

DISABILITY AND CULTURE (SOC 314:10) – 3 CREDITS
Department of Sociology, St. Francis Xavier University
WINTER 2023

*This course acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. It is important to understand the history of this land and understand our place within this context. Recognizing we are all Treaty People, students are encouraged to learn about the Peace and Friendship Treaties.**

COURSE INFORMATION:

Instructor: Dr. Katie Aubrecht; Pronouns: She/her; E: caubrech@stfx.ca; T: 902-867-4845
Office: Nicholson Tower Room 619

Office Hours: Mon. 9am-10am, Wed. 9am-10am, Thurs. 12pm-1pm, & Fri. 1pm-2pm AST

Course Meeting Time: Wed. 12:45pm-2pm & Fri. 11:15am-12:30pm AST

Course Meeting Location: Annex Room 124

Students may change the course, on or before Jan. 16, 2023, or drop the course by Mar. 10, 2023, online in Banner

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

This course begins with the understanding that disability is a socio-political phenomenon. Employing disability studies theory and methods, students will examine cultural representations of disability that serve to marginalize, exploit and oppress disabled people. As part of this examination, students will also consider how disability intersects and interlocks with race and ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, sexuality, class, and age. Cultural representations of disability will be analyzed from an international perspective, with a focus on how disability has been represented in Canadian social policy, the media, helping professions, and the education system. Experiential accounts of disability in the form of personal memoir, art, and autoethnography, will be reviewed to understand the meaning and significance of disability cultures.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand and employ sociological and disability studies theories and methods,
2. Analyze cultural representations of disability,
3. Examine disability using an intersectional approach,
4. Consider and discuss the social and political significance of disability cultures.

Course Materials and Teaching Methods

An **on-line course reader** that includes all required and supplementary readings is made available on the Moodle course site.

* Please consult the following resources for additional information about the Peace and Friendship Treaties: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028589/1539608999656>; https://lnuey.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/lnuey_4291_treatyday_ResearchPaper_V01_lowres.pdf

This seminar style course is delivered in-person and supported electronically by a Moodle course site. Moodle will be used to archive course materials and submit participation responses and course assignments. Lectures will not be recorded.

Accessibility & Accommodations

This classroom will be an anti-oppressive and disability, Mad, and D/deaf positive space (more information on what this means can be accessed using the following link: <https://simmons.libguides.com/anti-oppression/anti-ableism>).

Accessibility is a collective project we all have a stake in. One way that accessibility can be addressed is through accommodations. StFX supports academic accommodation for students with disabilities so that they may meet the learning objectives of their courses and be given the opportunity to be fairly evaluated on their understanding of course material. The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning welcomes students with documented disabilities and offers them a student-centered program of support. **If you have a registered accommodation, please let me know.** If you do not have a registered accommodation but would like to share information about existing or potential accessibility barriers, or if you cannot access the course material for any reason, please also let me know.

Religious, Spiritual or Cultural Observance

Everyone should feel welcome and encouraged to bring their full selves to the class. Please feel free to speak with me about any religious, spiritual or cultural commemorations or celebrations that you plan to observe during the term.

Expectations of Students

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you are going to be absent for more than one class, you must contact me. In the case of a sudden emergency requiring you to be absent for more than five days, you are required to contact the Dean's office. Faculty are required to report to the Dean all unexplained absences of more than three hours over at least two classes in any term.

Our criterion for success is engaged, critical and creative dialogue that is informed by the readings. For this to happen, it is expected that students will have read all of the required readings (as they are listed in the schedule) and come to class prepared to engage. A collective sense of trust, and respect for one another, will be essential to supporting meaningful engagement.

Clear and continuous communication throughout the course is important. I care about your progress. Contact me if you have questions or require clarification around instructions or expectations for assignments using my email caubrech@stfx.ca. In the subject line of your email please include the course title and code.

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to all academic regulations that are outlined in Chapter 3 of the academic calendar.

Course Assignments

Please include your name and student ID number on each document submission. All submissions must be in WORD (PDF not accepted), double spaced, include page numbers, and have a separate title page and reference page.

It is expected that all submitted writing assignments will include **references to course material** cited in **ASA or APA formatting**, in addition to the student's own reflections and creative contributions. When describing material from outside of the class, indicate where this information is from, using quotations for direct citations, and/or a reference that shows where you retrieved the information from. When you do use a quotation be sure to introduce it and explain the meaning of the passage in your own words (do not let the quotation speak for itself). Limit the use of direct quotations. The lectures are designed to scaffold and expand on the readings. Do not rely on or cite lectures in your assignments - refer to the readings.

Assignments must be uploaded via Moodle on or before the due date. **Marks may be deducted at a rate of 5% per calendar day for late assignments. Assignments without a negotiated extension and which are not received within 10 days of the submission date will not be accepted and will receive an automatic grade of zero.** Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The midterm grade will be based on the grade received on the autoethnography assignment.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR EVALUATED WORK

- 40% = Shows understanding of course material and a sociological perspective
- 20% = Shows meaningful engagement (with readings, lectures, discussions)
- 20% = Displays critical and creative thinking (takes material in new directions)
- 20% = Technical aspects (proofread for spelling, grammar, and flow)

Due Date		Value
Class Participation	Ongoing	15%
Proposal	Feb. 1	15%
Autoethnography	Feb. 28	20%
Film Review	Mar. 21	20%
Final Paper	Apr. 18	30%

Assignment Instructions

Class Participation (15%)

Students are expected to actively engage and contribute to class discussions. Participation may take different forms and students are encouraged to speak to the

professor to explore the range of ways of participating. This grade will be provided at the end of the course.

Disability Autoethnography (20%)

Autoethnography offers a way to expose and move beyond stereotypical ways of thinking about disability to offer new and/or deeper, critical, and complex understandings of disability as a cultural experience. In this assignment students must write a 3-page double-spaced paper that describes and **analyzes a personal experience of disability as a cultural experience**. The autoethnography should include:

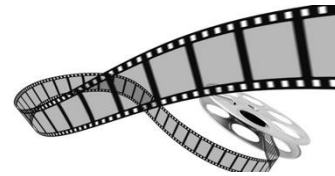
- An introduction,
- A brief description of the experience or an ‘epiphany’ (remembered moment that had an impact on how you understand culture, being part of culture and cultural identities),
- An analysis of the experience or epiphany that:
 - uses a sociological perspective and considers expectations, roles, institutions, and structures,
 - references at least 2 required course readings to show how the experience can be understood as a cultural experience.
- The autoethnography should have 1-inch margins, be double-spaced, with a title page with the course title, student name and ID, and submission date.

Film Review – Analyzing Disability Culture (20%)

Students will watch a film during class time and write and submit a 3-page double-spaced film review. The review must use at least 2 required course readings covered from the previous classes. The review will be graded based on demonstrated understanding of the course material by applying it to an analysis of the film.

It is expected that the review will include:

- **Introduction,**
- **Brief Plot Summary** of the film,
- **Description,**
- **Analysis** (identifying themes and patterns),
- **Conclusion/Evaluation.**



Detailed instructions will be provided and discussed in-class. The review should have 1-inch margins, be double-spaced, with a title page with the course title, student name and ID, and submission date.

Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (15%)

Students must submit a 1-page proposal and annotated bibliography for the final course paper (total approximately 3 pages double-spaced) in which they will curate a disability consciousness through a collection of 3 cultural artefacts related to disability.

The proposal should identify the cultural artefacts that will be explored and how they can be thought of in relation.

The annotated bibliography includes 3 academic journal articles. An annotation for an article is comprised of a concise summary of the main points of that article, understood from the perspective of disability culture/consciousness. Each annotation should be at least half of one page in length, double-spaced. Detailed instructions will be provided and discussed in-class. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor to discuss ideas for the final paper in advance of submitting the proposal.

Course Paper: Curating Disability Consciousness (30%)

Students must submit a research-informed essay that draws from the readings and discussions, as well as an independent review of literature from disability studies, sociology, cultural studies, fine arts, history, English, women and gender studies, critical race studies, aging studies, and/or other social sciences and humanities and interdisciplinary fields.

The purpose of the paper is to analyze disability as made to appear in 3 cultural artefacts –images/visual culture/photography, art and artisan works/art galleries, oral stories, fiction and non-fiction, poems, performances, memoirs, film, cultural exhibitions, histories/monuments/museums, celebrations/rituals/routine practices, architecture, etc.

Students must include at least 6 peer-reviewed academic journal articles that represent a sociological/disability studies perspective, not including the course text or other required readings. The body of the paper must be no less than 8 pages double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and a separate title page and reference page. All pages should be numbered. Detailed instructions will be provided and discussed in-class.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (Jan. 4 & 6): Welcome and Introduction

No Required Readings.

- Introductions to each other and the course, review of course outline, expectations and orientation and discussion of what is involved in understanding disability and/as culture

Supplementary Reading:

- Brown, S. (2002). What is disability culture? *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 22(2),34-50. Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/343/433>

WEEK 2 (Jan. 11 & 13): Disability Culture

Required Readings:

- Barnes, C. & Mercer, G. (1999). Disability culture: Assimilation or inclusion? *Disability in context* (19pgs). Retrieved from http://courses.washington.edu/intro2ds/Readings/33_BarnesMercer-culture.pdf
- Hobson, J. (2019). Disability as culture. *Multicultural Education*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1250140.pdf>

Supplementary Resource:

- Goodley, D. (2011). Discover the meaning of disability: An interview with Rod Michalko. Manchester Metropolitan University. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvPsShRlcS8> (12 minutes, 26seconds)

WEEK 3 (Jan. 18 & 20): Disability Consciousness

Required Readings:

- Waldschmidt, A., (2018). Disability-culture-society: Strengths and weaknesses of a cultural model of dis/ability. *Alter*, 12(2), 65-78.
- Barnartt, S. (1996). Disability culture or disability consciousness. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 7(2), 1-19.
- Longmore, P. (1995). The second phase: From disability rights to disability culture. *Disability Rag & Resource*, 16(5), 4–11. Retrieved from <https://www.independentliving.org/docs3/longm95.html>

Supplementary Resource:

- Ableism and disability history. Retrieved from <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/flexforward/chapter/ableism-and-disability-history/>

WEEK 4 (Jan. 25 & 27): Cultural Production

Required Reading:

- Bourdieu, P. (1993). The field of cultural production. In P. Bourdieu, *The field of cultural production* (pp. 29-73). New York: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from <https://carlos.public.iastate.edu/698Q/readings/bourdieu.pdf>

WEEK 5 (Feb. 1 & 3): Curation, Audiences and Affect

Required Reading:

- Excerpt from: Benjamin, W. Unpacking my library: A talk about book collecting. In W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, (pp. 59-67). NY, New York: Schocken Books.
- Kelly, C. & Orsini, M. (2021). Beyond Measure: Disability Art, Affect and Reimagining Visitor Experience. *Studies in Social Justice*, 15(2). Retrieved from <https://journals.library.brocku.ca/index.php/SSJ/article/view/2432>

Supplementary Resources:

- Excerpts from: Barthes, R. (1981). *Camera lucida*. New York: Hill & Wang. Retrieved from https://monoskop.org/images/c/c5/Barthes_Roland_Camera_Lucida_Reflections_on_Photography.pdf
- Roman, L. (2008). The unruly salon. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(1), 1-16.
- Church, K., Panitch, M., Frazee, C., & Livingston, P. (2008). Out from Under: A brief history of everything! Retrieved from <http://www.iimhl.com/files/docs/CCDS7.pdf>
- Out from under: Disability history and things to remember (video, 2 minutes). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcOhHJU3EwU>

WEEK 6 (Feb. 8 & 10): Disability Art and Agency

Required Readings:

- Rice, C., Changfoot, N., & Chandler, E. (2016). Imagining otherwise: The ephemeral spaces of envisioning new meanings. In C. Kelly & M. Orsini (Eds.), *Mobilizing metaphor: art, culture, and disability activism in Canada* (pp. 54-75). Vancouver: British Columbia Press.

Supplementary Resources:

- Redlab Public Videos: Digital Stories by Eliza Chandler (4 minutes) and Janna Brown (2 minutes): <https://revisioncentre.ca/projects/mobilizing-new-meanings-of-disability-and-difference/#videos>

WEEK 7 (Feb. 15): Invited Guest Speaker – Anna Quon, Artist

Required Resource:

- Documentary: Anna Quon (2021) (video with transcript, 44 minutes). Retrieved from <https://www.ami.ca/category/documentaries/media/anna-quon>

WEEK 7 (Feb. 17): Invited Guest Speaker – Tom Curry, Musician & Music Therapist, Nova Scotia Health

WEEK 8 (Feb. 20-24): Winter Reading Week - NO CLASS

WEEK 9 (Mar. 1): In-Class Video – “Code of the Freaks: The Story of Hollywood’s Exploitation of Disability” (2020)

Supplementary Resource:

- Code of the Freaks Website: <https://www.codeofthefreaks.com/>

WEEK 9 (Mar 3 & 5): World (Re)Building

Required Readings:

- Garland-Thomson, R. (2017). Building a world with disability in it. In A. Waldschmidt, H. Berressem, & M. Ingwersen, Eds.). *Culture - theory - disability: Encounters between Disability Studies and Cultural Studies*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. Retrieved from <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783839425336-006/html>

WEEK 10 (Mar. 8 & 10): Disability and the Media

Required Reading:

- Barnes, C. (1992). *Disabling imagery and the media: An exploration of the principles for media representations of disabled people*. British Council of Organisations of Disabled People. Halifax, UK: Ryburn Publishing. (29 pgs). Retrieved from <https://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/library/Barnes-disabling-imagery.pdf>
- Jones, C. (2012) Journalism and disability from a Canadian perspective. *Canadian Journal on Disability Studies*, 1(2), 75-108. Retrieved from <https://cjds.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cjds/article/view/43>

Supplementary Resources:

- United Nations. (2019). *Disability and the media*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/disability-and-the-media.html>

WEEK 11 (Mar. 22): “More than a Ramp”

Required Reading:

- Peers, D. & Eales, L. (2017). Moving materiality: People, tools and this thing called disability. *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, 2(2), 101-125. Retrieved from <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ari/index.php/ari/article/view/29236/21363>

Supplementary Resources:

- Kinetic Light Descent Project Webpage: <https://www.kineticlight.org/descent>
- Alice Sheppard: Kinetic Light/Descent Research (video interview with performance clips, 6 minutes): <https://vimeo.com/235858755>
- Kinetic Light Brings Diversity to Dance (text and audio interview, 13 minutes): <https://www.wabe.org/kinetic-light-brings-diversity-to-dance/>

WEEK 11 (Mar. 24): Invited Guest Speaker – Dr. Diane Driedger, Academic, Poet, Artist, Activist

- Dianne Driedger, My Will Remains Exhibit: <https://www.cmu.ca/gallery/exhibits/mywillremains>

WEEK 12 (Mar. 15 & 17): A Poetics of Disability Poiesis

Required Readings:

- Koppers, P. (2006). Disability culture poetry: The sound of the bones. *DSQ*, 26(4). Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/809/984>
- Aubrecht, K. (2016). Startle. *Feral Feminisms*, 5. Retrieved from <https://feralfeminisms.com/startle/>
- <https://cjds.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cjds/article/view/478/729>

Supplementary Reading:

- Ward, J.P. (1986). Poetry and sociology. *Human Studies*, 9, 323-345.

WEEK 13 (Mar. 29 & 31): Disability Arts & Social Change

Required Reading

- Evans, R. (2022). Lessons from disability arts practitioners about how to make sense of arts-based social change. *Field: A Journal of Socially-Engaged Art Criticism*, 20. Retrieved from <https://field-journal.com/issue-20/taut-threads-spanning-ambivalences-lessons-from-disability-arts-practitioners-about-how-to-make-sense-of-arts-based-social-change>

Supplementary Resource:

- British Council of the Arts. (2021). Arts, disability and social change (video, 2 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpeK6lPyNul&t=1s>

WEEK 14 (Apr. 5): Last Class – End of Term Reflections

Statement on Equitable Learning

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. Please feel free to talk with me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the StFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor. The Human Rights and Equity Advisor is Megan Fogarty. Megan can be contacted by email at mfogarty@stfx.ca or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EQUITABLE LEARNING

- **Student Success Centre**
Location: Angus L. Macdonald library
Phone: (902) 867-5221; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/student-success/>
- **Tramble Rooms Centre for Accessible Learning**
Location: Angus L. Macdonald Library, Room 108.
Phone: (902) 867-5349; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/accessible-learning/>

- **Health and Counselling Centre**
Location: 3rd Floor of Bloomfield Centre (Room 305).
Phone: (902) 867-2263; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/health-and-counselling/home>
- **Financial Aid Office**
Location: 204 & 206 Nicholson Tower
Phone: (902) 867-2374 / 2301; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/financial-aid/>
- **Diversity Engagement Centre**
Location: 4th Floor Bloomfield
Phone: (902) 867-3934; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/student-services/diversity-engagement-centre>
- **Sexual Violence and Assault Prevention**
Location: 313D Bloomfield Centre
Phone: 902-867-5601; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/visible-at-x/supports-and-resources>
- **Wellspring Centre**
Location: Wellspring Centre, 2nd Floor Morrison Hall
Phone: (902) 867-5252 or 867-3739; Website: <https://www2.mystfx.ca/wellspring/>

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