

AMST 390: Disability and American Culture

Fall 2019
MW 10:00-11:15am
EC-011



Instructor: Dr. Carrie Lane
Office Location: 410 Gordon Hall (formerly University Hall)
Office Hours: M 2:30-4:30/W 9-10am; and by appointment
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Course Description: Explores changing meaning, history, and experience of disability in American culture through scholarly readings, memoir, film, photography, and other cultural documents. Considers disability in relation to: identity; family; community; activism; stigma; discrimination; media representations; intersectionality; gender and sexuality; employment; fashion; and design.

Course Objective: This interdisciplinary course introduces students to theoretical, cultural, and political models of disability and explores the lived experiences of persons with disabilities (or people who are perceived to have disabilities) in American society. It is intended to sensitize students to issues surrounding disability and the representation thereof, inform them about the disability rights movement and how cultural constructions of disability differ across time and within different social contexts, and connect disability to broader themes and debates in American culture.

Prerequisite: Completion of G.E. Category D.1.

Student Learning Goals:

- Students will learn that disability is a culturally constructed category that differs across historical eras, cultures, and social contexts.
- Students will come to understand disability and representations thereof from a uniquely interdisciplinary and cultural perspective. They will learn about disability and persons with disabilities from a variety of cultural documents, including memoir, films (documentary and feature), photography, and audio and video recordings.

- Students will analyze how disability and persons with disabilities have been represented in American popular culture in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. In doing so they will gain skills and perspective that they can later apply to the analysis and critique of US popular cultural representations more broadly.
- Students will use the study of disability as a lens through which to examine broader aspects of American history and culture, including power, discrimination, social stigma, social and political activism, media representations, re-appropriation, gender and sexuality, identity, intersectionality, work, and design.
- Students will present written analyses of a sampling of the above subjects. Essay-based exams will demonstrate students' comprehension of course readings, films, and discussions, as well as their ability to draw connections between course materials in the process of crafting an original, well-evidenced argument.
- Through service-learning, students will gain exposure to communities that may differ from their own and achieve a more comprehensive view of the experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities.
- Through service-learning, students will also explore potential career options as well as future opportunities for community service work and other forms of civic engagement.

Required Texts:

- *Disability History of the United States*, Kim Nielsen (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012)
- Additional required readings, audio files, and videos available on Titanium

I do not require a specific edition of any book, so you may choose to purchase used copies or older editions from any bookstore or sites such as half.com. CSUF library and the American Studies reading room in GH-210a may also have free copies of course books for you to borrow.

Requirements: This course entails a combination of lecture, class discussion, and service learning. I expect you to come to class having completed all assigned reading for that day and prepared with questions and comments for discussion. Bring the readings and your notes to class each week so you can reference them in class discussion. **If you cannot participate verbally or need encouragement or assistance in doing so, it is your responsibility to meet with me** to discuss strategies for improving your participation level and, if necessary, identifying alternative methods of participation

It is crucial that you stay on top of the reading in order to keep up in class. If you're having trouble with a particular reading or topic, I'll be happy to talk it through with you during class or office hours. It is essential that you attend class consistently, as you will be accountable for material from readings, lectures, and discussions. You will receive a zero for any assignments missed due to absence. If you miss a class, you should obtain class notes from one or more of your fellow students.

In-Class Conduct & General Advice:

- **Get to class on time.** I make most important announcements in the first 5 minutes. Notify me in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.
- **Cellphones must be off** (not on vibrate) and stowed away (not on your desk). If you need to make or receive a text or call during class time, please leave the classroom in order to do so.
- **No taking notes on computers** or audio recording lectures unless specifically authorized to do so by Disability Support Services. Studies have confirmed that people retain far more information when they write rather than type their notes. Typing up notes, even verbatim, decreases students' retention of the material presented. The use of computers has also proven distracting to the students seated *around* the computer, not just the one using it. I ban computers not because I'm an ogre or a Luddite but because I truly believe it helps you learn.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a **professional manner**. Talking when someone else is speaking, sleeping, reading non-class related materials, texting, emailing, etc., are unacceptable behaviors and will result in my asking you to leave the classroom. Anything which distracts me or your fellow students is unacceptable. When someone has the floor, whether a fellow student, a guest, or myself, they deserve your undivided attention.
- I expect you to **demonstrate tolerance and respect** in all interactions with your classmates and professor. Disagreement is a natural, even necessary part of the learning process, and we will likely touch on sensitive topics in this class. I hope you will keep an open mind when others express opinions different from your own and approach all interactions in the spirit of intellectual curiosity. If someone offends you, give them the benefit of the doubt by assuming they did not intend to offend and either misspoke or were misinformed; respectfully help them see alternative perspectives or correct their misperceptions. However, if at any time you feel uncomfortable, insulted, or unsafe in our classroom, notify me immediately and we will work together to address the problem.
- **Don't be shy with questions**—I'm happy to answer them, big or small. However, always check the syllabus, website, and/or assignment sheets before contacting me in case the answer is already there (e.g., When is the paper due? What should I read this week?).

Course Requirements and Policies:

For this class you will:

- Design a disability history handout;
- Write an essay analyzing the depiction of disability in a feature film;
- Research and write a biographical essay about a disability activist;
- Participate in Service Learning and write a reflective essay about that experience; and
- Complete an in-class midterm and a take-home final exam.

In grading your exams and essay I will pay close attention to both substance and form (grammar, spelling, organization, and clarity of expression). In evaluating the substance of an essay or presentation, I will examine whether you have demonstrated a critical understanding of course materials and presented a coherent thesis or argument. I reserve the right to modify

or add assignments throughout the semester.

Service Learning: In addition to the exams and essay described above, each student for this class will complete **at least 15 hours of Service Learning and write a reflective essay** about their Service Learning experience. As part of that service-learning, students will be asked to serve as docents for an exhibit on the history of disability during CSUF's Disability Awareness Day (October 23 on campus). All students will also conduct Service Learning at one or more local organizations working with and on behalf of people with disabilities. I will provide additional information about these Service Learning requirements during class. **All students should understand that these are REQUIRED activities**, not optional ones. A portion of your grade depends on your completion of the required service hours as well as a reflective essay about those experiences.

Grading Procedures and Standards:

Midterm (in class)	20%	200 points	Take 10/9
Disability History Handout	5%	50 points	Due 10/16
Movie Review Essay	15%	150 points	Due 11/4
Disability Activist Bio	15%	150 points	Due 12/9
Final Exam (take home)	30%	300 points	Due 12/16
Service Learning & Essay	15%	150 points	Due 12/19
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	100%	1000 points	

A+ 100% or higher	B- 80-81	D 62-67%
A 92-99%	C+ 78-79%	D- 60-61%
A- 90-91%	C 72-77%	F 59% or lower
B+ 88-89%	C- 70-71	
B 82-87%	D+ 68-69%	

The +/- grading system will be used. *Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for every unexcused day overdue.* Keep all graded assignments so any discrepancies may be easily and fairly straightened out. I reserve the right to add or modify assignments over the course of the semester. There are currently no extra credit assignments for this course. If I decide to add one during the semester it will be equally available to all students.

Student Information

Visit <http://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/syllabus.php> for information on:

- Disability Support Services
- Academic Dishonesty Policy
- Emergency Preparedness
- Student Learning Goals and Outcomes
- Library Resources

Course Communication: I regularly use Titanium to communicate with you about this class, so be sure to check your student email address several times each week. I strive to reply to student queries within two business days. If you phone or email me and do not hear a reply within two business days, please re-send your message.

Technical Support: If you encounter technical problems, contact the student help desk at (657) 278-8888 or email StudentITHelpDesk@fullerton.edu. All CSUF students can also go to the [Student Genius Corner \(SGC\)](#) located in the Titan Lab (PLN- 30) for **walk-in help with technology**. Take advantage if you are having a hard time getting used to the Titanium site or your own software: they are there to help. Also, if you would like the latest version of Microsoft Office 365 or Adobe Creative Cloud, you can get **free access to software programs** through our IT page. Click [here](#) to see the many free software options available for students.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism, and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. Policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced in this class; academic dishonesty of any kind will result in a failing grade on that exam or assignment and a referral to Judicial Affairs. Familiarize yourself with the academic dishonesty policy at <http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/documents/PDF/300/UPS300-021.pdf>.

Office Hours: I encourage you to attend office hours, or to schedule an individual appointment with me if those hours are not compatible with your schedule. I am always happy to talk with you about the course readings, assignments, and broader questions about American Studies and academic life. It is a true pleasure for me to get to know you and your intellectual interests, so please drop by with any questions or to mull over something you've been thinking about.

Further Resources

Writing Center: Located on the first floor of Pollak Library, the Writing Center offers 30-minute, one-on-one peer tutoring sessions and workshops. Registration and appointment schedules are available at the [Writing Center webpage](#) or by calling (657) 278-3650.

University Learning Center (ULC): The ULC provides CSUF students with academic support including assistance with assignments, general study skills, and computer user needs. The ULC offers one-to-one peer tutoring, online writing review, and many more services. More information can be found on the [ULC website](#).

Disability Support Services: If you have a temporary (like a broken ankle) or permanent disability or believe you may have a disability, visit <http://www.fullerton.edu/dss/> for information about access to closer parking, note-takers, and other forms of support.

Counseling & Psychological Services: CSUF students are eligible for **free** counseling (individual, group, or couples), crisis intervention, and wellness programs. Please click here for an appointment if you feel overwhelmed this semester: <http://www.fullerton.edu/caps/>

The WoMen's Center also provides students with a variety of support opportunities for: adult re-entry students, parenting students, LGBTQ students, advocacy for issues of sexual assault,

stalking and domestic violence. Please click here for more information: <http://www.fullerton.edu/womenscenter/>

Tuffy's Basic Needs: If you are facing challenges this semester regarding securing food and/or housing, please go to the Tuffy's Basic Needs office in MH-143 or click here: https://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/tuffys_basic_needs/ In addition to on-campus housing, they offer hygiene products, gently used career clothing, and emergency grants for those who qualify.

Graduate Student Food Pantry was established to address the growing food insecurity problem among CSU grad students. The pantry is available to all graduate students through the Graduate Student Success Center (PLS 365) and offers students the use of a microwave, refrigerator, hot water pot, and coffee maker.

Project Rebound supports formerly incarcerated students and those affected by mass incarceration. You can contact them at <https://www.fullerton.edu/rebound/>

Scholarships of all types and amounts are available to CSUF students. Review the list (<http://www.fullerton.edu/financialaid/general/scholarships.php>) and apply for any and all for which you're eligible. You might not be awarded all of them, or even any of them, but it's worth a try, and you can't win them if you don't apply.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

** All required readings, audio clips, and videos should be completed before Monday's class unless otherwise noted on the syllabus. **

Week 1: August 26 (no class meeting 8/28)

Introduction

Week 2: September 4 (no class 9/2—campus closed for Labor Day)

Read: Panko-Reis, "Straight Talk about Disability"
 Basken, "A Team of Academics Redesigns an Icon"
 Lanier, "The R-word"
 Mairs, "On Being a Cripple"

Week 3: September 9 & 11

Disability in US History, Part I

Read: Nielsen, Introduction, Ch. 1-2

9/9 Guest Speaker: Karina Rodriguez, CSUF Best Buddies

***Monday, 9/9, 5:30-6:30pm:** Best Buddies Informational Meeting (location tbd)

***Tuesday, 9/10, 5:30-6:30pm:** Best Buddies Informational Meeting (location tbd)

***Friday, 9/13, 6 or 6:30pm,** Best Buddies Speed Matching Social (exact time & location tbd)

***Saturday, 9/14, 12-2pm:** Open House, L'Arche Wavecrest (558 N Maplewood St., Orange, CA)

Week 4: September 16 & 18

Disability in US History, Part II

Read: Nielsen, Ch. 3-4

9/16 Guest Speaker: Travis, Case, L'arche Wavecrest

9/18 Guest Speakers: Jacquelyn Gerali & Lori Neill, DSS

Week 5: September 23 & 25

Disability in US History, Part III

Read: Nielsen, Ch. 5-6

9/25 Guest Speaker: Professor Leila Zenderland, American Studies

***Friday, 9/27, 1:15-4pm:** Best Buddies Social (location tbd)

Week 6: September 30 & October 2

Disability in US History, Part IV

Read: Nielsen, Ch. 7-8, Epilogue
“An Overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act”
Mattlin, “An Act that Enabled Acceptance”

Watch: *Lives Worth Living* (2011)

9/30 Guest Speaker: Paula Margesen, Dayle McIntosh Center

Week 7: October 7 & 9

MIDTERM 10/9 (review on Monday, exam in class on Wednesday)

***Saturday, 10/12:** Open House at L’Arche Wavecrest (558 N Maplewood St., Orange, CA)

Week 8: October 14 & 16

Disability in the US Media

Read: Benschhoff, “Cinematic Images of Disability”

Watch: *Cinemability* (2013)

10/14 Disability Exhibit Docent Training (Amanda Pinedo & Ashley Carter, DSS)

DUE 10/16: Disability Awareness Day Handouts

Week 9: October 21 & 23

Culture and Community

Read: Dolnick, “Deafness as Culture”
Straus, “Autism as Culture”

Watch: *Sound & Fury* (2000) [on Titanium]

10/23 DISABILITY AWARENESS DAY ON CAMPUS—we will attend as a class

***Friday, 10/25, 1:15-4pm:** Best Buddies Social (location tbd)

Week 10: October 28 & 30

Disability and Design

Read: Pullin, “fashion meets discretion” and “provocative meets sensitive” in
Design Meets Disability

Crippledscholar, “When Celebrating Accessible Technology is Just
Reinforcing Ableism”

Cataneo, “Needham's Olin School of Eng. reaches out to the elderly”

- Watch:** Aimee Mullins, “My 12 Pairs of Legs” (TED lecture 2009)
 “Nike FLYEASE Story”
- Listen:** “On Average” (*99% Invisible* podcast)
- Bring:** **Representation of Halloween & Disability (on 10/30)**

Week 11: November 4 (*no class 11/6—Professor Lane at American Studies conference*)

Disability and Employment

- Read:** Scheiber, “Fake Cover Letters Expose Discrimination against Disabled”
 Bender, “Paychecks, Not Pity”
 Rich, “Art House”
 Dominus, “Open Office”

- Listen:** “The Hostess with the Toastess” (“This American Life” radio program)

DUE 11/4: Movie Review Essay

Week 12: November 13 (*no class 11/11—campus closed for Veterans Day*)

Disability and Sexuality

- Read:** Appel, “Sex Rights for the Disabled”
 Carlson, “10 Misconceptions about Sex and Disability”
 Diament, “Can Disability be Sexy?”; also view photo gallery
 Engber, “The Strange Case of Anna Stubblefield”

- Watch:** Modesta, “Prototype,” music video

- Listen:** Bartley, “The Italian Stallion,” *The Moth*

Week 13: November 18 & 20

Disability and Family

- Read:** Bertelli & Silverman, eds., *My Baby Rides the Short Bus*, selected chapters
 Frederick, “Mothering while Disabled”
 Hedlin, “Living as a Mom in a Wheelchair”
 Black, “Passing My Disability On”

- Watch:** *Far from the Tree* (2017)

- Listen:** “Wary Home Companions” (“This American Life” radio program)
 “Baby Steps” (“This American Life” radio program)

***Friday, 11/22, 1:15-4pm:** Best Buddies Social (location tbd)

Week 14: November 25**NO CLASS MEETING**—work on your Activist Bios and Service-Learning Essays**Read:** None*** * * FALL BREAK: NO CLASS 11/26-29 * * *****Week 15: December 2 & 4****Disability and Sports****Read:** Hardin, “Disability and Sport”**Watch:** *Murderball* (2005)

“2012 SportsKids of the Year” (short video)

Promo for 2016 Rio Paralympics (short video)

Friday, 12/6, 1:15-4pm:** Best Buddies Social (location tbd)**Week 16: December 9 & 11*Conclusion & Bio Presentations****Read:** *Resistance and Hope: Essays by Disabled People*, excerpts**Listen:** “How to Become Batman” (“Invisibilia” radio program)**DUE 12/9: Disability Activist Bio & Presentations****EXAM WEEK**

- **FINAL EXAM DUE: Monday, 12/16 by 4:30pm** (hard copy to AMST Office in GH-313; upload to Titanium by 11:55pm that same day)
- **SERVICE LEARNING ESSAY DUE: Thursday, 12/19** (upload to Titanium by 11:55pm)

***ADDITIONAL REQUIRED EVENTS:** Events highlighted in gray take place outside scheduled class times but are required Service-Learning activities for this course. Each student is expected to attend at least: 1) one Best Buddies informational meeting (9/9 **or** 9/10); 2) multiple Best Buddies socials (9/13, 9/27, 10/25, 11/22, 12/6); and 3) one L’arche Wavecrest Open House (9/14 **or** 10/12). Each student will also arrange monthly hangouts with their Buddy. Best Buddies will hold optional Mini Socials the weeks of October 7 and November 4 (exact dates and times TBD) that can be used as monthly hangouts.

Please add these events to your calendar now and plan your schedule accordingly. Let me know **immediately** if you need assistance arranging transportation or fitting these events into your schedule. If you already know that it will be difficult or impossible for you to attend all or most of these events, you may want to reconsider whether this course is a good fit for you. I am happy to support and accommodate you however I can, but ultimately it is your responsibility to complete all course requirements, including Service Learning activities.