

HCOL 086J

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF DISABILITY

Spring 2019

Class Meets: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 2:20 PM-3:10 PM, UHN 034F

Plenary Lectures: Wednesdays, 5:05 PM-6:20 PM, See Course Syllabus for Locations

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What it means to be Disabled in our society is understood through the lens of the social category, and through the social construction, which is no less powerful and has no less impact on Disabled people than if the parameters were true. (Burch & Sutherland, 2006, p. 129)



Bruegel, P., *The Beggars* (1568)

THE SEMINAR

The focus of HCOL 086 is on the theoretical questions concerning how our culture understands the social construct of disability. Students will examine, critically reflect upon, and engage in dialogue about the

historical, biological, social, cultural, political, and economic trends and factors in the societal construction of disability. In addition, students will explore the concept of disability as it relates to issues of diversity.

Society traditionally has viewed people with disabilities as a minority group in both social and economic realms. It is, however, a unique minority, as unlike other minority groups, any able-bodied person, regardless of socioeconomic class, gender, race, ethnicity, age, and/or sexual orientation can become disabled at any time. Some, in fact, contend that every able-bodied person who lives to be elderly will eventually acquire a disability as a consequence of aging. As Fries (1997) states, “Ultimately, those of us who live with disabilities are too often treated as unwelcome reminders of the mortality that is the fate of us all” (p. 8).

Course objectives, which will be explored and examined via literature, a variety of media, research, and fieldwork, include:

- Exploring how attitudes and beliefs about people with disabilities affect the personal and social view of disability;
- Examining the concept of “social construction of disabilities,” as well as the relationship between diversity and disability;
- Studying and considering the complex interaction between historical, social, political, and economic forces as they relate to disability;
- Analyzing and discussing different ways and models of defining and understanding disability; and
- Reflecting upon and engaging in critical dialogue concerning issues related to negative social perception, self-fulfilling prophecy, ableism, stigma, political correctness, and discrimination that affect people with disabilities throughout their lives.

Learning goals include:

- Sharpening your ability to analyze and interpret various textual as well as media genres;
- Significantly developing your writing and oral communication skills;
- Gaining experience in working collaboratively; and
- Further developing habits of mind and heart.

As the instructor of HCOL 086, I will strive to create a learning culture that reflects an ethic of caring, engagement in personal inquiry and reflection, thoughtful consideration of multiple perspectives, use of moral conversations, collaboration, and an appreciation of varied learning styles.

COURSE READINGS

[Books], [n]ovels, and stories are renderings of life; they can not only keep us company, but admonish us, point us in new directions, or give us the courage to stay a given course. They can offer us kinsmen, kinswomen, comrades, advisors—offer us other eyes through which we might see, other ears with which we might make soundings. (Coles, 1989, pp. 159-160)

The following books are required reading for the course.

Bernstein, J. (2007). *Rachel in the world: A memoir*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. (1994). *The social meaning of mental retardation: Two life stories*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (This book is out of print, so I will distribute copies of it for you to borrow for the semester.)

Rapp, E. (2013). *The still point of the turning world*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

In addition to the aforementioned books, other required readings will be posted on Blackboard. I reserve the right to modify the syllabus as circumstances dictate. Consider the syllabus a road map that guides us on our journey, but we might need to make a few detours to get to our destination.

CLASSROOM RULES, EXPECTATIONS, AND POLICIES

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers...They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 61)

Class Attendance, Participation, and Presence: HCOL 086 will require students to adhere to appropriate academic standards and expectations such as arriving to class on time, actively participating and listening in class seminars, meeting deadlines, using effective interpersonal communication skills, and engaging in reflective practice. Further, it is expected that students will attend all seminars. If you know that you will miss class for a legitimate reason, such as illness, you must notify me via telephone or e-mail *before* class. Finally, assignments are due on the date specified and/or date agreed upon with me. This is not a lecture-style class, but rather one of discussions and exploration. Because “[d]ialogue is making knowledge in conversation” (Tarule, 1996, p. 280), exchanging insights, ideas, and perspectives will better ensure that the course is a rich, rewarding experience for everyone.

Students are expected to have their texts with them for each class in a form that they can access and annotate with ease. Screen devices ARE NOT permitted; rather, you will need to bring hard copies of readings to class, or take thorough, thoughtful notes on them before our seminar meets. Smartphones or other small devices must be put away during class.

ASSIGNMENTS

Essays: Students will be responsible for critically reflecting upon and responding to the assigned readings for each course seminar. Blackboard and/or Facebook posts and essays will be used as the primary source for seminar discussions each week. Essays, some of which will take the form of Scholarly Personal Narratives (SPNs), will require you to interact with and connect the readings to your personal dispositions and beliefs about the world, as well as require you to think about ideas, concepts, assertions, and analyses made by the authors. As you craft your essays, you may want to consider the following questions: What resonates with you in the reading(s) and why? To what extent do you agree with the author(s)’ position and why? What is your position on the issue(s) and why have you embraced this position? Essays, then, may take the shape of identifying important understandings and questions, as well as exploring further your assumptions and perceptions about the social construction of disability. Given that your work will be submitted electronically, the following penalties will be strictly enforced, should you fail to submit properly on Blackboard or Facebook:

- Any essay submitted electronically (via email) immediately after the deadline, without a valid, prior excuse, will receive a 10% deduction;
- Any essay submitted manually (i.e. a paper copy) in class immediately after the deadline will receive a 10% penalty;
- Any essay submitted electronically within 24 hours after the deadline, without a valid, prior excuse, will receive a 40% deduction; and
- Any essay submitted over 24 hours after the deadline, without a valid, prior excuse, will receive no credit.

Be sure to develop your essays as clearly and cogently as you can, and cite examples (use an accepted scholarly format) from the reading(s) to support your perspectives. These essays will afford you the opportunity to express your ideas/insights and will give me a chance to provide you with evaluative comments throughout the semester

Please type (double space, 12-point font) your essays, post them on Blackboard in a Word Document (if I cannot open your file, you will receive a zero) by the designated due date and time, and *be sure* to proofread your work before submitting it. *Written work must conform to all of the standards of good English prose and must be exclusively your work.* If you are unclear as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, you should reread the University of Vermont's Code of Ethics, which can be found on the University's web site: (uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf). Each essay grade will reflect not only the depth and thoroughness of your analysis of and interaction with the reading(s), but also its prose style.

Homework: In or for nearly every class I will also assign short exercises, including Blackboard journal or discussion board, and Facebook posts (you will be required to join our class's Facebook group, which will be closed to anyone outside of our class), to help you come to terms with challenging readings and to explore various ideas for essays and projects.

Nota Bene: Unlike the aforementioned penalties for late or improper submission of essays and projects, any homework assignments submitted late or not using the appropriate technology (Blackboard journal or discussion board and Facebook) will receive no credit.

Welcome to Holland Research Project: A major focus and outcome of this course is to gain a greater understanding of what disability means in our culture through the perspective of a family with a child with a disability. That said, student teams will be required to conduct a "brief" qualitative research project via a family interview. This is how you will collect data. Your interview write-up, which must be approximately 1500-1700 words in length, should be written in a narrative form much like Bogdan and Taylor's, "Ed's Story." In addition to your interview write-up, you are required to include a 750-word analysis based upon your interviewee's responses, which, again, are your data. Whenever possible, you should integrate course readings, films, and class discussions and presentations into your analysis. Also, ensure that you complete the Committees on Human Subjects Tutorial (<https://www.uvm.edu/rpo/citi-program-training>), and attach a copy of your e-mail certification of completion to your paper. If you have completed the tutorial prior to this course, you are still required to attach a copy of your certification of completion to your paper.

In addition, to your paper, your group will be creating a poster based upon your research project, which you will present at the HCOL 086 Research Symposium on Wednesday, April 24th in the UVM Alumni House located at 61 Summit Street. You will have opportunities on Wednesday, April 10th and on Wednesday, April 17th to give a preliminary presentation of your poster project to Professor Christensen's section of HCOL 086: Meanings of Madness. Additionally, you will have two or three class periods in which to work on your group posters, which must be submitted to me as PowerPoint files no

later than Sunday, April 7th, by 11:59 PM on Bb. More information about research posters and your research paper will be posted on Bb under the Welcome to Holland Research project tab.

Class Co-facilitation: Students are responsible for co-planning and facilitating a thirty- minute discussion that focuses upon the assigned readings for one seminar during the semester. Students must meet with Adele or me prior to the designated class to discuss the planning for and structure of the class discussion. In addition, each student will be required submit a written assessment (250-350 words) of her/his/their co-facilitated discussion no later than one week after completing their facilitation.

Critical media review and presentation: One way in which our society learns and forms powerful beliefs about persons with disabilities is through popular culture and the media. Different forms of media (e.g. literature, film/movies/television, art, music, etc.) can provide us with unique perspectives about the experience of being labeled disabled and/or living with a person with a disability, or they can serve to reinforce both positive and/or negative stereotypes and beliefs about people with disabilities. Given that this course focuses on the social construction of disability, the purpose of this review is to analyze the way in which a selected form of media portrays the disability by comparing and contrasting its underlying assumptions with your collective values and beliefs. Following discussion and approval of your media selection, develop and write an approximately 1200-word critical review and analysis of your chosen cultural product.

Non-traditional Expressive Assignment: Students will identify and create a non-traditional form of expression using any type of medium (e.g. music, art, satire, writing or oratorical genres, etc.) that represents how this course influenced their perception and understanding of the social construction of disability. During our last seminar, you will be required to share your form of expression with the class.

Writing Center: Each of you will be required to visit the Writing Center at least THREE times this semester. These writing supports are not for remediation; rather, tutors can assist you with certain elements of your work and provide you with suggestions. Remember that academic writing should not be an isolated, stressful process, so throughout our course, I want you to revise, or re-vision your work, and tutors at the Writing Center are trained to help you improve and polish your writing

***Final exam:** An essay format examination, which will assess your understanding of the major concepts explored in this course and their relationship to the social construction of disability, must be posted on Bb on Tuesday, May 7th, no later than 4:30 PM.

Grades

Your final grade will be computed according to the following formula:

Blackboard, Facebook posts, Use of Writing Center, and Class Participation: 20%

Class Co-facilitation and reflection: 7.5%

Analysis of *Freaks*: 10%

Scholarly Personal Narrative: 10%

Critical media review: 10%

Welcome to Holland Research Project: 25%

Non-traditional expressive act: 7.5%

Final exam: 10%

Course Schedule and Assignments

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/Assignment	Media	Plenary Lecture
1	Jan 14	Introduction Overview of Course	Nash, R., <i>Fostering Moral Conversations in the College Classroom</i> (Bb) Review Syllabus Rosen, <i>Survivor</i> (Bb) Person-first language		
	Jan 16	Social Construction of Disability	Wendell, S., <i>The Social Construction of Disability from The Rejected Body</i> (Bb)		
	Jan 18	Language and Identity	Linton, S., "Reassigning Meaning" (Bb) Collier, R., <i>Person-first language: What it means to be a "person"</i> (Bb)		
2	Jan 21	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, No Class			
	Jan 23	"[Freaks] are aristocrats." (Diane Arbus)	Clare, E., "Freaks and Queers" from <i>Exile and Pride</i> (Bb)	<i>Freaks</i>	
	Jan 25	Who are the "freaks" in <i>Freaks</i> ?	Hawkins, J., "One of Us": <i>Tod Browning's Freaks</i> (Bb) Film Review- <i>Freaks</i> -Slant Magazine (Bb) Binaries and Boundaries (Bb)	<i>Freaks</i>	

2	Jan 28	The Judge, Not the Judges	Couser, T., Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation (Bb) Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S.J, Preface, Introduction, and pp. 1-67		
	Jan 30	“The problem is getting labeled as being something. After that you’re not really a person.” (Ed in Bogdan & Taylor, 1994, p.33)	Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S.J., pp. 67-92	“Willowbrook”	
	Feb 1	Disability as Sociopolitical Construct	Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S.J., pp. 205-234 Essay #1: Connecting HCOL 085 to HCOL 086 Due at 11:59 PM on Bb		
3	Feb 4	How far have we come?	Suffering in Secret: Illinois hides abuse and neglect of adults with disabilities (Bb) A woman in a vegetative state for more than twenty-five years gives birth in nursing home facility (Bb)		
	Feb 6	Uncovering the Hidden History of People with Disabilities	Burch, S. & Sutherland, I., Who’s Not Yet Here? (Bb) Barnes, C., “A Brief History of Discrimination and Disabled Peoples” (Bb) Homework #1: Prep for fishbowl activity		
	Feb 8	Welcome to Holland	Welcome to Holland (Bb) Rapp, E., Chapter 1-4 of <i>The Still Point of the Turning World</i> pp. 1-40 Facebook Post #1: Initial reactions to reading		

			Due the day of at 1:00 PM on Facebook group		
4	Feb 11	Welcome to Holland Research Project	<p>Introduction to research project: Qualitative Research Methods (Bb)</p> <p>Continue: Rapp, E., Chapters 4-8 of <i>The Still Point of the Turning World</i> pp. 41-95</p> <p>Facebook Post #2 Due the day of at 1:00 PM on Facebook group</p>		
	Feb 13		<p>Continue: Rapp, E., Chapters 9-17 of <i>The Still Point of the Turning World</i> pp. 96-194</p> <p>Schnell, L., "The Language of Grief" (Bb)</p> <p>Facebook Post #3 Due the day of at 1:00 PM on Facebook group</p>	Guest Speaker: Professor Lisa Schnell	
	Feb 15		<p>Continue: Rapp, E., Chapters 18-20 of <i>The Still Point of the Turning World</i> pp. 195-224</p> <p>Facebook Post #4 Due the day of at 1:00 PM on Facebook group</p>		
5	Feb 18	Presidents' Day, No Class			
	Feb 20		<p>Continue: Rapp, E., Chapters 21-Afterword of <i>The Still Point of the Turning World</i> pp. 225-257</p> <p>Rapp Black, E., "Coming to Terms," (Bb)</p> <p>Rapp, E., "Everyone will Have a Disability if They Live Long Enough. Even You, Mr. Trump" (Bb)</p> <p>Facebook Post #5</p>		

			Due the day of at 1:00 PM on Facebook		
	Feb 22	Disability and Families	Solomon, A., excerpt from <i>Far from the Tree</i> (Bb) Carey, A., Parents and Professionals (Bb)		
6	Feb 25	Parents' Choices	Leshin, L., Plastic Surgery in Children with Down Syndrome, pp. 1-3 (Bb) The "Ashley Treatment," pp.1-16 (Bb) Field, G., "Should Parents of Children with Severe Disabilities be Allowed to Stop their Growth?" (Bb) Homework #2: Prep for fishbowl activity Homework #3: Choose a quotation from Rapp's memoir, which will serve as a foundation for your SPN. Post this and your rationale for your quotation choice on Bb no later than 11:59 PM.		
	Feb 27	Eugenics and Disability	Mostert, M., Useless Eaters: Disability as Genocidal Marker in Nazi Germany (Bb) Pernick, M., excerpt from <i>The</i>		

			<p><i>Black Stork</i> (Bb)</p> <p>Nielsen, K., "Three Generations of Imbeciles are Enough" from <i>A Disability History of the United States</i> (Bb)</p>		
	Mar 1		Clare, E., excerpt from <i>Brilliant Imperfection</i> (Bb)		
7	Mar 4	Intersectionality	<p>Clare, E., "Stones in my pockets, stones in my heart" (Bb)</p> <p>Mairs, N. "Carnal Acts" (Bb)</p> <p>Garland-Thomson, R., "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory" (Bb)</p>		
		Intersectionality continued	<p>Bell, C., "Introducing White Disability Studies" (Bb)</p> <p>Pryal, K. "Shattering the Madness Monolith" (Bb)</p> <p>Doucette, L., "If You're in a Wheelchair, Segregation Lives" (Bb)</p> <p>SPN is due on Bb no later than 11:59 PM</p>		
	Mar 6	Disability Legislation	<p>Circle of Courage (Bb)</p> <p>Valle, J.W., & Connor, D.J., <i>Disability in American Public Schools</i> (Bb)</p> <p>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Bb)</p>	Including Samuel	

	Mar 8		<p>Federal Disability Policy (Bb)</p> <p>The Evolution of Special Education (Bb)</p> <p>Overview of Today's Special Education (Bb)</p>	Including Samuel	
8	Mar 11, 13, & 15	Spring Recess	<p>Watch <i>CinemAbility-The Art of Inclusion</i>, which is available to stream on Amazon</p> <p>Facebook Post #5: Due on Sunday, March 17th, by 11:59 PM on Facebook. What were your reactions to the film? What questions did it raise for you? How does it relate to the social construction of disability?</p>		
9	Mar 18	Rachel in the World	<p>Bernstein, J., <i>Rachel in the World</i>, pp. 1-68</p> <p>Facebook Post #6: Initial reactions to reading Due the day of at 1::00 PM on Facebook</p>		
	Mar 20	Rachel in the World continued	<p>Bernstein, J., <i>Rachel in the World</i>, pp. 71-(end of 8)</p> <p>Transition planning and MAPs (Bb)</p> <p>Facebook Post #7: Due the date of at 1:00 PM on Facebook</p>		Poster Plenary, Billings Lecture Hall

	Mar 22	Work Session			
10	Mar 25	Work Session	Poster Check-in on Bb no later than 11:59 PM		
	Mar 27	Rachel in the World continued	Bernstein, J., <i>Rachel in the World</i> , pp. 151- (end of 16) Facebook Post #8: Due the day of at 1:00 PM on Facebook		Actors of the London Stage, Music Recital Hall
	Mar 29	Think about the parents	Disabled Kids Push Parents' Limits (Bb) Let's Not Forget the Parents (Bb) Piepmeier, A., "Saints, Sages, and Victims" (Bb) Homework #4: MAP is due no later than 2:00 on Bb, or you may submit your work at the beginning of class.		
11	Apr 1	Work Session			
	Apr 3	Poster Presentation Practice	Adele, your peers, and I will provide you with feedback about your presentation, as well as your poster. You should be prepared to integrate our suggestion and corrections into your poster as soon as possible, and into your presentation within a week. Also, each group should continue practicing.		Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, Billings Lecture Hall
	Apr 5	Think College Presentation	Submit final research posters on Bb no later than 11:59 PM		

			on SUNDAY, APRIL 9th.		
12	Apr 8	Mental Illness and Disability	<p>excerpt from Jamison, K.R., <i>An Unquiet Life</i> (Bb)</p> <p>excerpt from Raeburn, P., <i>Acquainted with the Night</i> (Bb)</p> <p>Lewis, B., "A Mad Fight: Psychiatry and Disability Activism" (Bb)</p>		
	Apr 10	Mental Illness and Disability Continued	<p>Rossier, W., The stigma of mental disorders: A millennia-long history of exclusion (Bb)</p> <p>Corrigan, P. W., & Watson, A.C., Understanding the impact of stigma on people with mental illness (Bb)</p> <p>The Connection Between Eating Disorders and Physical Disability (Bb)</p>		Research Poster Presentation, James Jeffords Hall 110
	Apr 12	Media	<p>Baun, K., The Media's Impact on Public Perceptions of Mental Illness (Bb)</p> <p>Ellis, K.M., Cripples, bastards and broken things: Disability in Game of Thrones (Bb)</p>		
13	Apr 15	Aging and Disability	<p>Harway, J., "A Daughter's Memoir about Alzheimer's" (Bb)</p>		
	Apr 17	Deafness: Disability, Culture, or Both?	<p>Reagan, T., excerpt from <i>Non-Western Educational Traditions</i> (Bb)</p>		Research Poster Presentation, James Jeffords Hall 110
	Apr 19	Medical Model of Disability	<p>Wilson, J. "(Re)Writing the Genetic Body-Text" (Bb)</p>		

			<p>Clare, E. excerpts from Brilliant Imperfection (Bb)</p> <p>Welcome to Holland Research Papers are due on Bb no later than 11:59 PM</p>		
14	Apr 22	Genetics and Disability	<p>The Relationship Between the Genetic Counseling Profession and the Disability Community: A Commentary (Bb)</p> <p>Conti, A., Drawing the Line: Disability, Genetic Intervention, and Bioethics (Bb)</p> <p>Oulette, A., Barriers to Physician Aid in Dying for People with Disabilities (Bb)</p> <p>Homework # 5: Post the title of the movie or series you will review or analyze from the lenses of our class, along with a rationale for your choice, on Bb no later than 11:59 PM</p>		
	Apr 24	Art and Disability	<p>Hevey, The Enfreakment of Photography (Bb)</p> <p>Diane Arbus (Bb)</p>		First-Year Research Symposium, UVM Alumni House, 61 Summit Street
	Apr 26	Anthropology and Disability	<p>Fadiman, A., excerpts from <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> pp. 20-31, pp. 278-288 (Bb)</p> <p>Nielsen, K., "The Spirit Chooses the Body it Will Occupy" from <i>A Disability History of the United States</i> (Bb)</p>		
15	Apr 29	Literature	<p>Mossman, M., Acts of Becoming: Autobiography, <i>Frankenstein</i>, and the</p>		

			<p>Postmodern Body, pp. 1-25 (Bb)</p> <p>Bring your copy of Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> into class.</p> <p>Critical Media Review is due no later than 11:59 PM on Bb</p>		
	May 1	Wrap Up	<p>Reflections and discussion</p> <p>Introduction to Final</p> <p>Non-traditional Expressive Act</p> <p>Course Evaluations</p>		
	May 3	Last Day	<p>Non-traditional Expressive Act is due at the beginning of class- Be prepared to present your work.</p>		
	May 7	Final Exam	<p>Final Exam is due on Bb no later than 4:30 PM</p>		