


Rebecca Belmore
http://www.rebeccabelmore.com/home.html
11th seminar - March 23, 2015 - To what end? Troubling Research in Health and Disability
- How to Tell What We Learn
a return to our first articles - how do we/they know. In addition we will each bring in a methods
article that we feel is key to our work in this area. Send citations to me at least one week in
advance so that I can distribute.

Davis Halifax, N., & Mitchell, G. (2013). (Nurse)—Writing with the wolves. Qualitative Inquiry,

Madison, Soyini (2011). It’s time to write: Writing as performance. In Critical ethnography:

COURSE READER

Wolcott, H. (2002). Writing up qualitative research... better. Qualitative Health Research, 12(1),
91-103. doi:10.1177/1049732302012001007

12th seminar - March 30th, 2015 - Presentations of Final Papers

13th seminar - April 6th, 2015 - Presentations of Final Papers