

Disability: Past and Present

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HNR 232 – Honors team-taught interdisciplinary seminar – 4 hours credit

Instructors: Dr. Carolyn Stuart (Education) and Dr. Mary Jo Festle (History)

Elon University Honors Program

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Course 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 peoples’ experiences with disability in the past and present. Disability can be viewed from a number of lenses, including that of various academic disciplines and a medical, social construction, or minority group perspective. Students will analyze the actions, ideas, and portrayals by cultural authorities and the disabled themselves. They will 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, will be assigned.

Syllabus

Date	Topic
30 Aug	Introduction – what do we know, think, and think and why?
4 Sept	Deafness and Deaf Culture; Social Construction of Disability; Identity Issues <i>Assignment:</i> Dolnick, E. (1993) Deafness as culture. <i>Atlantic Monthly</i> , Sept., 37-51; Wolkomir, R., Johnson, L. (1992). American Sign Language: “It’s not mouth stuff...it’s brain stuff.” <i>Smithsonian</i> , 23 (4),30-41; www.gallaudet.edu
6 Sept	Deaf Culture: Gallaudet Uprising; the “Medical Model” and alternative models <i>Assignment:</i> <i>The Deaf Celebration of Separate Culture</i> , Ch. 3 in <i>No Pity</i> by Joseph Shapiro

11 Sept	Deafness and the Cochlear Implant Debate <i>Assignment:</i> Position Statement, National Association of the Deaf (NAD): http://www.nad.org/site/pp.asp?c=foINKQMBF&b=138140 ; Levy, N.(2002). Reconsidering cochlear implants: The lessons of Martha's Vineyard. <i>Bioethics</i> , 16 (2), 134-153; Sound and Fury (video). Cochlear Implant Paper Due; In-Class debate
13 Sept	Disability and War: Disability in History; Experiences and Changing Treatment of Veterans <i>Assignment:</i> Rosenberg, R.B, " 'Empty Sleeves and Wooden Pegs': Disabled Confederate Veterans in image and Reality," in David A. Gerber, <i>Disabled Veterans in History</i> , pp. 204-223; Gerber, G., "Blind and Enlightened," in P. Longmore and L. Umansky, <i>The New Disability History</i> , Ch. 12; Kovic, R. <i>Born on the Fourth of July</i> , pp.14-44.
18 Sept	Physical Disabilities: Early Activism and the "Poster Child" Phenomenon <i>Assignment:</i> Longmore, Ch. 4, "The League of the Physically Handicapped and the Great Depression," pp. 53-87+ in <i>Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability</i> ; Shapiro, Ch. 1, "Tiny Tims, Supercrrips, and the End of Pity," pp. 12-40, in <i>No Pity</i>
20 Sept	Cultural Portrayal of People with Physical Disabilities: Freak Shows, Films, Stereotypes and the purposes they serve <i>Assignment:</i> Longmore, Ch. 6, "Film Reviews," pp. 119-130, and Ch. 7, "Screening Stereotypes: Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion Pictures," pp. 102-115; Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "The Cultural Work of American Freak Shows, 1835-1940," pp. 55-66 and 78-80, in <i>Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Disability in American Culture and Literature</i> ; http://www.ncdj.org/newsletters/win_03.html#4
25 Sept	Disability Rights and People with Physical Disabilities: Independent Living Movement <i>Assignment:</i> Shapiro, Ch. 2, "From Charity to Independent Living," pp 41-73, from <i>No Pity</i> Short Paper #2 is due today (accessibility evaluation of two public sites or review of two films).
27 Sept	Psychological Coping to a Physical Disability Acquired in Adulthood <i>Assignment:</i> Reynolds Price, <i>A Whole New Life: An Illness and a Healing</i> , pp. 100 – 114 and Ch. 6 & 7, pages 147-193.
2 Oct	Manic Depression (Bipolar Disorder) and Insanity <i>Assignment:</i> Kay Redfield Jamison, <i>An Unquiet Mind</i>
4 Oct	Mental Retardation, Sexuality, Sterilization <i>Assignment:</i> Noll, S. (1995). Feeble-Minded in our Midst. Ch. 4, <i>The Promise of Sterilization</i> (pp. 65-80). Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press; The Arc's policy statement on sexuality, http://www.thearc.org/posits/sexualitypos.doc ; Shapiro, Ch. 10, Crossing the Luck Line, pp. 289-321, in <i>No Pity</i> .
9 Oct	The Eugenics Movement <i>Assignment:</i> Brockley, "Martyred Mothers and Merciful Fathers," Ch. 11 in Longmore and Umansky, <i>The New Disability History: American Perspectives</i> .

11 Oct	Discussion of research project (topics, expectations, stages, etc.) <i>Assignment: The take-home midterm examination on the factors that affected a person's experience with disability is due today.</i>
18 Oct	Autism <i>Assignment: Mark Haddon, <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime</i></i>
23 Oct	Disability Rights – Guest Speaker: Dr. Joy Weeber <i>Assignment: Shapiro, Ch. 8, "Up from the Nursing Home," pp. 237-257, in <i>No Pity</i></i> Research questions are due in class today.
25 Oct	Developing a good Research Strategy Meet in library today
30 Oct	Disability Rights: How much has changed? Americans with Disabilities Act <i>Assignment: Shapiro, "Epilogue: How the Disability Rights Movement is Changing America," pp. 322-332 in <i>No Pity</i>; Longmore, Ch. 1, "Disability Watch," pp. 19-31 in <i>Why I Burned my Book and Other Essays on Disability</i>.</i>
1 Nov	Expectations for a thesis statement and outline <i>Assignment: The bibliography/research strategy assignment is due today.</i>
6 Nov	The <i>Culture</i> of Disability; Rethinking American values <i>Assignment: Doris Zames Fleisher & Frieda Zames, Ch. 12, "Identity and Culture," pp. 200-215 in <i>The Disability Rights Movement</i>; Longmore, Chapter 11: "The Second Phase: From Disability Rights to Disability Culture," pp. 215-224; Ch. 12: "Princeton & Peter Singer," 225-229</i>
8 Nov	Physician-Assisted Suicide; a Disability Issue? <i>Assignment: Read EITHER Longmore, Ch. 9, "The Resistance: The Disability Rights Movement and Assisted Suicide" in <i>Why I Burned my Book</i> OR Shapiro, Ch. 9, "No Less Worthy a Life" in <i>No Pity</i>; read a few websites with positions on assisted suicide. In-class debate.</i>
13 Nov	Individual conferences with students on their thesis/outline <i>Assignment: Thesis statement and outlines are due by 5:00 pm before class meets</i>
15 Nov	Technology: what are the assistive devices <i>Assignment: Shapiro, Ch. 7, The Screaming Neon Wheelchair, pp. 211 – 236 in <i>No Pity</i>; Visit the website CAST at that give hope? What are the drawbacks? What is "universal design"? http://www.cast.org</i>
20 Nov	Peer editing of first drafts Assignment: Two copies of the first draft of the research paper are due in class today.
27 Nov	Popular Culture: Artistry and Communication <i>Assignment: 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.</i>

29 Nov	<p>Field trip to Gateway Education Center in Greensboro</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Visit website at http://schools.gcsnc.com/spages/gateway/gateway_education_center_main.htm</p>
4 Dec	<p>Educational Settings: Is inclusion the best strategy for students with disabilities? What does the law say? Can separate be equal?</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> We will analyze a documentary, <i>Educating Peter</i>, 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.</p>
6 Dec	<p>Final Reflections – What are we taking from this class? How are we different?</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> No readings assigned</p>
11 Dec	<p>Final Exam: Poster Session</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Each student will prepare a poster that summarizes his/her research. See handout for expectations.</p>