Introduction to Gender and Disability

Gender & Women’s Studies 370
Prof. Ellen Samuels
MTWTh 10:00-1:00
Sterling 3425
Summer, 2012
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Phone: 263-2190
Office Hours: T 1-2, Th 1-2, and by appt.

This course examines the social, cultural, political, and symbolic constructions of the intersecting categories of gender and disability. Through a wide variety of texts and cultural examples, we will explore how disability is gendered; gender is disabled; and both are interwoven with issues of race, class, sexuality, and nationality. While a large portion of the class focuses on the experiences of women with disabilities, we will also investigate the intersection of disability and queer/straight masculinities and gender transgression. Disability in this course is defined widely, to include physical, mobility, sensory, learning, and cognitive disabilities, as well as chronic illnesses, cancer, and mental/emotional differences—all the ways in which a person’s body or mind may be perceived and experienced as different from the “norm.”

Required Texts:
Available at A Room of One’s Own bookstore (307 W. Johnson St., 257-7888):

   Eli Clare. *Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation.*


Plus ONE of the following:

   Meri Nana-Ama Danquah. *Willow Weep for Me: A Black Woman’s Journey Through Depression*

   Kenny Fries. *Body, Remember*

   Terry Galloway. *Mean Little deaf Queer*

   Connie Panzarino. *The Me in the Mirror*


   *Mary Herring Wright. *Sounds Like Home: Growing up Black and Deaf in the South.***

   *Not available at Room of One’s Own, but used copies are available online.

All of these books are also on reserve in College Library (Helen C. White).

All other listed course readings are posted on Learn@UW (under “Materials > Content”)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Attendance:** Active and engaged participation is essential for this course, and is not possible without regular attendance. *You will not receive an A in this class if you have more than one (1) absence.*

2. **Participation:** You may earn participation points for coming to class well-prepared, engaging in a lively discussion of class topics, doing in-class writing assignments, responding thoughtfully and generously to your classmates, showing that you have completed all assigned readings, and visiting me in office hours. Participation grades begin at an 85 (B), and can be increased or decreased based on the criteria above.

3. **Discussion Community on Learn@UW:** Post a discussion question or comment on Learn@UW as listed on syllabus, for a total of 5 posts, each worth 20 points. Late postings will receive 10 points.

4. **Memoir Group Presentation:** 15-20 minute presentations by groups of 2-3 students on your assigned memoir, on the dates listed on the syllabus. Presentations combine the biographical, analytical, and/or creative. Further guidelines on presentations will be distributed in class. Each student will also turn in a **one-page paper** summarizing her/his/hir part of the presentation, *due on the day of the presentation.*

5. **Two Response Papers (3-4 pages).** Due July 24 and July 31. Paper prompts and guidelines will be distributed in class.

6. **Final Project:** Due Aug. 9. Guidelines will be distributed in class. *No extensions will be granted on final projects.*

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<th>Grade Breakdown:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance:</td>
<td>A: 93-100</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>AB: 88-92</td>
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<td>Discussion Posts:</td>
<td>B: 83-87</td>
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<td>Presentation:</td>
<td>BC: 78-82</td>
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<td>Response Paper #1</td>
<td>C: 70-77</td>
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COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

1) **Classroom Conduct:** Please respect your fellow students’ right to a quiet and non-distracting learning environment. Cell phones, texting, iPods, and other distractions of modern life are *not* allowed during class. If you use a laptop computer during class, you *may not have a web browser open at any time.* You may be asked to show your screen at any time, and if you are doing anything other than taking notes, your attendance will be zeroed for that day, and you will be banned from using a laptop in class.

2) **Emails and Office Hours:** I will endeavor to respond to emails within 48 hours of receipt. Please do not rely entirely upon email to communicate with me: Emails are fine for short questions, but to discuss papers and exams, it is necessary to meet in person. I welcome you to office hours, and suggest you plan ahead to make appointments before deadlines.
Questions about grades will only be discussed during office hours or appointments, not over email or before/after class.

3) **Late Paper Policy:** Papers turned in late will be penalized by five (5) percentage points for each 24-hour period after the due date. No late papers will be accepted more than one week after the due date.

4) **Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism and Cheating):** This class will strictly follow and enforce the university’s policies on academic misconduct. UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct to include acts in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation. Examples include but are not limited to:
   a. Cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation.
   b. Paraphrasing from the web or written texts without crediting the source.
   c. Using notes in an exam when such use is not allowed.
   d. Using another person’s ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one’s own.

Complete information on academic misconduct is at [www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic_misconduct.html](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic_misconduct.html).

**Writing Center:** For additional help with papers, visit the Writing Center at any stage during the writing process. Stop by 6171 Helen C. White, call for an appointment (263-1992), or consult the center’s resources online at [www.wisc.edu/writing/](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/)

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**Statement on Accessibility:**

It is very important to me to fully include all students with disabilities or learning differences in this course. Please let me know as early in the semester as possible if you need any accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order to enable you to participate fully. The McBurney Center will provide useful assistance and documentation. The syllabus and all course materials are available in large print or electronic formats on request, and will be posted on Learn@UW as well.

**Statement on Grade Appeals:**

If you have questions about a grade, please speak first to me. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Jane Collins, or Associate Chair, Judy Houck. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

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**WEEK ONE: WHY A CLASS ON GENDER AND DISABILITY?**

*Key Concepts: The social model of disability; language and naming; charity vs. rights; disability, feminism, and social justice movements*

**July 17: What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Disability?**

Clare, *Exile and Pride*, pp. 67-101

Susan Wendell, “Who is Disabled? Defining Disability”

Abby Wilkerson, “Slipping”

Film (in class): *When Billy Broke His Head*

**July 18: Disability Activism and Culture**

**Discussion Post 1 due by 8 a.m.:** What kinds of people belong in the category of “disability”? Who decides which bodies and minds are normal: historically, culturally, legally? What words have been used to describe non-normative bodies and minds? What words could we/should we use?

Paul Longmore, “Uncovering the Hidden History of Disabled People”

Dora Zames Fleischer and Frieda Zames, “Identity and Culture,” from *The Disability Rights Movement: From Charity to Confrontation*

Corbett O'Toole, “The Sexist Inheritance of the Disability Rights Movement”

Film (in class): *Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back*

**July 19: Intersections with Feminist, Queer/LGBT, and Social Justice Movements**

**Discussion Post 2 due by 8 a.m.:** How have your other gender and women’s studies classes included or addressed disability? Can you think of disabled feminist or LGBT writers, activists, or researchers? How does disability intersect with other identities and locations to form unique experiences and issues?

Clare, pp. 123-138

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory”

Anita Ghai, “Disabled Women: An Excluded Agenda of Indian Feminism”

Nirmala Erevelles and Alison Kafer, “Committed Critiques”

Simon Chess, et al. “Calling All Restroom Revolutionaries”

Film (in class): *Disabled Women: Visions and Voices* (Beijing, 1995)

**WEEK 2: CRIP LIVES/CRIP LOVES**

*Key Concepts: access and independence; femininity, masculinity, and “rolelessness”; sexuality; the gendered politics of caregiving; bodily transgression/bodily resistance*
July 23: *Meet independently with memoir groups*

July 24: Crippling Sexuality

➤ *Response Paper One due at the beginning of class.*

Clare, 103-122


Riva Lehrer, “Golem Girl Gets Lucky”

Tom Shakespeare, “The Sexual Politics of Disabled Masculinity”

July 25: **Discipline Post 3 due by 8 a.m.: Open Topic**

**Memoir Group One:** Connie Panzarino, *The Me in the Mirror*

Clare, 1-13

July 26: **Memoir Group Two:** Kenny Fries, *Body, Remember*

Fries, poems from *Beauty is a Verb: The New Poetry of Disability*

**WEEK 3: CHALLENGING “NORMAL” BODIES/MINDS**

*Key Concepts:* What is “normal”? What is “natural”?; the medical vs. the social; the personal is political; public and private; the politics of visibility; cure vs. treatment vs. acceptance; bodily and mental diversity

July 30: Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*, pp. 9-54

July 31: ➤ *Response Paper Two due at the beginning of class*

Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*, pp. 55-77

Diane Price Herndl, “Reconstructing the Posthuman Feminist Body”

Aug. 1: **Memoir Group 3:** Meri Nana-Ama Danquah, *Willow Weep for Me*

Susan Gabel, “Depressed and Disabled”

Aug. 2: ➤ *Discussion Post 4 due by 8 a.m.: Open Topic*

**Memoir Group 4:** Dawn Prince-Hughes, *Songs of the Gorilla Nation*

Stuart Murray, excerpt from *Autism*
WEEK 4: VOICE, IDENTITY, POLITICS

Key Concepts: tensions between disability rights and reproductive rights; should disability be prevented whenever possible? deafness/Deafness as disability, culture, language difference?

Aug. 6: Parenting and Reproductive Rights

Discussion Post 5 due by 8 a.m.: Do you see a conflict between the reproductive rights and disability rights movements? How does this debate challenge divisions between personal and political? What is the difference between selective abortion based on disability and selective abortion based on sex?

Anne Finger, excerpt from Past Due: A Story of Disability, Pregnancy, and Birth

Marsha Saxton, “Why Members of the Disability Community Oppose Prenatal Diagnosis and Selective Abortion”

Siobhan Brooks, “Black Feminism in Everyday Life”

Selections from Bigger than the Sky: Disabled Women on Parenting:

Corbett O'Toole, “A Child of Both Countries”

Micheline Mason, “Reclamation”

Jo Litwinowicz, “In My Mind’s Eye”

Jill Daly, “Gonzilla the Ape Woman Gets Angry”

Rosangela Berman Bieler, “The Right to Maternity”

Aug. 7: Memoir Group 5: Mary Herring Wright, Sounds Like Home

Kristen Harmon, “Deaf Matters”

Aug. 8: Memoir Group 6: Terry Galloway, Mean Little deaf Queer

Alison Kafer, “Debating Feminist Futures: Slippery Slopes, Cultural Anxiety, and the Case of the Deaf Lesbians”

Aug. 9: FINAL PAPERS/PROJECTS due at the beginning of class