Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Critical Disability Studies Graduate Program  

CDIS 5080 3.0: Language, literature & disability  
Winter 2020  
Course Outline

Class Time: January to March  
Tuesday, 11:30 am to 2:30 pm

Venue: Room 1156, Vari Hall

Course Directors: nancy viva davis halifax, PhD  
Associate Professor

Contact Info: nhalifax@yorku.ca  
Room 344, Stong Building

Office Hours: Professor halifax: by appointment

“Were you thinking that those were the words, those upright lines? Those curves, angles dots, No, the real words are more delicious than they.

Human bodies are words, myriads of words.”  
- Walt Whitman

Course Description and Objectives:
This course has as its focus disability in language and literature – the cultural construction of disability through language, medical and literary texts. We will begin with an exploration of the languages of disability and how historically language has been used to shape what we know of our experiences of disability and impairment.

We will exercise our curiosity and intellect as we explore language, literature and critical disability theory through readings, discussions, lectures, and the occasional media work. The course sets the stage for students to deepen their understanding of theoretical, conceptual, interpretive, representational, and creative practices, as well as to explore the fundamental questions related to who they are as scholars.

Through active participation students will:

• be introduced to the language and literature of critical disability studies thereby gaining an understanding of key historical and contemporary forms of writing in the field;
• increase their capacity to think critically about language and literature that includes disability, through the co-creation of a learning environment;
• develop methods of critical reading and thinking in order to enhance their scholarship

ASSIGNMENTS

**Participation:** ongoing 30%

I imagine that each of us will have different and at times overlapping interests. Over the semester it is expected that each of you will provide references and examples of texts that are important to your work & writing & are not on the syllabus. This practice provides support, extends what each of us is reading, includes a final evaluation of your learning and the class.

**Reflections, responses, work-in-progress:** ongoing 30%

Twice during the semester (date to be decided) each of you will submit a short piece of writing (3-4 pages) that engages a text that you choose and which extends the direction of your writing. These will be shared. Guidelines for sharing work in a writing studio will be discussed.

**Essay/Project - March 31, 2020** 40%

We will use class time to discuss & develop our chosen area of exploration for the final paper/project. Projects in alternate forms include podcasts, scripts, essays, short films, blogs, artifact analysis, conference paper, draft of paper for a journal, a blurred genre, and so on it goes. If you will be working in a form that you are less familiar with please raise questions in class - there is likely collegial expertise to draw upon.

Suggested Texts


Sample: [http://www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk/downloads/samples/9781908058522_sample.pdf](http://www.pennedinthemargins.co.uk/downloads/samples/9781908058522_sample.pdf)


Resources


Writers of Color Discussing Craft - An Invisible Archive
January 7, 2020 - welcome

In our first class we will review the syllabus (likely ongoing & exploratory) with the intent of adding, removing, suggestions of what has been missed, areas, writing and reading practices as well as rules of engagement

Before 14 January, 2020 bring in an article with language that troubles - send it to the class two days in advance.

January 14, 21, 28, 2020 - words\languages\gestures

we begin by following the languages of disability, chronic illness, difference attending to their effects.


Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s “Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship


Dialogue on Teaching Disability Literature

February 4, 11, 2020 - genre - and - or - crafting language


READING WEEK - no class on February 18 2020
March 10, 17 2020 - affect, auto\ethnography – poetics & politics


March 24, 31 2020 - activist texts, texts of witness

   http://poets.ca/2019/04/02/npm19-place-by-gwen-benaway/


Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. bodymap,
   https://glittertongue.wordpress.com/piepzna-samarasinhabodymap/


Thom, kai cheng (2017). a place called NO HOMELAND. Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press. Pulp Press. diaspora babies, in your mouth, there is a poem, what the moon saw, its name was The Body Without a Penis, good communication, we did not ask for. excerpt: https://arsenalpulp.com/Books/A/a-place-called-No-Homeland

