Human Rights and the Social Collective: Disability in the Arts, Activism, and the Law

In this course, we will consider the intersections between human rights discourse and disability studies in relation to the question of the social collective. Three primary arenas will be addressed: the arts, activism, and the law. These arenas taken together can provide a vehicle for envisioning more inclusive communities. We will examine the medical, social, and legal constructions of disability, as well as the implications of these analyses for understanding disability rights socially and individually. In the process, we will also examine the idea of the normative body, and, from the results of our inquiry into the arts, activism, and the law, we will ask how we might form new spaces for emerging communities that are based on more equitable frames of reference.

Required Texts:


COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To gain a broad-based understanding of human rights and disability in relation to the arts, activism, and the law
2. To build an understanding of the role that the social collective can play in human rights discourse and its connection to disability rights
3. To contextualize contemporary interest in disability and human rights within a historical and international frame, including seminal figures and important socio-historical moments
4. To explore the tension between the social and legal constructions of disability as a way of engaging in cultural/social/political critique and envisioning new models of community
5. To apply the course findings to individual areas of interest
METHODOLOGY:

In general this course includes a combination of lecture, film, discussion, and workshop activities. The activities of each section will culminate in a writing assignment that demonstrates a synthesis of questions regarding disability studies and its significance for that particular section topic. Final papers are intended to reflect an in-depth exploration and understanding of disability and human rights and its application to a particular arena outside the range of the class.

COURSE OUTLINE/ASSIGNMENTS:

_Week One: Jan. 3, Jan. 5_


Assignment due Week one, day two: Create a collection of images (archival evidence) of disability that shows either one of the following: 1) a) images of access denied and b) also images of access gained, 2) the question of disability rights as resting with a) the individual on the one hand and with b) the collective on the other, 3) How art helps us understand and grapple with disability rights in a) placing the individual and in b) locating the community.

_These images can be culled from a variety of sources, such as from magazines, newspapers, web-sites, and art collections. Compile into a 2-D or 3-D format. We will be taking pictures of your work on Wed. for archiving on a class website._

_Analyze patterns in the images, what kinds of narratives (stories) the images are expressing, and what conclusions you can draw from the collection of images in relation to the individual and society. Two page minimum write-up due that works from the images and analyzes the significance of the collection of images, or one part of the images._

Jan. 5, Day Two: Sharing images, building understanding of disability and its relationship to the individual and society, film: _When Billy Broke His Head_, handout on final project.

_Rdg Jan. 5: Voices from the Edge, p. 1-52_

_Week Two: Jan. 10, 12_

1/10, Day One: Human rights and the social collective: Overview
1/12, Day Two: Human rights and disability: Overview; disability and work

_Rdg assignment due Jan. 10: E-reserve reading on human rights and the social collective_

_Rdg assignment due Jan. 12: O’Brien, Crippled Justice, pp. 1-87_
Week Three: Jan. 17, 19
1/17, Day One: No Class
1/19, Day Two: Disability and work
Rdg assignment due Jan. 19: O’Brien, Crippled Justice, pp. 88-161
Assignment one on the final project due Jan. 19

Week Four: Jan. 24, 26
1/24, Day One: The ADA, Library Visit
1/26, Day Two: Voices from the Edge
Rdg assignment due Jan. 24: Voices, pp. 55-117
Rdg assignment due Jan. 26: Voices, pp. 121-212

Week Five: Jan. 31, Feb. 2
Shifting perceptions: The question of activism
1/31, Day One: ADAPT, Bus stories
2/2, Not Dead Yet, Autobiography: What is a human being and what is the right to live?
Rdg assignment due Jan. 31: Voices, pp. 215-235. Please read the articles at:
http://www.adapt.org/articles.htm
Rdg assignment due Feb. 2: Please read the articles at:
http://www.notdeadyet.org/docs/articles.html

Week Six: Feb. 7, 9
Shifting perceptions: The question of art
2/7, Day One: People's theater, Phreaks, NTD, VSA and others
The international interest in disability arts; or disability activists build disability culture
2/9, Library Visit
Rdg assignment due Feb. 7: Please read some of the material at:
http://www.vsarts.org/x101.xml,
E-reserves: TBA

No Rdg assignment due Feb. 9: TBA

Week Seven: Feb. 14, 16
Disability and the Law
2/14, Day One: Case study: Globalizing the discourse: Nazi Germany and the legacy of eugenics, Bodies without Organs
2/16, Day Two: Germany, disability studies and human rights today/ Issues of remembering, issues of acting

Rdg assignment due Feb 14: Henry Friedlander, “The Killing Centers,” *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*

Rdg assignment due Feb 16: Please read the material at: [http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/disabilities_02/](http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/disabilities_02/)

Assignment #2 on the Final Project due Feb 16

Week Eight: Feb 21, 23
Disability and what’s next: Questions of power/ bioethics, human genome, and the question of health

Feb. 21-No Class
Rdg assignment due Feb. 23: Excerpts from Farmer’s *Pathologizing Power on E-reserve, p 1-50, 51-90, 213- 246*

Week Nine: Feb. 28, March 2
Disability and human rights: Policy issues
2/28-United Nations
3/2-Global Frames: Remapping the individual and social collective through disability rights
Rdg assignment due 2/28: Please read the material at [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dis50y00.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dis50y00.htm)

No Rdg assignment due 3/2:

Week Ten: March 7, 9
Presentation of projects

Exam Week: March 14-18
Final Exam. March 14

Distribution of Primary Course requirements:
1. Participation, Homework, Reading, and class exercises: 150 pts.
2. Response papers: 150 pts.
3. Final Project which shows exploration of and integration of theory/practice: 200 pts.
4. Final Exam: 100 pts.

Explanation of Key Course Requirement Areas:

Participation: In addition to lectures and films, this class format will also employ a variety of interactive moments, ranging from group and observation exercises, workshops, and discussion in order to address with the subject matter at hand. The participation grade will be based on your effort to engage and grapple with the questions being asked in each of these activities. These class room opportunities will foster ways in which we can

1. learn from each other,
2. explore the material through a multi-sensory approach, and
3. explore what disability arts, for example, is by looking at and experiencing some of its key tenets.

Evidence of your participation will be gathered through a variety of means which will differ according to the specific exercise.

Response papers: There will be several opportunities to write a response paper. The challenge in human rights and disability is always that of finding a “balance” in writing between addressing the event itself and what one wants to say about it. Students will be asked to develop their own ideas about the implications a specific example or theoretical passage. If time permits, students will be encouraged to exchange drafts with fellow classmates in order to dialogue about their ideas and to get sufficient feedback before submitting some papers.

Observation exercises: Performance happens not only on the stage but also all around us all the time, and a performance studies approach works best been framed by an understanding of and an ability to use what we know and then extend through rigorous study. Some of the observation exercises are designed to hone in on what we see as going on around us and how we talk and write about those observations. This work will then be extended over the course of the term. There will be both in-class and out-of-class observation exercises.

Project which shows exploration of and integration of theory/practice:

These assignments are due the last week of class. These projects must show a research component and a hands-on component. I want to encourage you to experiment will any number of options—creative projects ranging from videos, performances (theater, dance, mixed media, performance art, computer based), and powerpoint that explore themes and theories from an art-based perspective. Other options may include service learning-based projects (see me on this as proper documentation is absolutely key here). Please come to talk with me or email me as soon as you have ideas and questions. I will devote parts of two class sessions during the first three weeks to some information sharing on project possibilities; you will also receive a full set of guidelines during this time. It is crucial that you pace yourselves on these projects. You will be asked to make firm commitments to the project at the end of the fourth week in class. It is possible to negotiate group projects on this assignment, but please see me well in advance.

Test:
Prior to the test I will provide an overview of some of the essential things that have been covered thus far in the class and that you might want to focus on in preparation for the test. Test material will be based on the readings as well as class discussion and lecture. Do not assume that simply reading the textbooks is sufficient for passing the test. Test format will include short answer and an essay section.

Specific guidelines for each key assignment will be made available well in advance of the due dates. If you are absent and need specific handouts from me, please see me during office hours or after class.

**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION**

**Type of Performance:** Participation and completion of all assignments. Please direct any questions about guidelines for assignments and grades to your professor.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Evaluation criteria will be established prior to all assignments. Several assignments will be both peer and professor evaluated.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will be accepted only in consultation with the professor.

**Make-Ups and Rewrites:** Students will be encouraged to develop their work and ideas as far as possible within the time frame of the course. In other words, assignments are expected to be turned in on the due date. Exams occur on the date assigned; students will be able to make up exams only if they miss the exam due to illness and they have contacted me in advance. Students who have extenuating circumstances about other missed assignments must consult with the professor. Should that process necessitate make-ups or rewrites, a decision will be made through joint consultation between the professor and the student.

**Class Participation:** Class participation is absolutely crucial to the course. Numerous and varied opportunities to participate will be provided. In order to make the most of class time, it is important that students arrive to class on time. Please let me know in advance if you have extenuating circumstances that necessitate late entry into class.

**Class Conduct:** Students are expected to make choices in class that reflect respect and courtesy toward each other. For more on the student conduct guidelines at UW-B, please see: [http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html](http://www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html)


**Incomplete:** University rules state that "an incomplete is given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work until within two weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control."
**Copies of Assignments:** It is your responsibility to retain a copy of any materials that you mail or hand in to a center or to your professor. This includes, but is not limited to, exams, assignments, cases, or reports.

**SUPPORT SERVICES AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

UW-B offers you a variety of library services. For more assistance, the following contact information is provided here:

URL: [www.uwb.edu/library](http://www.uwb.edu/library)
Phone: 425-352-5340
Email web form:
[http://www.uwb.edu/library/askus.html](http://www.uwb.edu/library/askus.html)

UW-B offers you a variety of writing center services. For more assistance, the following contact information is provided here:

Contact: Becky Reed Rosenberg, Director  
URL: [www.uwb.edu/WritingCenter/](http://www.uwb.edu/WritingCenter/)
Phone: 425-352-5253
Email: uwbwrite@u.washington.edu
Location: UW2-124

Please check back at the Student Information webpage for up-to-date information on workshops and other services provided for students.
[http://www.bothell.washington.edu/students/current/](http://www.bothell.washington.edu/students/current/)

**Academic Integrity:** Written or other work which a student submits must be the product of her/his own efforts. Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty, including dishonesty involving computer technology, are prohibited. For more on the UW-B policy please see
[http://www.bothell.washington.edu/students/policies/integrity.html](http://www.bothell.washington.edu/students/policies/integrity.html).

**ADA:** UW-B provides individuals with disabilities reasonable accommodations to participate in educational programs, activities and services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should contact Disabled Student Services at (425) 352-5307.

For more on UW-B policy for accommodation, please consult:
[http://www.bothell.washington.edu/community/access/](http://www.bothell.washington.edu/community/access/)