York University
Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies
Methodology CDIS 5110 3.0
Fall 2018

SEMINAR TIMES/LOCATION

Tuesdays from 11:30am-2:30pm in VH 1156 from September 11 to December 4, 2018
Instructor: Prof. Rachel da Silva Gorman
Office: HNES 406
Office Hours: Tuesdays from 2:30-4:30pm
Email: gorman@yorku.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will immerse students in current Disability Studies research practices across the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Fine Arts. Disability Studies is interdisciplinary, which means that we incorporate and build on theory and method from a variety of academic disciplines. Disability Studies has grown out of theoretical and methodological struggles in various disciplines, even as we have been developing our own theoretical and epistemological approaches to research over the past two decades. We will critically examine the politics and practice of Disability Studies research, through attention to the historical unfolding of debates within Disability Studies and Disability Rights and Disability Justice movements, as well as the democratization of research practices in the academy and the community. We will emphasize the process of choosing methods appropriate to research questions; and conversely, we will consider the types of questions that can be answered through the application of various research paradigms, methods, and designs. As this is a core graduate methodology course, students will develop an understanding of the connections between epistemology, methodology, and knowledge production.

As an area of study emerging from struggles for social justice, we have much to learn from feminist and anti-colonial methodologies which were developed in the 1980s and 1990s and are widely used in academic, public policy, and community development research today. Innovative approaches to research, including arts-based research and testimony, continue to evolve. Yet, at the same time, education, health, and public policy sectors continue to draw on social science-based research, which features statistical analysis, reliability, and generalizability. Readings are drawn from prominent Disability Studies fora, and demonstrate specific methodological approaches; pursue critiques of the impact of research on disability communities; and suggest more equitable ways of engaging in research projects. Discussions of our specific projects will develop our understanding of the interdisciplinary research process. Assignments are designed to develop participants’ critical understanding of, and engagement with, the various research approaches available to Disability Studies researchers. Participants will apply critical research techniques, design a research method appropriate to an identified research problem, and consider ways of sharing research results.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course assignments are designed to let you try different methodological approaches to your research topic, while building a methods section for your MRP. Through completing short, cumulative assignments, you will generate 24 pages of text or alternate format work, as well as relevant appendices, charts, data, artistic reproductions and/or questionnaires. You will engage with and cite course readings as appropriate to your topic, method, and focus. Class discussions and exercises will reflect, build on, and clarify our collective research interests.

1. Reflection on the politics of disability research Due Sept. 27 25%
2. Institutional mapping, timeline, and/or narrative Due Oct. 25 25%
3. Detailed research design including instruments and/or sources Due Nov. 15 25%
4. Analysis of a text, artwork, transcript, or narrative Due Dec. 6 25%

REQUIRED READINGS

Bring a memory stick to the first class in order to upload the full set of course readings. We will be reading five thematically organized articles in preparation for each class. Full citations for these are listed in the weekly schedule below. Required readings are all available electronically through the York University Library or via the included web links for articles from The Wellesley Institute, Leeds, Radical Psychology, and Disability Studies Quarterly. The Ejiofor & Ware and Szigeti articles will be emailed to you, along with the articles for the first class, before the beginning of the course. We will discuss strategies for efficient reading and skimming in class. As a good practice for graduate school, please give some thought to developing a consistent way to read and take notes on these articles—whether you prefer to make electronic notes on the pdf, in a separate file, on the hardcopy article, or in a reading notebook. Effective notation practices are key to academic writing.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The following books will serve as excellent resources now, and in your future research endeavours. Further, you are expected to cite the relevant sections of these books in your assignments. You can get the Bernard text in pdf format from the instructor if you bring a memory stick to class or office hour. Hesse-Biber & Levy and Tuhiwai Smith are both available as ebooks through the York library. In addition, all three are available at the Scott library, and are also available in new or used through Amazon.ca. If you require these in alternative format, email lashelp@yorku.ca at York University’s Library Accessibility Services.


PART ONE: The Politics of Disability Research

September 11 Disability Studies and Knowledge Production


September 18 Participatory and Emancipatory Research


September 25 Disability Studies and Institutional Ethics

REFLECTION DUE THURS


Morrison, Linda (2006) A matter of definition: Acknowledging consumer/survivor experiences through narrative, Radical Psychology 5: Available at the following link.


PART TWO: Disability and Social Research

October 2 Disability and Critical Policy Study


Wipond, Rob (2008) A ‘patient-centered path toward ignoring patient rights, Radical Psychology 7 (2): Available at the following link.

October 16 Disability and Historiography


Molina, Natalia (2006) Medicalizing the Mexican: Immigration, race, and disability in


October 23 Disability and Critical Ethnography


Sleeter, Christine (1987:2010) Why is there learning disabilities? A critical analysis of the birth of the field in its social context, reprinted in *Disability Studies Quarterly* 30 (2) Available at the following link.


PART THREE: Data Collection and Disability Studies Research

October 30 Survey-Based Research in Disability Studies


**November 6  Focus Groups and Interviews in Disability Studies**


**November 13  Arts-Based Approaches to Disability Research  DESIGN DUE THURS**


**PART FOUR—Data Analysis and Disability Studies Research**

**November 20  Excavating Disability Relations through Textual Analysis**


November 27 Literary Analysis as Disability Studies Method


December 4 Narrating Disability and Emancipatory Praxis ANALYSIS DUE THURS


**POLICIES ON ASSIGNMENTS**

1. I am happy to work with you to develop alternate formats for any of the course assignments. These may include blogs, video or audio recordings, or other arts-based work including poetry. An important component of grad school is learning to honour and respect the way you think, rather than trying to force yourself to follow other people’s processes. Please don’t delay speaking to or emailing me if you feel this option is for you. Academics regularly present their work in a range of different ways.

2. Otherwise, each assignment should be at least six pages (1500 words) and should cite all relevant references from the course syllabus.

3. **Submit assignments in word via email** by midnight on the due date.

4. Assignments should be double-spaced 12 point Times New Roman, and adhere to the style guide of your choice (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago).

5. As an instructor, I am bound by School of Graduate Studies guidelines around grading practices, missed assignments, and late work (link to Student Survival Guide located on the Critical Disability Studies website and see 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.

6. Please also see the Student Survival Guide which sets out York policies on **Grading Systems**, **Academic Honesty**, and the **Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**.

**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. It takes knowledge of your peers’ work to become a mature researcher. It takes collective reflection, discussion, and action to change the world.