

**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 5th2015
Classroom: VARI 1156**

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 inter-related. 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 Information

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Associate Professor, Graduate Program Director

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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

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,

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.

Assignments:

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**

Participation

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: [Reflexivity in Research: Disability between the Lines](#) AND Beyond the Pros and Cons of Trigger Warnings: [Collectivizing Healing collectivizing-healing/](#)

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.

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.

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 [on the Student Community & Leadership Development website](#).

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:

[Greil Marcus - Notes on the making of A New Literary History of America - Part 1 - "Scare quotes are the enemy"](#)

TEXTS

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

Biehl, J. (2013). *Vita: Life in a zone of social abandonment*. University of California Press.

Goffman, E. (1961/). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates* (reprint of 1st ed.). Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books.

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.

Alcoff, L. (1991). The problem of speaking for others. *Cultural critique*, 5-32.

Haraway, Donna. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14, 3: 575-599.

Stoetzler, M., & Yuval-Davis, N. (2002). Standpoint theory, situated knowledge and the situated imagination. *Feminist theory*, 3(3), 315-333.

Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies (2014). Cripestemologies Part I. Special Edition: 8, 2.

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.

Foucault, Michel. (1984). The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century. In Paul Rabinow, (Ed.) *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 273-289). New York: Pantheon Books. **COURSE READER**

Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates* (1st ed.) (pp. 1-124). Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books.

Rossiter, K., & Clarkson, A. (2013). [Opening Ontario's "Saddest Chapter": A Social History of Huronia Regional Centre](#). *Canadian Journal Of Disability Studies*, 2(3), 1-30.

MEDIA

<http://www.kmlaw.ca/huroniaclassaction>

<http://www.asylumbythelake.com/>

<http://www.historyofmadness.ca/>

SUPPLEMENTAL

Blatt, B., & Kaplan, F. M. (1966). *Christmas in purgatory: A photographic essay on mental retardation*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

HV 3006 A4 B55 1966

Broderick, R. (2011). Empty hallways, unheard voices: The deinstitutionalization narratives of staff and residents at the Huronia. (Unpublished Major Research Paper). Toronto, ON: York University.

4th Seminar - January 26th 2015 - Total Control

Armstrong, David. (1995). The Rise of Surveillance Medicine. *Sociology of Health and Illness*. 17.3: 393-404.

Foucault, M. (2012). "Right of death and power over life." *The history of sexuality: An introduction* (pp. 135-159). Random House LLC. **COURSE READER**

Wendell, S. (1996). *The rejected body: Feminist philosophical reflections on disability* (pp. 117-138). New York: Routledge. **COURSE READER**

Zola, Irving K.. (1972). Medicine as an institution of social control. *The Sociological Review*. 20.4: 487-504.

Willard Suitcase Project

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

Miceli, M. (2010). The disavowal of the body as a source of inquiry in critical disability studies: The return of impairment? *Critical Disability Discourse/Discours Critiques dans le Champ du Handicap*, 2.

Mills, Catherine. (2013). Biopolitical life. In S. O. Wallenstein & J. Nilsson. *Foucault, Biopolitics, and Governmentality* (pp 73-90). **COURSE READER**

Rabinow, P., & Rose, N. (2006). Biopower today. *BioSocieties*, 1(02), 195-217. [David Maisel - Library of Dust](#)

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.

Biehl, J. (2013). *Vita: Life in a zone of social abandonment* (pp. 1-122). Univ of California Press.
Wilkinson, Iain. (2001). Thinking with suffering. *Cultural Values*, 5:4: 421-444.

Red Wagon. (2013). *women's stories of aging, disability and homelessness*. download from [The Red Wagon Collective Website](#)

READING WEEK - no class

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

Biehl, J. (2013). *Vita: Life in a zone of social abandonment* (pp. 123-270). Univ of California Press.

Patsavas, A. (2014). Recovering a Cripistemology of Pain. *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, 8(2), 203-218

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

Biehl, J. (2013). *Vita: Life in a zone of social abandonment* (pp. 271-end). Univ of California Press.

Casid, Jill. (2012). Handle with care. *TDR: The Drama Review*, 56, 4, 121-135

Puar, Jasbir K. (2009). [Prognosis time: Towards a geopolitics of affect, debility and capacity](#). *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*. 19:2, 161-172

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

Birke, Linda. 2003. Who—or what—are the rats (and mice) in the laboratory. *Society and Animals* 11(3):207–224.

Taylor, S. (2011). Beasts of burden: Disability studies and animal rights. *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19(2), 191-222.

Svendsen, M. N., & Koch, L. (2013). Potentializing the research piglet in experimental neonatal research. *Current Anthropology*, 54(S7), S118-S128.

Bill Burns, Safety Gear for small animals

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

Das, Veena. (2001). The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity. In Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds, (Eds.) *Violence and Subjectivity* (pp. 205-225). Berkeley: University of California Press. **COURSE READER**

Jolly, R. (2011). [Witnessing embodiment](#). *Australian Feminist Studies*, 26(69), 297–317.

Kleinman, A. (2001). The Violences of Everyday Life The Multiple Forms and Dynamics of Social Violence. In Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds (Eds.) *Violence and Subjectivity* (pp. 226-241). Berkeley: University of California Press. **COURSE READER**

[Rebecca Belmore](#)

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*, 19(5), 349-352.

Madison, Soyini (2011). It's time to write: Writing as performance. In *Critical ethnography: Method, Ethics and Performance* (pp. 209-232). Thousand Oaks & London: Sage Publications. **COURSE READER**

Wolcott, H. (2002). [Writing up qualitative research... better](#). *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(1), 91-103.

12th seminar - March 30th, 2015 - Presentations of Final Papers 13th seminar - April 6th, 2015 - Presentations of Final Papers