Introduction to Disability Studies:
The Social Context of Disability

SW 387R   SW 360K
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Text: You will have readings for the course that will be made available to you by the Texas Center for Disability Studies. They will be uploaded on the Canvas Website. You can either read them on line or print out a copy.

Format: This course will be conducted entirely on the web, using software called Canvas. This software is fully accessible, but if you have difficulty in using a screen reader to access any information on the website, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. As is University policy, if you need any accommodations to successfully complete this course, you must notify the instructor in advance of your needs.

Course Objectives:
The purpose of this course is to introduce psychosocial topics from an empowerment model as they relate to Disability Studies. To that end:

    *The student will learn and critically evaluate current definitions and theories of disability.

    * The student will understand disability as a socially conferred status, not a fixed attribute of the individual.

    *The student will identify how attitudes and beliefs about

individuals with disabilities may impact the personal and social view of disability.

 *The student will identify and discuss some of the issues that influence individuals with specific disabilities.

  *The student will examine the complex interplay of social, political, and economic forces as they relate to disability.

  *The student will examine the impact of cultural values in conceptualizing individual difference.

  *The student will understand the longstanding social oppression of the disability community and consider ways to initiate social change.

Requirements: Since this course is offered for both graduate (SW 387K) and undergraduate (SW 360K) credit, there are different requirements for you, depending on what class you signed up to take. If you are not sure what class you are in, please ask the instructor. Essentially, the graduate students have more reading and writing to do, although the same content will be covered.

This course is designed in a web-based environment that gives us a certain kind of flexibility in creating learning opportunities for you. The course is designed to give you some flexibility in choosing how you best learn, and what topics are of primary interest to you, within a structure. There are 6 lessons in this course (not counting what you will do this week). Each lesson will last about two weeks. There is one "project" that will last one week. At the beginning of each lesson or project, there is a map that will tell you all of the learning activities for that lesson. Some of the activities will be required, and some will be optional. The map will clearly state what you need to do to complete that lesson, but if you have any doubts or concerns or questions, be sure and ask the instructor.

One of the biggest hazards in a distance learning environment is getting behind, and although I do create some flexibility within this course, you must complete your lessons on time! The lessons will be open for a certain time period only, and you must complete the activities within that time period to get credit. If you find yourself getting behind, due to unexpected circumstance or poor planning, let

me know as soon as possible. This is not a course where you can ignore everything til mid term and cram and catch up. The content will be measured out and paced. Before you start, ask yourself whether you are willing to devote time each week to this course, just like you would if you were going to a classroom and sitting down there. You have to make yourself sit down; even though you get to choose the time, you still have to put in the time. If you are self disciplined, and learn best by reading, writing, thinking, and discussing, you will probably love this class. If you don't, you won't, and it's better to know that now than at mid term. **I will not grant any incompletes in this course**; you must keep up with the work.

Each lesson is broken down into learning activities. These are the parts:

The Map

To make sure everyone knows what to expect for any given lesson, there is a map of the tasks and assignments. The map will list the tasks, give you estimated times to complete the task, and give you the number of points you can earn for doing it. You should review the map of every lesson at the beginning, with your day planner, so you can plan when you will work on the class that week. The map will also specify which assignments are REQUIRED and which are optional. Within each lesson you will have options about the activities you engage in to get information. Some activities will be required, and the optional activities will (obviously) be your choice.

The Lesson

This would be the lecture I would deliver if I were standing in front of you in a class. Read it, and imagine me talking to you (it's better if you imagine that I am younger, thinner, and much better looking than I actually am!). You will notice that I pose a lot of questions when I teach; that's just how I teach, and I do that because I want you to think, to stay engaged in the material**. The lessons are always required**, along with the "think" document that you produce with each lesson.

Activities

These will be things I'll ask you to do to support your learning in the class. Most will be required, some will be optional, but you will know each time by looking at the map. These tasks will involve you "doing" something.

Readings

You will have a reading packet for this class of articles, book chapters, etc. I will supply this to you online; you don't have to buy it somewhere. You will write a reaction paper for the items you read. There will be specific instructions for each reading, but in general what you will do is summarize what you have read, and then react to it.

Readings on the Web

I'll also ask you to read documents that are on other websites and react to them. Again, you will have specific instructions for each of those readings, and a link within BlackBoard to get there.

Listen On The Web

These are very fun! These are audio documents, usually from National Public Radio. You need Real Player to listen to them, so you'll want to make sure it's loaded on your computer. You'll have a link to get there, and will summarize and comment on what you hear.

Web Hunt

This activity allows you to review websites. Sometimes you'll review ones I've found, sometimes you'll look for your own.

Discussion Questions

Each lesson we'll have some questions to discuss on the bulletin board. Your participation there will be required, just like class participation. BlackBoard counts the number of times you read and post messages, so I have a numeric gauge of your class participation. As the class progresses, you also may be asked to develop your own discussion questions. This is an important part of our learning. I expect full participation on the discussion board. And yes, you can lose points for not participating.

Quiz

We'll end each lesson with a quiz. The questions will be short answer ones, and you'll have them in advance. This will be a brief way to wrap up a particular lesson.

Project Weeks

There will be some weeks when we forgo new information in order to apply the information you already have learned. During those

weeks, you will have an assignment to help you apply your learning. These will vary, but at least one will require you to watch a movie, and apply some of the concepts we have discussed to it. You will write a paper or answer questions about the assignment in that week.

SUBMITTING WORK
Submit your work to me no later than midnight on the due date, unless you have specifically gotten permission to turn it in late. Your work should all be in one document, saved in Microsoft Word as .doc. If you don't use Word, and can't save as .doc, save as .rtf. If that doesn't make any sense to you, call the ehlp desk and they will explain it to you. Put your NAME in the title of the document so I know it's yours, and for heaven's sake, put your name on the paper at the top. You should make a list of what you are submitting to me, with a point total, and the grade you are hoping to get, on the first page you submit. Please, please, please follow these simple formatting guidelines because it makes my life very difficult when I'm reading lots of papers, and this formatting isn't followed!

GRADES
You will acquire points by doing the tasks associated with each lesson. Each lesson has basic requirements equivalent to the time you would spend in a classroom, plus the time you would normally spend outside the class doing readings or working on papers. Each lesson clearly states how many points you can earn, and what grade you get for that number of points. There are different point requirements for the graduate and undergraduate students. There will be points for doing the project, during the project week. There are no mid terms or finals, only quizzes at the end of each lesson, and activities to do to support your learning. You won't memorize a bunch of stuff in this class; you will read, write, and think. We will be done with all of the work for the course by the last day of class. Everything must be turned in to me by the last class day to get credit for it.

COURSE DROP DATES
January 30, 2014 is the last day to drop and still get a refund, according to the course catalogue. If you start this course and realize that learning on line is not for you, don't hesitate to drop it. It's torture for both of us if you don't. Working like this is not for everyone; if it's not a good match for you, don't force it.

COURSE EVALUATION
The course will be evaluated according to university guidelines. I'll also ask for feedback that you will be able to provide anonymously on the website.