

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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**Semester:** Spring 2019      **Office:** Texas Center for Disability Studied  
**Meeting Time/Place:** By Appointment      10100 Burnet Rd., Bldg. 137, L4000  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment

## The Social Construction of Disability

### I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will focus on the social and cultural context of disability, with an emphasis on how disability is defined and understood at the micro and macro levels. Attitudes, language, and adjustment theories will be considered from a personalist view. A deep understanding of the longstanding social oppression of the disability community, as well as ways to initiate social change, are integral to the course.

### II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives for this course are as follows:

- Understanding of key theoretical frameworks for and definitions of *disability*.
- Understanding of the role of intersectionality in lived experiences with disability, including how disability intersects with such categories as gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and age.
- Understanding of the historical and cultural context of contemporary disability worlds.

### III. TEACHING METHODS

This class is entirely online and includes no in-person classroom time.

### IV. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

All texts and materials for weekly class assignments will be available online, either via links or as documents available on the course Canvas page. Students will need to access additional sources for their final projects, such as via the University library system or online.

Each weekly module in Canvas will be published for class access on Wednesdays, at which point students can access the materials and prompts for that week. All assignments will be due each Tuesday by 11:59 p.m., which gives students a full week to complete them. Note, however, that students are encouraged to complete assignments in a timely manner and are welcome to submit them at any time during a particular module.

### V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Weekly Assignments:** Students will complete all readings or other assigned materials (including videos or additional topical research) for each weekly session. In addition, students will complete

weekly assignments to demonstrate their understanding of these readings and course materials. Details will be provided each week so that these activities can best address the topics at hand. Most weekly assignments will be writing exercises. Students' weekly grades will also include participation in targeted online discussions about the week's themes. Together, these weekly assignments are critical for developing an understanding of the intersections of disability and gender. **Again, each weekly assignment will be due by Tuesday at 11:59 p.m. at the latest, unless otherwise specified.**

There will be no exams for this class. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the materials and proficiency in the course learning objectives through weekly assignments, as well as through a series of additional progressive assignments (detailed below) culminating in a final research project. Students will receive additional instructions regarding the following assignments:

- **Assignment 1:** Each student will identify a key theme, preferably selected from the weekly class topics, to pursue in their final project. For this assignment, each student will provide a one-page write-up identifying their chosen theme, explaining the rationale for their selection, and brainstorming potential topics of interest. Students will receive written feedback to assist with further developing their final projects.
- **Assignment 2:** Students will build on their first assignment and the feedback received to compile a polished final project proposal, including a literature review. Additional details and instructions to follow. Students will have the option to choose one of two options for their final project: either a traditional academic research paper (4-6 pages for undergraduate students, 5-7 pages for graduate students) OR a series of informational materials, a presentation, or other items that would be useful in an applied work setting. More information will be given regarding these options.
- **Assignment 3:** Final research project. Students will elect to complete either a research paper *or* produce a series of informational materials that could be used for an applied project.

Students grades will be determined based on the following:

- Weekly assignments: 50%\*
- Assignment 1: 10%
- Assignment 2: 10%
- Assignment 3: 30%

\*Weekly grades will be broken down as follows: 40% for the weekly activity (mostly written assignments), and 10% for participation in online discussions.

## VI. GRADES

94.0 and Above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+

74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

## VII. CLASS POLICIES

Late Work: Late work will not be accepted unless extenuating circumstances are a factor (e.g., family emergency, severe illness). Contact the professor for any questions regarding exceptions to this policy. Whenever possible, contact the professor in advance of any anticipated excused late work.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate in any required activities or assignments. Failure to do so will have a negative impact on one's grade. Since this is an online course, student participation will be assessed via weekly assignments and online discussions and, in addition, through the assignments detailed later in this syllabus.

Behavior Expectations: All students are expected to carry themselves in a civil, respectful, and professional manner.

Communication: Students are encouraged to contact the professor with any questions or concerns. Email will be the primary form of communication, and the professor will respond to emails received on weekdays (Monday-Friday) within 24 hours.

Grades: Grades received are final and are not subject to negotiation. There will be no opportunities for extra credit in this course.

The professor reserves the right to make changes to course readings, assignments, and due dates detailed in this syllabus.

## VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE.** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.** The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and

uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

**UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

**POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION.** Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

**POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all

students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

**USE OF COURSE MATERIALS.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

**DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**TITLE IX REPORTING.** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Faculty, instructors, agency-based field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Deputy for the SSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

**CAMPUS CARRY POLICY.** The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

**CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational

supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

**USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

**SAFETY.** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

**BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL).** If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY.** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

## **IX. COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>
Week 1: 01/22-01/29	<b>Mapping the Course</b>	<i>Introductory Writing</i>	None
Week 2: 01/30-02/05	<b>Foundations of Disability Studies</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Shakespeare, T. "The Social Model of Disability"  Adams, R., Reiss, B., and Serlin, D. "Disability"  Goffman, E. "Stigma – Selections"  Love, H. "Stigma"
Week 3: 02/06-02/12	<b>Disability History</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Baynton, D. "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History"  Fries, K. "The Nazis First Victims were Disabled"
Week 4: 02/13-02/19	<b>Disability and Gender</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Hall, K.Q. "Gender"  Garland-Thomson, R. "Feminist Disability Studies"  Garland-Thomson, R. "Becoming Disabled"
Week 5: 02/20-02/26	<b>Disability and Race</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Erevelles, N. "Race"  Erevelles, N. "Thinking with Disability Studies"  Perry, D. "Why America Keeps Criminalizing Autistic Children"
Week 6: 02/27-03/05	<b>Love/Romance/Sex</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	McRuer, R. "Sexuality"  Shildrick, M. "Sex"  Ladau, E. "Playing the Online Dating Game, On Wheels"  Bartlett, J. "Longing for the Male Gaze"
Week 7: 03/06-03/12	<b>Disability Across the Life Course</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Woodward, K. "Aging"  Powell, R. "How We Treat Disabled Mothers"

			Leary, A. "The Importance of Finding Family"
Week 8: 03/27-04/02	<b>Disability and Film</b>	<i>ASSIGNMENT I DUE</i>	TBD: Students will select a film about disability to watch.
Week 9: 04/03-04/09	<b>Disability, Images, and Representation</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Stewart, S. "The Oscars Love Movies About Disability, Not Disabled Actors"  Young, S. "Inspiration Porn and the Objectification of Disability" (Ted Talk)  Wong, A. "Disabled People Still Aren't Being Cast to Tell Their Own Stories in Hollywood"  Toscano, P. "The Myth of Disability 'Sob Stories'"
Week 10: 04/10-04/16	<b>Disability Literature: Memoir and Storytelling</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Couser, G. T. "Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation"  Harris, T. "Two Black Parents of an Undiagnosed Child Walk Into an IEP Meeting"
Week 11: 04/17-04/23	<b>Disability and Digital Worlds</b>	<i>ASSIGNMENT 2: PROJECT PROPOSAL</i>	In-depth study: DisabilityVisibilityProject.com
Week 12: 04/24-04/30	<b>Disability, Culture, and Globalization</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Sohn, E. "Why Autism Seems to Cluster in Some Immigrant Groups"  Sohn, E. "Understanding the History Behind Communities' Vaccine Fears"  Robinson, B. "Unusual Asylum Cases Spark Debate"
Week 13: 05/01-05/07	<b>Disability and Bioethics</b>	<i>Weekly Writing</i>	Landsman, G. "Reconstructing Motherhood in the Age of 'Perfect' Babies"  Field, G. "Should Parents of Children with Severe Disabilities be Allowed to Stop their Growth?"
Week 14: 05/08-05/10	<b>Conclusion</b>	<i>None</i>	Students will use this time to work on their final projects.  <b>FINAL PROJECTS DUE WEDNESDAY, MAY 15 BY 10:00 P.M.</b>



## X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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