2007

Disability: Past and Present (Honors 232—Interdisciplinary Seminar)

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CAROLYN STUART AND MARY JO FESTLE

Disability: Past and Present
Honors 232—Interdisciplinary Seminar
4 Hours Credit

CAROLYN STUART (EDUCATION) AND MARY JO FESTLE (HISTORY)
ELON UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
MARY JO FESTLE, DIRECTOR

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to be “disabled”? How has this meaning changed over time in the U.S.? What factors affect a person’s experience of disability? Why should people—either disabled or not—learn about these matters?

This course explores the complexity of people’s experiences with disability in the past and present. Disability can be viewed from a number of lenses, including various academic disciplines, medical or social constructions, and minority-group perspectives. In this course, students analyze actions, ideas, and portrayals by cultural authorities and by the disabled themselves. Students complete a significant research project reflecting their major and interests. The instructors hope to engage students’ brains and hearts by deepening their thinking about disability, improving their academic skills, and stimulating their thinking about the art of being human.

Seminar for 20 students.

TEXTS

We will read all or substantial portions of the following:

Paul Longmore, Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability (Temple University Press, 2003)
Joseph Shapiro, No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement (Three Rivers Press, 1994)
Mark Haddon, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time (Knopf, 2004)
Kay Redfield Jamison, An Unquiet Mind (Knopf, 1995)
Reynolds Price, A Whole New Life (Scribner, 2003)

Additional readings, including scholarly articles and chapters from books and occasional websites, are assigned.
# DISABILITY: PAST AND PRESENT

## SYLLABUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Readings</th>
<th>Class Preparation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Introduction—what do we know, think, and why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Deafness and Deaf Culture; Social Construction of Disability; Identity Issues</td>
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<td><em>Smithsonian</em>, 23 (4), 30–41;</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.gallaudet.edu">www.gallaudet.edu</a></td>
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<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>Deaf Culture: Gallaudet Uprising; the “Medical Model” and alternative models</td>
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<td><em>The Deaf Celebration of Separate Culture</em>, Ch. 3 in <em>No Pity</em> by Joseph Shapiro</td>
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<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Deafness and the Cochlear Implant Debate</td>
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<td>Position Statement, National Association of the Deaf (NAD);</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.nad.org/site/pp.asp?c=folNKQMBF&amp;b=138140">http://www.nad.org/site/pp.asp?c=folNKQMBF&amp;b=138140</a>;</td>
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<td>Cochlear Implant Paper Due; In-Class debate</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Disability and War: Disability in History; Experiences and Changing Treatment of Veterans</td>
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<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Physical Disabilities: Early Activism and the “Poster Child” Phenomenon</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Cultural Portrayal of People with Physical Disabilities: Freak Shows, Films, Stereotypes and the purposes they serve</td>
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<td>Longmore, Ch. 6, “Film Reviews,” pp. 119–130, and Ch. 7, “Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion</td>
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**HONORS IN PRACTICE**
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Sept 25

Disability Rights and People with Physical Disabilities: Independent Living Movement

Shapiro, Ch. 2, “From Charity to Independent Living,” pp 41–73, from No Pity

Short Paper #2 is due today (accessibility evaluation of two public sites or review of two films).

Sept 27

Psychological Coping to a Physical Disability Acquired in Adulthood


Oct 2

Manic Depression (Bipolar Disorder) and Insanity

Kay Redfield Jamison, An Unquiet Mind

Oct 4

Mental Retardation, Sexuality, Sterilization


Oct 9

The Eugenics Movement


Oct 11

Discussion of research project (topics, expectations, stages, etc.)

The take-home midterm examination on the factors that affected a person’s experience with disability is due today.

Oct 18

Autism

Mark Haddon, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime

Oct 23

Disability Rights—Guest Speaker: Dr. Joy Weeber

Shapiro, Ch. 8, “Up from the Nursing Home,” pp. 237–257, in No Pity

Research questions are due in class today.

Oct 25

Developing a good Research Strategy

Meet in library today
Oct 30  
Disability Rights: How much has changed? Americans with Disabilities Act  

Nov 1  
Expectations for a thesis statement and outline  
The bibliography/research strategy assignment is due today.

Nov 6  
The Culture of Disability; Rethinking American values  

Nov 8  
Physician-Assisted Suicide; a Disability Issue?  
Read EITHER Longmore, Ch. 9, “The Resistance: The Disability Rights Movement and Assisted Suicide” in Why I Burned My Book OR Shapiro, Ch. 9, “No Less Worthy a Life” in No Pity; read a few websites with positions on assisted suicide. In-class debate.

Nov 13  
Individual conferences with students on their thesis/outline  
Thesis statement and outlines are due by 5:00 pm before class meets

Nov 15  
Technology: what are the assistive devices that give hope? What are the drawbacks? What is “universal design”?  
Shapiro, Ch. 7, The Screaming Neon Wheelchair, pp. 211–236 in No Pity; Visit the website CAST at http://www.cast.org

Nov 20  
Peer editing of first drafts  
Two copies of the first draft of the research paper are due in class today.

Nov. 27  
Popular Culture: Artistry and Communication  
There is no class preparation. We will meet in the computer lab and review some online art, magazines, websites, and blogs and discuss the way disabled people portray themselves in popular culture.

Nov 29  
Field trip to Gateway Education Center in Greensboro  
Visit website at: http://schools.gcsnc.com/spages/gateway/gateway_education_center_main.htm
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Dec 4
Educational Settings: Is inclusion the best strategy for students with disabilities? What does the law say? Can separate be equal?
We will analyze a documentary, Educating Peter, about the experience of a third-grade student with Down’s Syndrome who is fully included into a regular elementary education classroom.

**Research papers are due in class today.**

Dec 6
Final Reflections—What are we taking from this class? How are we different?
No readings assigned

Dec 11
Final Exam: Poster Session
Each student will prepare a poster that summarizes his/her research.
See handout for expectations.

_____________________________
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2007