

**Disability and Culture (SOC 314:10) – 3 credits**  
**Department of Sociology, St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Winter 2022**  
**Mondays 6:30pm-9:30pm Atlantic Standard Time**

*This course acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.*

Professor: Dr. Katie Aubrecht

Preferred pronoun: She/her

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Office hours (via Teams): Tuesdays 9:00-10:00am, Wednesdays 9:00am-9:30am, Thursdays 9:00am-9:30am. Other times can be explored. In all cases please make an appointment.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

### Course Description

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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

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

1. Understand and employ disability studies theories and methods;
2. Analyze cultural representations of disability;
3. Examine disability from an intersectional perspective;
4. Understand the social and political significance of disability cultures.

### Course Materials

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**Required Course Textbook: Kelly, C. & Orsini, M. (Eds.) (2017). *Mobilizing metaphor: Art, culture and disability activism in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.** An **on-line coursepack** makes the remainder of required readings and supplementary readings available on the Course Moodle Site.

### Teaching Methods

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This seminar style course is delivered in-person and supported electronically by a Moodle online classroom. The online classroom is a resource, and students must attend seminars and participate in the course discussions to advance in the course.

To enhance the accessibility of the course, I will use a variety of teaching methods in each class, including:

1. Lecture materials, including PowerPoint presentation slides.
2. Required and supplementary readings and course materials that include academic publications, reports, websites, blogs, documentary film, news media, YouTube videos, as well as artistic and creative works and guest speakers. Lectures will refer to both required and supplementary readings.
3. Private online reflection submissions of a reflective response to the readings, including questions developed from the readings.
4. In class discussions and collaborative work. Through dialogue we will create a safe and stimulating space where you can creatively engage with the course content, and one another.
5. Short written assignments that provide students with an opportunity to monitor their progress in the course and receive feedback.
6. Individualized in-person meetings with students.

### **Expectations of Students**

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**Participation** in the course discussions is expected of all students. The discussions are our space to share our reactions, thoughts and questions related to the readings. Each lesson will include guiding questions to support the conversation, but students are also encouraged to pose their own questions, think critically and take the conversations in new directions.

Attendance will be taken at each class. Where the classes are seminars, missing two classes is equivalent to missing three or more. **Students who miss two classes will have their names forwarded to the Dean's Office.** This is not done to be punitive but as a formal check-in to ensure you are supported in realizing your potential for success in the class.

Students are expected to complete assignments before or by due dates listed on the **syllabus**, unless previous arrangements have been made. If circumstances arise which make meeting a due date difficult, please inform me in advance, as soon as possible. **Clear and continuous communication** throughout the course is critical. I care about your progress. Contact me if you have questions or require clarification around instructions or expectations for assignments.

**Our criteria 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 will engage one another by listening to and responding to one another in respectful ways. A collective sense of trust, and respect for one another, will be essential to supporting meaningful engagement of all people in the class.

**Students may share related materials from outside of the course** as part of their responses to the readings; for example, digital audio and/or visual excerpts with the class (with a description and where possible, captions), links to media stories, current events, popular culture, social policies and programs, references to poetry or literature, etc. However, it is critical that the main focus of any response is on the required readings.

It is expected that all submitted writing assignments will include **direct references to course material** cited in **APA or ASA 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. Do not overuse direct quotations, since this will negatively impact your grade. When you do use a quotation be sure to introduce it, and explain the meaning of the passage in your own words.

### **Important Dates in the University Calendar**

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- Mon., January 24: Last day to drop full-year courses or change second-term courses
- Mon., February 21: Winter Study Break begins, Nova Scotia Heritage Day, offices closed
- Tue., February 22: Last day to drop second-term three-credit courses

### **Course Assignments**

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Please include your name and student ID number on each document submission. Pay particular attention to assignment due dates and please consult assignment rubrics posted on Moodle before beginning and before submitting assignments.

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 working days of the submission date will not be accepted and will receive an automatic grade of zero.** Extensions may be granted upon negotiation directly with the course professor.

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

<b>Due Date</b>		<b>Value</b>
Class Participation	Ongoing	15%
Proposal	Feb. 11	15%
Autoethnography	Feb. 28	20%
Film Review	Mar. 21	20%
Major Paper	Apr. 18	30%
Bonus	Apr. 2 - No late submissions	+2%

### **Detailed Assignment Instructions**

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#### **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 and Representation (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 a) uses a sociological perspective and considers expectations, roles, institutions and structures; b) 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 Analysis – Cultural and Artistic Review (20%)**

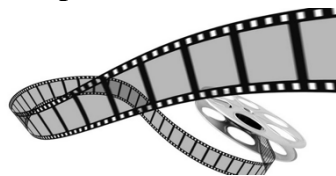
Students will watch a film during class time and write and submit a **3 page double-spaced** film review. The review must use at least 2 required course readings covered from the previous classes. The review will be graded based on demonstrated understanding of the course material by applying it to an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

It is expected that the review will include:

- **Introduction;**
- **Brief Plot Summary** of the film;
- **Description;**
- **Analysis;**
- **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 one 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 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.

### **Bonus**

Students may complete a voluntary extra credit assignment graded out of 100 with a value of 2% to enhance their overall grade in the course. Since this is a bonus, late submissions will not be accepted. In fulfillment of this assignment students must submit a **2 page double-spaced reflection** that describes an ‘Aha moment’ in the course when there was a transformation in understanding of disability. As part of the paper, describe the circumstances, readings, relationships/discussions, and other conditions that supported the change in understanding. Make direct connections to at least one reading, including a reference.

### **Submission of Assignments**

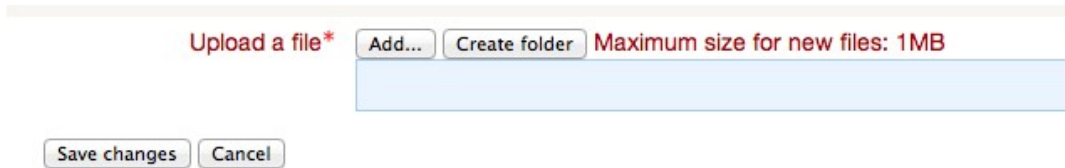
Assignments will be submitted and returned through Moodle. All the assignment drop boxes have the “Submit” icon in front of them. Click on the appropriate assignment link and click on the “upload file” button.

**Submission draft**

No files submitted yet

Upload files

Then click on “add” button and browse in your computer and attach the appropriate assignment. Finally click on “save changes”. Make sure your file is in MS Word format.



## **Statement on Equitable Learning**

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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](mailto:mfogarty@stfx.ca) or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

### **Resources to Support Equitable Learning:**

- **Student Success Centre**, Angus L. Macdonald Library, Main Floor; Website: <http://www2.mystfx.ca/student-success/>; Email: [sscentre@stfx.ca](mailto:sscentre@stfx.ca); Telephone: 902-867-5221
- **Health and Counseling Services**, Bloomfield Centre, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor (Room 305); Website: [https://sites.stfx.ca/health\\_and\\_counselling/](https://sites.stfx.ca/health_and_counselling/); Telephone: 902-867-2263
- **Student Advisory Services**, *Aboriginal, Black, International and LGBTQ Student Advising*; Website with links to advising and student societies: [https://sites.stfx.ca/equity/Student\\_Campus\\_Resources.html](https://sites.stfx.ca/equity/Student_Campus_Resources.html)

### **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.

### **Accessibility & Accommodations\***

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This course is organized to expect and welcome disabled, Mad, and Deaf students. This classroom will be a **disability, Mad, and Deaf positive space**. I recognize that accessibility should not follow a ‘one-size-fits-one’ standard, and therefore we will create our own access commitments, building on the accessibility already built into this course, during the first week of class. We will revisit these access commitments throughout the course to make sure that we are still following them, and that they still work for us.

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\* This statement has been adapted from a statement created by Dr. Eliza Chandler, Ryerson University’s School of Disability Studies.

The course has been developed using the **principles of universal design** for learning, and ways of enacting accessibility that I find to be useful and productive. The material for each class includes theoretical texts and life writing, blog posts and/or film, to accommodate different learning styles and preferences. **If you are not able to access the course material, please let me know as soon as possible.** Although participation is graded in this course, you can participate in different ways. Please feel free to get in touch with me in advance of the course to discuss your accessibility requirements with me.

St. Francis Xavier University 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 mastery of course material. The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning welcomes students with documented disabilities and offers them a student-centered program of support. For more information about access and accommodation please see:

[http://sites.stfx.ca/accessible\\_learning/](http://sites.stfx.ca/accessible_learning/) **If you have a registered accommodation, please let me know.**

### **Self-Care**

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Due to the focus of sociological study (social relations/social order/power and inequality), students need to be aware that course related discussions may contain information that could be potentially disturbing, triggering, and unsettling. If this happens students can identify it in the class discussions and talk through it collectively as a class, and/or contact the professor after class and work with the professor to develop appropriate strategies of address. In cases of more intensely felt disquiet students can also obtain peer support (talk to a friend), seek guidance from Student Services Coordinator, or seek assistance from resources listed in the STFX academic calendar.

### **Academic Integrity**

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Academic integrity must be upheld throughout the course. The following offences will result in an automatic zero:

- 1) Plagiarism** - the misrepresentation of another's ideas, words, or other work as one's own, plagiarism is a form of theft. Types of plagiarism may include: a) paraphrasing or re-arranging another's words without proper acknowledgement; b) using material from the Internet, a database, a book, a journal, or any other source without attribution.
- 2) Cheating** - A more direct form of academic theft, cheating may include: a) buying, selling, or sharing papers or other assignments, or submitting them as one's own work; b) collaborating on assignments designated as individual; c) submitting to one instructor work completed for another; d) copying or using unauthorized aids during examinations; e) impersonating another or allowing oneself to be impersonated; f) illicitly obtaining, viewing, or sharing information about an assignment or an examination before it is administered.
- 3) Falsification** - requesting extensions dishonestly.
- 4) Tampering** - interfering with others' work, including their use of computer or other resources.

## **SCHEDULE**

**Lesson 1 (Jan. 17): Introduction - Understanding Disability and/as Culture**

*No Required Readings.*

⇒ Introductions, review of course outline, expectations and orientation.

## **Lesson 2 (Jan. 24): Making Sense of Disability Culture**

*Required Readings:*

- Barnes, C. & Mercer, G. (1999). Disability culture: Assimilation or inclusion? *Disability in context*. Retrieved from [http://courses.washington.edu/intro2ds/Readings/33\\_BarnesMercer-culture.pdf](http://courses.washington.edu/intro2ds/Readings/33_BarnesMercer-culture.pdf)
- Brown, S. (2002). What is disability culture? *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 22(2),34-50. Retrieved from <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/343/433>

*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=nvPsShRIcS8> (12 minutes, 26seconds)

## **Lesson 3 (Jan. 31): Getting a Feel for 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.

## **Lesson 4 (Feb. 7): Making Meaning of 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>
- Benjamin, W. Unpacking my library: A talk about book collecting. In W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, (pp. 59-67). NY, New York: Schocken Books. Retrieved from [http://art.yale.edu/file\\_columns/0000/2138/benjamin.pdf](http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/2138/benjamin.pdf)

## **Lesson 5 (Feb. 14): Agency, Art and Mobilization**

*Required Readings:*

- Textbook Introduction: Mobilizing Metaphor (pp. 3-21)
- Textbook Chapter 2: Imagining Otherwise: The Ephemeral Spaces of Envisioning New Meanings (pp. 54-75)

**NO CLASS FEB. 21**

## **Lesson 6 (Feb. 28): Deaf, Disability and Mad Arts**

*Required Readings:*

- Textbook Chapter 4: Deaf and Disability Arts: Insiders, Outsiders and the Potential of Progressive Studios (pp. 98-117)
- Textbook Chapter 5: “It Fell on Deaf Ears”: Deafhood through the Graphic Signed Novel as a Form of Activism (pp. 118-137)



### **Lesson 7 (Mar. 7): Cultural Analysis (Disability and Film)**

#### *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>

#### *Supplementary Resources:*

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

### **Lesson 8 (Mar. 14): Art and Social Change**

#### *Required Readings:*

- Textbook Chapter 9: Crip the Light Fantastic: Art as Liminal Emancipatory Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (pp. 198-205)
- Textbook Chapter 10: Claiming the ‘Masters’ for Disability Rights: An Artist’s Journey (pp. 206-218)

### **Lesson 9 (Mar. 21): Embodied Movements**

#### *Required Readings:*

- Textbook Chapter 6: (Dis)Quiet in the Peanut Gallery: Performing Social Justice through Integrated Dance (pp. 141-161)

#### *Supplementary Resource:*

- Kinetic Light Brings Diversity to Dance: <https://www.wabe.org/kinetic-light-brings-diversity-to-dance/> (text and audio interview, 13 minutes)

### **Lesson 10 (Mar. 28): Arts Praxis**

#### *Required Reading*

- Sandahl, C. (2018). Disability art and culture: A model for imaginative ways to integrate the community. *Alter*, 12(2), 79-93.

### **Lesson 11 (Apr. 4): A Poetics of Disability Poiesis**

- Textbook Chapter 12: Challenging Rhetorical Indifference with a Crippled Poetry of Witness (pp. 241-259)
- 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/>

### **Lesson 12 (Apr. 11): Revaluing Disability through Activist Art**

- Textbook Chapter 15: Accountability, Agency and Absence: Embodying Radical Disability Values in Artistic Production (pp. 289-308)