This course provides a multidisciplinary perspective on issues affecting people with disabilities. The overall purpose is to provide an understanding of the social, economic, historical, political, cultural, and legal forces that have shaped policy and the experiences of people with disabilities. We will explore classic and current writings on topics that include work and the labor market; attitudes, stigma, and discrimination; gender and race; politics and the disability rights movement; how people with disabilities are portrayed in the media; accessibility of the built environment; sports; community and political engagement; and cross-cultural differences.

The study of disability can teach us not just about one particular group, but also about how society understands and responds to human variation and diversity in general. Through the lens of disability, we will explore assumptions about how society is structured, how those assumptions shape institutions and policies, and how society can be changed to improve opportunities for disadvantaged groups. The course should also help to strengthen your ability to read for analytical insight, summarize texts, pick out key ideas, and discuss and debate ideas in groups.

Classwork and Preparation for Class

Class attendance is mandatory and reading assignments are expected to be completed before class. Please bring hardcopies of the readings to class. Assigned readings are on the Sakai website. Supplemental material will also be handed out in class or added to the Sakai website.

Please turn off cell phones during class time, as they can be distracting. If you have a health problem or other emergency that requires you to miss a class, please inform me of the situation before the class if possible, or as soon after the class as you can. If you have any type of health condition or disability that requires accommodation, I will be glad to make reasonable accommodations if you provide some documentation at the beginning of the semester or as soon as the condition develops.

It is important to participate in discussions and group activities. Explain your views. Don’t be afraid to ask questions! Also listen – don’t monopolize the discussion or ignore other views.
### Requirements

1. **Two current events stories on disability to be presented and discussed in class (10% of overall grade).**

   You will bring to class two different current items that involve people with disabilities. These items can be newspaper articles, magazine articles, web-based material, pictures of situations that impact on the lives of people with disabilities, and summaries of scenarios that involve people with disabilities. Your two submissions will be accepted from now until the last day of class. The original article should be submitted with a brief, half-page summary of why you chose that particular item.

2. **Measuring exercise to determine ADA compliance of buildings (5% of overall grade).**

   Using the “ADA Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal” (available on Sakai), with a tape measure that you will be given in class, you will pick a public building on the Rutgers campus or another location, and see if it complies with ADA requirements for accessibility. The completed checklist should be turned in on week 13.

3. **One short paper based on an interview of person with a disability, or book review of memoir of person with a disability (2-4 pages) (10% of overall grade).**

   **Option 1:** You will interview a friend, family member, or acquaintance who has a disability about their experiences of school, work, or community. The interview questions and consent forms (approved by the Rutgers Institutional Review Board for protection of human subjects) will be handed out in class. We will cover interview techniques and protocols in class.

   **Option 2:** You will read a memoir of a person with a disability, and write a book review of it, relating the person’s experiences to the ideas we have covered in class. A list of possible books to review will be handed out in class, but you may use another book if you check with me first.

4. **Research paper (8-10 pages) (25% of overall grade).**

   This paper will be on one of the topics we have covered that you find especially interesting, or on another disability-related topic. This paper should: a) summarize the main points, b) relate it to other relevant readings, including at least one book or article from outside the syllabus, c) evaluate the strengths and/or weaknesses of the authors’ arguments, and d) relate it to your own experiences or current events if relevant. You should submit your proposed paper topic in the class after the midterm. The full paper is due on the last day of class.
You should submit papers on Sakai (see instructions below), and also submit hardcopies in class. The Sakai site will submit papers to Turnitin.com to ensure that they are original and there is no plagiarism. Late papers will be downgraded by a third of a grade (e.g., A to A-) for 1-2 days late, two-thirds of a grade (e.g., A to B+) for 3-4 days late, and a full grade for 5 or more days late.

5. Two exams (40% of overall grade)

The first exam will cover the readings and presentations in the first half of the course, and the second exam will cover readings and presentation in the second half of the course (it will not be cumulative).

6. Class participation (10% of overall grade).

This course emphasizes student participation. All students are expected to attend class prepared to discuss the readings and participate in discussions.

Readings

There are about 50-60 pages of reading in each week. The readings are available on Sakai. To obtain the readings do the following:

1. Go to [http://sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)
2. Enter your Rutgers ID and password in the upper right corner
3. Click on the tab that says “Disability, Work, and Society 37:575:365:01 Sp11”
4. Click on “Resources” at the left
5. Click on the folder titled “Disability, Work, and Society 37:575:365:01 Sp11 Resources”
6. Click on the folder for the week you want, then the file you want to download. Many of the readings are in Adobe Acrobat format. If your computer doesn’t have it, you can download the reader for free at [http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html)

Submitting papers to Sakai

Follow the directions above to get onto the Sakai site, and click on “Assignments” on the left so that you can see a list of the assignments. After selecting an assignment, you can submit your paper either by copying text into the “Submission” box or by attaching a file.

Also, please check “Announcements” on the left of the Sakai site each week for any updates on the class and assignments.
Readings

Week 1 (Jan. 20): Introduction

Week 2 (Jan. 27): Stigma and Models of Disability


Video shown in class: “Abandoned to Their Fate”

Week 3 (Feb. 3): Responses to Disability and Popular Culture


Video shown in class: “Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back”

Week 4 (Feb. 10): History of People with Disabilities and Disability Etiquette

Guest speakers: Debbie Hehir, Personal Attendant Services Program Coordinator, and Judith Cusumano, Director, Middlesex County Office of People with Disabilities, New Brunswick, NJ


Optional:

Week 5 (Feb. 17): Employment of People with Disabilities

Guest Speaker: Professor Douglas Kruse, School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University


“Introduction” and “Setting the Context,” pp. 15-25


Optional:


Week 6 (Feb. 24): Disability and Employment Law

Definition of disability under the ADA and Rehabilitation Act:
David Twomey, Labor and Employment Law, pp. 571-585, 772-775
   Cook v. State of Rhode Island (obesity)
   School Board of Nassau County, Florida v. Arline (contagious diseases)
   Sutton v. United Airlines (mitigating measures)
   Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky Inc. v. Williams (work disability)

Additional case not in Twomey:
   Ellison v. Software Spectrum (cancer)

“Otherwise-qualified” for employment position:
   Treadwell v. Alexander (otherwise-qualified)
   Palmer v. Circuit Court (direct threat defense)

The ADA Amendments Act of 2008

Week 7 (March 3): Disability and Employment Law (continued)


Reasonable accommodations:
   David Twomey, Labor and Employment Law, pp. 585-595
       U.S. Airways v. Barnett (seniority systems)

Additional cases not in Twomey:
   Wallace v. Veterans Administration (former drug addiction)
   Lyons v. Legal Aid Society (reasonable accommodations, undue hardship defense)

In Class Mock Trial: Martinson v. Kinney Shoes

Week 8 (March 10): First exam

Week 9 (March 24): Political Participation

   Short paper based on interview or memoir due
   Proposed research paper topic due
   Guest speaker: Jim Dickson, American Association of People with Disabilities
Joseph Shapiro, *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994), Chap. 2 (pp. 41-73) and Chap. 4 (pp. 105-141).


Other readings may be added.

Optional:

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**Week 10 (March 31): Gender and Race**


Optional:

Film shown in class: “Murderball”

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**Week 11 (April 7): Issues Affecting People with Psychiatric Disabilities**

Guest Speakers: Joni Dolce and George Brice, Integrated Employment Institute, Department of Psychiatric Rehabilitation, UMDNJ-SHRP


Other readings may be added.

Week 12 (April 14): The Built Environment and Community Inclusion

Guest speaker: Ethan Ellis, President, Next Step

Assignment due: use the “ADA Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal” to assess a public building at Rutgers or elsewhere.

Ethan Ellis, “Bio” and “Social and Economic Rights: Without Them We Are Just Commodities”


“Introduction,” pp. 1-4
“Understanding the Spectrum of Human Abilities,” pp. 16-30
Optional:
    one or more case studies presented in Chapter 4 at http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/pubs_p/pudfiletoc.htm.


Optional:

Week 13 (April 21): Disability and Sports

Guest Speaker: Robert Angelo, Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations, Rutgers University

--focus on pages 1-18 and 119-127

Other readings may be added.

Week 14 (April 28): Second exam
Research paper due