



# TEXAS CENTER *for* DISABILITY STUDIES

## **Introduction to Disability Studies: Making Systems Work for People with Disabilities**

**SW 360K and 387R**

**Fall 2011**

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*Please read through the entire syllabus. The course schedule is provided as well as other important information.*

This course provides an overview of disability policy. Topics include the history of the disability rights movement, relevant federal and state legislation, legal and ethical issues, services and supports through federal and state programs, the political economy of disability, and disability culture, advocacy and leadership issues.

**Text:** You will have readings for the course that will be made available to you through the course web pages. There is no text to purchase.

**Format:** This course will be conducted entirely on the web, using software called Blackboard. This software is fully accessible, but if you have difficulty in using a screen reader to access any information on the website, please contact me 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 the student to the history of the disability movement, and how this movement affected the development of federal and state legislation, legal and ethical decisions, policies, agencies, services, including those delivered through waiver programs. Finally, a discussion of disability culture, advocacy, and leadership, and how these issues aid our understanding of Disability Studies will complete the course. To that end:

- ❖ The student will understand the major events in the history of the disability movement and their relationship to current legislation, policy, legal issues, and service delivery affecting people with disabilities.
- ❖ The student will understand the content and intent of recent legislation and court decisions that affect people with disabilities.
- ❖ The student will identify how attitudes and beliefs about disability may affect the development of legislation, legal decisions, and policies.
- ❖ The student will explore and critically evaluate the complex issues related to the political economy of disability.
- ❖ The student will examine federal and state agencies providing services to people with disabilities and their families.
- ❖ The student will examine the complex process of obtaining needed services through federal and state waiver programs.
- ❖ The student will identify qualities of the disability culture and how it is perceived by mainstream culture.
- ❖ The student will critically evaluate the importance of disability advocacy and leadership, and consider ways to support this movement.

**Requirements:** Since this course is offered for both graduate (SW 387R) 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 me. Essentially, the graduate students have more reading and writing to do, although the same content will be covered.

The 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 primarily designed to give you some flexibility in choosing how you best learn, and what topics are of primary interest to you, within a certain structure. There are six lessons in this course (not counting what you will do this first week). Each lesson lasts for approximately two weeks. At the beginning of each lesson, there is a **Map of the Lesson** 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 the lesson, but if you have any doubts or questions, be sure to ask me.

One of the biggest hazards in a distance learning environment is getting behind, and although I do have some flexibility in 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 until mid term and cram and catch up. The content will be measured out and paced, not crammed. 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 - focus; even though you get to choose the time, you still have to put in the time.

**LEARNING ACTIVITIES** Each lesson is divided into specific learning activities as follows: READ THOROUGHLY!

### **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, identify which are required and which are optional, and give you the number of points you can earn for doing them. 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 be your choice. As you work on the lesson, remember that all of your

responses to the activities must be submitted together in one document on or before the date that the lesson will close. Your document should also tell me how many points you are attempting and what items you are including. Again, submit everything in one document, with your name and the lesson name by uploading it into the grade book.

### **The Lesson**

This would be the lecture I would deliver if I were standing in front of you in a class. Read it, and I hope it will feel like I am talking to you. 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**. You will see a sample in just a minute so that you know what I am talking about.

### **Activities**

These will be things I will 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 in "doing" something.

### **Readings**

You will have a reading packet for this class of articles, book chapters, etc. I will supply this to you so that 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. Although there will be some readings **REQUIRED** for each lesson, you will usually be able to choose which ones you will do. Your written essays should be a well-constructed syntheses of the information presented including your interpretation and ideas. Please use the basic structure of a five paragraph essay. Each paragraph should have a strong topic sentence with 3-4 supporting sentences. While this is not specifically a writing course, good form, grammar and strong writing skills are important.

### **Readings on the Web**

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

### **Listen to This!**

Sometimes I will ask you to listen to something available on the web, and react to what you've heard. These activities are generally

optional because some students have difficulty in downloading a media player to their computers that will allow them to listen to these files.

### **Web Hunt**

This activity allows you to review websites. Sometimes you will review ones I've found; sometimes you'll look for your own [Find your own].

### **In the News!**

I will sometimes ask you to find a recent article from an on-line newspaper or news magazine source. You'll send me the URL for the article and write a brief review discussing the relevance of the article to the topic we are discussing in class.

### **Discussion Questions**

Each week we'll have some questions to discuss on the bulletin board. Your participation there will be **REQUIRED**, just like class participation. This is one area I really encourage you to keep up with and be involved in! The discussions on the course bulletin board are always interesting and it's a great way to get to know the other students in the class, just as you would in a traditional class. It is important that you post early and often. Don't just agree with what someone is saying but say why. This is a really dynamic part of the course and if everyone devotes their time and attention to it, it can be very similar to sitting in class exchanging dialog with peers. Do not wait until the last few days to post. This is a disservice to your classmates and to your ability to really think about the material presented.

### **Ask the Expert**

Sometimes we ask individuals who have disabilities to logon and tell you a little about themselves and their stories. This gives you the opportunity to ask them questions. This is similar to having a 'guest speaker' in class. Everyone in class is **REQUIRED** to ask at least one question of the expert. As you listen to the answer and those of classmates, you write a summary of what you learned from the expert and your classmates. This will be included in your document under the section heading 'Ask the Expert.' Again, don't wait to jump right in and ask questions.

### **Quiz**

We'll end each lesson with a **REQUIRED** 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.

## **GRADES**

You will acquire points by doing the tasks associated with each lesson. Each lesson has basic requirements equivalent to about five hours of work each week, and everybody has to do those things within that week. Then you have the option to add tasks to increase your grade. 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 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 facts for this class; you will read, explore, write, and think.

**INCOMPLETES in this class ARE NOT AN OPTION.** Be sure that you keep up with the work so you won't have problems at the end of the course.

## **COURSE DROP DATES**

Check the official academic calendar for the last date to add/drop a class.

## **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.

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## **SYLLABUS FALL 2011**

### **Syllabus Lesson**

Date August 24 - September 4, 2011

Goals We will go over the information you need to be successful with on-line learning, how to use the Blackboard software, and helpful on-line resources.

### **Lesson 1 History of Disability and the Disability Movement**

Date September 4 - 20, 2011

**Goals** We'll go over the major events that occurred in the disability movement and begin to discuss their impact on legislation, legal rulings, programs and services for people with disabilities. Topics will include disability definitions, perceptions of disability in different times and places; disability in the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries; systems of care of people with disabilities, including focus on institutional placements; models of disability, including pity, charity, empowerment, disability language, person first language and more.

## **Lesson 2 Legal and Ethical Issues**

**Date** September 20 – October 4, 2011

**Goals** We will examine major legal rulings and ethical issues that affect people with disabilities. Legal rulings will include the Olmstead decision, ADA and educational decisions, civil rights, and others. Some of the ethical issues we will consider include assisted suicide, advance directives, educational inclusion, parenting, marriage, medical issues, and others.

## **Lesson 3 Federal and State Legislation**

**Date** October 4 – October 18, 2011

**Goals** We will explore the impact of legislation on the lives of people with disabilities. Federal legislation will include ADA, IDEA, the Rehabilitation Act and others. Specific Texas legislation will also be examined.

## **Lesson 4 Movie Lesson**

**Date** October 18 – November 1, 2011

**Goals** And now for something different! You'll watch a movie and discuss it as one of the primary ways people in the world, average people, learn about disability and disability related issues.

## **Lesson 5 Programs and Services**

**Date** November 1 – November 15, 2011

**Goals** In this section, we will begin to examine the relationship between legislative activity and legal rulings on the

development of policies, programs and services. The process of finding and obtaining services is very difficult. There are numerous agencies, service programs, and federal and state waivers. People with disabilities and families are faced with this maze daily. We will talk about it here.

## **Lesson 6 Political Economy of Disability**

Date November 15 – December 2, 2011

Goals In this section, we will discuss the social and economic aspects of disability, and how this affects the development of programs and services for people with disabilities. We'll talk about how services and programs are developed, who gets the services, and how some of those decisions are made.

**So, let's get started!** Your first task is to learn about the Syllabus, Blackboard and become familiar with its organization and features. We are making sure all works before we get into the content of the course. Click on the [Syllabus Lesson](#) and begin!

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The following are required University of Texas Policy Statements that must be included and provided to you as part of this syllabus:

### **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 in Class**

The professor expects students to act like 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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

### **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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).

### **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). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

### **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, an examination, a work assignment, or a 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.

### **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 to keep the university informed about changes to their 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 <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

### **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 among 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- although this is an online course we are required to advise you of the evacuation procedures**

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 of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered 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're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

### **Use of Blackboard in Class**

In this class the professor uses Blackboard exclusively—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give students online quizzes and surveys. Students can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk

by calling 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Please plan accordingly.

### **Feedback Statement**

During this course the professor will ask students to provide feedback on their learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how the professor's teaching strategies are helping or hindering student learning. It is very important for the professor to know the students' reactions to what is taking place in class, so students are encouraged to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together the professor and students can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.