

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number:	SW 360K/387R18	Instructor:	Dr. Nick Wings-Yanez
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Semester:	Spring 2021	Office:	JJ Pickle Research Campus, 1.156AC
Meeting Time/Place:	online	Office Phone:	512-232-0744
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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.

You are required to attend two online meetups.

In addition, you must schedule a conference time with me (during office hours preferably) for a 20-minute discussion of your goals for this course mid semester and during finals. Further instructions are part of the [Ungrading](#) section.

In order for this course to succeed, we must all make a commitment to honoring the diversity of the human experience and remaining open to the exploration of this diversity. As part of our commitment to cultivating this kind of environment, we bring the following assumptions to the course:

- Students and professors both bring valuable experience, knowledge, and insights, and our learning this semester will be a collective effort.
- We all have areas of knowledge and mastery. Likewise, we all have gaps. Education is the process of filling these gaps, sharing knowledge, and illuminating new insights, connections, and questions.

- Everyone has the right to voice. We ask that you treat one another professionally, but encourage you all to ask questions, interrogate assumptions, and share your knowledge.
 - Critical feedback and evaluation are constructive tools for growth and improvement. Throughout this class, you will be pushed to think deeply and critically about course materials, and to question your assumptions. This is all part of the learning process.
 - It is accepted as a given in this course that discrimination, oppression, and marginalization are part of our society. This includes ableism, sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of intolerance. We will not tolerate their expression (in any form) in this course. We will, however, invite these issues into our dialogue for critique and exploration.
- (adapted from Dr. Ben Anderson-Nathe)

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 lesson. Each Module is two weeks long. All assignments will be due Tuesday by 11:59 p.m., which gives students two full weeks 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

Because this course is designed in a web-based environment, that gives us a certain kind of flexibility in creating learning opportunities for students.

Critical Thinking: Disability studies is the study of how disability interacts with society, economics, history, politics, and other areas. Disability as an identity and an experience is integral to any discussion of -isms (eg. Racism, heterosexism, classism, etc.). I do not want any work in this course to be busy work. My goal is for students to unpack preconceived notions, biases, and unlearn a lot of misinformation AND THEN figure out how to apply this new information or way of thinking to life; this application can mean professionally or personally or both.

To This End: Ungrading. What is this? Grading every student on a Universal Standard (traditional grading) does not work and is contrary to Critical Disability Studies. Every student engages with material differently. The multidimensional experience of learning requires not a standard rubric, but a discussion – but how to do this? Well, I will give students some assignments during the first couple of weeks and provide a very general rubric of what I’m looking for. Then, students will begin to assess themselves. For each assignment, I will provide a lot of feedback versus a grade. Why? Because generally, once students see their grade, they abandon the feedback– but the feedback is the most important part!

I expect students to engage a lot with each other through Slack and Canvas. Again, the most important facet of this process is the feedback and interaction with the materials and your peers.

The work and effort you choose to put in leads to the grade you choose. This also demands mutual trust with your peers, me, and yourself. The grade you are assigning yourself is what you feel you have put into the work and the course overall.

At the end of the course, you will write up a paper, do a podcast, create a video – create a final product that discusses what you got out of this course and **how you can take this material with you in the future** – whether it be the actual material OR how to talk with someone about a very delicate subject (like disability, religion, politics). Each student, in this product, will also provide the grade they believe they should get based on their interaction with the course*.

*I reserve the right to change any grade a student gives themselves. Students may feel uncomfortable with this process, so this is why I am the backup.

Assignments: Students will complete all readings or other assigned materials (including videos or additional topical research) for each lesson. In addition, students will complete assignments to demonstrate their understanding of these readings and course materials. Details will be provided each lesson so that these activities can best address the topics at hand. There are assignments in Canvas AND outside Canvas.

Canvas Assignments

Student Conferences

At midsemester and during finals, I will meet 1:1 with students to discuss your progress towards your chosen course goals as well as your overall feedback about the course. A sign-up sheet will be provided in the Announcements section of Canvas as well as in the module the week before meetings take place (on zoom).

Privilege Pie

See Canvas for directions. Each student will post a short video describing their own personal privilege pie. Module 1 and Final Module.

Course Goals

In Module 1, all students will identify why they are taking this particular course. From this, students will then create an outline of their unique course goals for this course and how they plan to achieve those goals. A specific grade can be one goal, but please choose an overarching framework; for example, what about this course specifically is useful to either your discipline or your life? What would you like to achieve by the end of the semester outside of a specific letter grade? We will review this outline at our midsemester and final conferences.

Discussion Boards: This is where students will interact with the whole class to answer a specific prompt or question related to lesson materials.

- Your post must be at least 2 paragraphs AND add something new to the discussion. Alternately, students can post an audio/video that is at least two minutes long.
- You must respond to at least one other student (if you are the first to post, ask some questions of your peers regarding the topic). This can also be an audio/video.
- These discussion posts substitute in-class discussions. Respond to one another, comment, and respectfully and thoughtfully counterpoint. I do read all posts. At times, I will respond and comment as well. However, I try not to interrupt the flow of the conversation between students.

Reflection Product: At the end of each module, students will write a paper or create a video reflecting on the materials AND assignments from the module. What was new? What was surprising? What was uncomfortable? How was the group interaction? At the end of each paper/video, tell me what grade you think you earned for that module.

Final Project: Each student will write up a paper, create a podcast, create a video – a product that you create about your overall takeaways from this course, the learning process, the self-assessment process, and how to apply the material/skills gained from this class to your profession or your personal life (if you are not yet sure of your profession).

Questions to consider:

1. What was most useful in this class?
2. What was the process of ungrading like?
3. How do you feel about engaging in discussions about disability/sexuality with others?
4. What is something you learned? What surprised you?
5. How is this material useful to you?
6. **REQUIRED** – what grade do you give yourself and why?

EXTRA CREDIT: An extra 1 point (to be attributed to Final Grade) is possible for completing the TCDS survey posted at the beginning and end of the semester in the announcement section of Canvas.

GRAD STUDENTS ONLY

Do/Review/Redo**

Each module, there will be an opportunity to review and redo and expand on the initial assignment from Module 1 asking about the social construction of disability. Each time you update the piece based on information from modules after module 1, you keep the previous work, but expand the essay (or outline if you are doing a video or podcast) to be more inclusive, more intersectional, a deeper dive into what social construction of disability is according to you while specifying the essay to your stated goals for this course. This is an additional assignment only for grad students. There are set times to turn in an essay and then these will be peer reviewed and redone with feedback taken into account. These essays should relate to your specific course goals.

Example:

Do/Review/Redo

Your choice to write an essay, create a video, create a podcast (other approved product; I've had students create zines, for example).

The first essay should answer the question posed in Module 1. Your stated goals for this course should be listed at the top of your product in order to keep you focused (similar to a research question). For each review/redo, add in material from the new modules covered as it fits with your final product goal. List references and use APA formatting. Are you analyzing a specific story or topic? How are you formulating this piece?

For a podcast or video, outline the main points, are you talking with anyone else?, are you presenting a story and dissecting it using information from this course?, etc.

- what materials are you using as references? List these in APA formatting.
- what points are you most interested in conveying? List these.

**The final product of the Do/Review/Redo will culminate into your final project with these 6 questions below added into the conclusion

Final Project:

6 Questions to consider:

1. What was most useful in this class?
2. What was the process of ungrading like?
3. How do you feel about engaging in discussions about disability/sexuality with others?
4. What is something you learned? What surprised you?
5. How is this material useful to you?
6. **REQUIRED** – what grade do you give yourself and why?

Other Assignments – NOT on Canvas

Slack:

Join: https://join.slack.com/t/socialconstru-e0f1607/shared_invite/zt-kh46t34m-0UdytiDwIgfIf41Nn26~LQ

You will need to join Slack (app) to have additional group discussions; these discussions are in addition to your Canvas discussions and self-assessments.

Guidance for SLACK:

- Each student will be part of the same SLACK group for the entire semester.
- Use your group to support you for your do/review/redo process.

- Each group needs to provide at least one new outside resource (twitter thread, film, TV show, news article, etc.) **PER MODULE** related to the current module to your group and engage in a conversation about that resource (*e.g.: ask questions to your group members about the resource; state what is most interesting or relevant; connect it to current course topic; etc*) – your group decides how to delegate whose turn it is to find a new resource during the first two weeks of class.
- You should post at least twice per module (every two weeks). A “post” is at least 50 words. A post should meaningfully move the conversation forward or dive deeper into the material(s).

Meetups: We will have meetups for students to have time to engage in real time with me and with each other. These meetups will be in the form of trivia (in teams) or café conversations. I will post these meetups for students in Canvas with links to attend. **You must attend at least two throughout the semester.** This will be reflected in your ungrading rubric for the end of the course.

- Dates for Meetups (Link to access will be in the module corresponding to the date of the meetup. Meetups will be on Fridays.)

There will be no exams for this class. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the materials and proficiency in the course learning objectives through lesson assignments. I will often ask you to synthesize information from previous lessons in order to build upon what you’ve already learned.

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: Whenever possible, contact the professor in advance of any anticipated late work. Discussion posts can only occur during the week assigned since class interaction is part of the grade.

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 assignments, online discussions, and the required two online meetups.

Behavior Expectations: All students are expected to carry themselves in a 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 36 hours.

Grades: Grades received are final and are not subject to negotiation. **An extra 1 point** is possible for the final grade by completing both surveys (beginning and end of semester) for TCDS (these will be in announcements).

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

VIII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: <https://protect.utexas.edu/>

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.

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/>.

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 race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism,

heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. 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 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) 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: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>.

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.

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://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

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 on the basis of sex <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>. Faculty, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, dating violence, or any other forms of sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Further

information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <https://titleix.utexas.edu/>.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University’s policy on concealed firearms 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.

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 have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. 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 <https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line>.

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.

GRADING SCALE

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

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Module	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings Due
Lesson 1			
Week 1:	Mapping the Course	<i>Privilege Pie</i>	Intersectionality APA Style Guide: Bias Free Language Ungrading essays
Week 2:	Discourse	<i>Course Goals</i> <i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Slack</i> <i>Do/Review/Redo (grad only)</i> <i>Reflection Product</i>	McRuer, R. & Johnson, M.L. (2014). Proliferating cripistemologies: A virtual roundtable. <i>Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies</i> 8(2), 149-169.
Lesson 2			
Week 3	The Myth of Disability as a Stable Concept	<i>Discussion Post</i>	Samuels, E. (2014). <i>Fantasies of identification: Disability, gender, race</i> . New York University Press. (Ch. 1 & 6).
Week 4	The Myth of Disability as Stable	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Slack</i> <i>Reflection Product</i>	Price, M. (2014). The bodymind problem and the possibilities of pain. <i>Hypatia</i> . Weijun Wang, E. (2019). <i>The collected schizophrenias: Essays</i> . Graywolf Press. (Ch. 1: Diagnosis)

			Disability Visibility Podcast: Ep. 43: Disabled “Fakers”
Lesson 3			
Week 5	Cure/Violence	<i>Discussion Post</i>	Eli Clare – Brilliant Imperfections TBD – excerpts from Curative Violence – Eunjung Kim
Week 6	Cure/Violence	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Slack</i> <i>Do/Review/Redo (grad only)</i> <i>Reflection Product</i>	Medical Industrial Complex by Mia Mingus Radical Disability Allyship, Mad Activism, and Black Mental Health Illness by: Noah Gilman Disabled People Don’t Need to Be “Fixed” – We Need a Cure for Ableism by Wendy Lu
Lesson 4			
Week 7	COVID and Disability	<i>Discussion Post</i>	Winges-Yanez, N. (2020). Disability should not invalidate a person’s worthiness. Disability Visibility Podcast: Ep. 94: Healthcare Rationing
Week 8	COVID and Disability	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Slack</i> <i>Reflection Product</i>	ADA 30: No Justice for Disabled Native People
Module 5			

Week 9	Spring Break		
Week10	Disability Culture	<p><i>Discussion Post</i></p> <p><i>Slack</i></p> <p><i>Do/Review/Read (grad only)</i></p> <p><i>Reflection Product</i></p>	<p>How Do We Know What We Know? By Cecil Leigh Wilson</p> <p>Disability Justice, Disability Art Laura Flanders Podcast</p> <p>Finding Dory, Disability Culture, and Collective Access by: Alice Wong</p>
Module 6			
Week 11	Disability Images/Media	<i>Discussion post</i>	<p>Young, S. “Inspiration Porn and the Objectification of Disability” (Ted Talk)</p> <p>Wong, A. “Disabled People Still Aren’t Being Cast to Tell Their Own Stories in Hollywood”</p>
Week 12	Disability Discourse (present)		<p>Unspeakable Conversations [discourse prevalent in academic conversations]</p> <p>Couser, G. T. “Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation”</p> <p>· Nurturing Black Disabled Joy [disability discourse]</p>
Lesson 7			
Week 13	Disability experience	<i>Discussion Posts</i>	Disability Visibility Podcast: Ep. 48: Care Work

Week 14	Disability experience	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Slack</i> <i>Do/Review/Redo (grad only)</i> <i>Reflection Product</i>	Disability Visibility Podcast: Ep. 90: Disabled Immigrants
Lesson 8			
Week 15	Future	<i>Discussion Post</i>	Kafer, A. (2012). Accessible futures, future coalitions. Futurity
Final week	Conclusion	<i>Final Reflection</i> <i>Final Redo (Grad Only)</i>	Students will use this time to turn in any late work

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