

**AMST 596 – TOPICS IN AMERICAN STUDIES  
INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY STUDIES  
Spring 2016, M 1:10-4pm, Wilson Short Room 4**

Professor: Dr. Jenifer Barclay  
Office Hours: M 11a-12p or by appointment  
Office: WILS 112-A  
Email: [jenifer.barclay@wsu.edu](mailto:jenifer.barclay@wsu.edu)  
Phone: (509) 335-7973

*The cultural resonances accorded [to disabled bodies] arise from the historical and intellectual moments in which [they] are embedded. Because such bodies are rare, unique, material, and confounding of cultural categories, they function as magnets to which culture secures its anxieties, questions and needs at any given moment. ~Rosemarie Garland Thomson*

This graduate seminar is designed to be an introduction to the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of Disability Studies. In recent decades, scholars in the humanities and social sciences have labored intensively to demonstrate that disabilities, broadly defined, are not exclusively clinical phenomena that belong to the realm of healthcare professionals and rehabilitation specialists. Instead, disability is a lived human experience that is *always already* embedded in a set of socially constructed ideas that change dramatically over time and across cultures. These shifting ideologies work hand-in-hand with other interlocking forms of oppression involving race, gender, class and sexuality. Disability, then, is embodied but it is also discursively constituted; shaped by social injustices and the built environment; and often rendered paradoxically visible and invisible in a profoundly ableist world. Drawing on classic and cutting-edge scholarship, this seminar seeks to introduce students to these complex dynamics by examining some of the theoretical underpinnings of the field as well as the ways in which disability as an experience *and* a category of analysis filters through literary and media representations, history, education, culture, social justice, civil rights and the criminal justice system in the United States and around the world.

Policies

**Plagiarism:** Please consult WSU's Student Standards of Conduct for details of what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (<http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/standards-of-conduct/>) and note that this behavior will not be tolerated. Immediate action will be taken against plagiarizers that can result in failure of the course. In other words, do your own work.

**Students with Disabilities:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center.

**Campus Safety:** Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the Pullman campus. As part of this commitment, the university has prepared this Campus Safety Plan, containing a listing of university policies,

procedures, statistics and information relating to campus safety, emergency management and the health and welfare of the campus community. See: <http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/> and <http://oem.wsu.edu/>.

#### Assignments and Evaluation:

##### ***Participation and Facilitation*** **20%**

Students are expected to be in class on time each week, to prepare in advance by reading the assigned texts and to be active contributors to class discussions. Each student must also facilitate one class discussion (sign ups during first class meeting). Student facilitators must provide a 10 minute overview of the assigned text(s) and prepare 5-7 thoughtful, open-ended discussion questions to be emailed to the class the Sunday before meeting by 5pm.

##### ***Weekly Reading Notes (10 sets, 3pts each)*** **30%**

Students must submit detailed reading notes each week for at least 10 assigned readings. I will discuss the format/expectation of these notes at the start of the semester but they must be completed on 5" x 8" index cards and include exhaustive notes with direct quotes, detailed paraphrasing and corresponding page numbers.

##### ***Research Paper*** **50%**

Graduate students must produce a 20-25 page research paper (undergraduates a 15-20 page research paper) connecting Disability Studies to a topic of interest (ideally within the student's primary area of research so that this paper can potentially be submitted for publication as a scholarly article). Papers should conform to the most rigorous professional standards and the citation style of individual students' disciplines. They must also include all the basic elements of a formal research paper (title page, notes, works cited/bibliography, etc.) and be free of grammatical errors, typos, and misspellings.

#### Required Books

- Ben-Moshe, Liat, Chapman, Chris and Carey, Allison C. eds. *Disability Incarcerated: Imprisonment and Disability in the United States and Canada*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Burch, Susan and Joyner, Hannah. *Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Davis, Lennard. *Enabling Acts: The Hidden Story of How the Americans with Disabilities Act Gave the Largest US Minority Its Rights*. New York: Beacon Press, 2015.
- Erevelles, Nirmala. *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011.
- Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Macmillan, 1997, rpt. 2012.
- Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Hall, Kim ed. *Feminist Disability Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.
- Linton, Simi. *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.
- Passanante Elman, Julie. *Chronic Youth: Disability, Sexuality, and U.S. Media Cultures of Rehabilitation*. New York: New York University Press, 2014.

Schweik, Susan. *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Siebers, Tobin. *Disability Theory*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008.

Watters, Ethan. *Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010.

Selections on BlackBoard [BB]

### CLASS SCHEDULE

January 11 – Introductions

Linton, *Claiming Disability* (Forward and Chapters 1-2) [BB]

“Why We Need to Talk about Kylie Jenner” <http://claimingcrip.blogspot.com/2015/12/why-we-need-to-talk-about-kylie-jenner.html?m=1>

January 18 – NO CLASS, MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

January 25 – Theoretical Frameworks

Linton, *Claiming Disability* (Chapters 3-8) and Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Introduction-Chapter 4)

February 1 – Representations

Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*

February 8 – Disability History, I

Schweik, *The Ugly Laws*

Recommended: Douglas Baynton, “Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History” [BB]

February 15 – NO CLASS, PRESIDENTS’ DAY

February 22 – Disability History, II

Burch and Joyner, *Unspeakable*

February 29 – Disability and Feminism

Hall, ed. *Feminist Disability Studies*

March 7 – Disability Rights

Davis, *Enabling Acts*

March 14-18 – NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

March 21 – Disability Studies and Education, I

Passanante Elman, *Chronic Youth*

March 28 – Disability Studies and Education, II  
Disability and Educational Practices and Politics K-12 and Higher Ed

TBA: Selections on BlackBoard from David Conner, Jan Valle and Chris Hale, eds. *Practicing Disability Studies in Education: Acting Toward Social Change* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2014); Susan Gabel, ed. *Disability Studies in Education* (Peter Lang Publishing, 2009); and Arlene Kanter and Beth Ferri, eds. *Righting Educational Wrongs: Disability Studies in Law and Education* (Syracuse University Press, 2011).

April 4 – Mass Incarceration and Policing  
Selections from Ben-Moshe, et al eds., *Disability Incarcerated*  
Julie Passanante Elman, “Policing at the Synapse: Ferguson and the Disability Politics of the Teen Brain” [BB]

April 11 – Neoliberalism and Globalization  
Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts*

April 18 – NO CLASS (read two books for last meeting)

April 25 – Disability and Culture  
Watters, *Crazy Like Us*  
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

May 2-6 – FINALS WEEK  
Research papers due during scheduled final exam time in Dr. Barclay’s office, WS 112-A