

**William Paterson University**  
**College of Education**  
**Department of Special Education and Counseling**

**DIS1010 Rethinking (dis)Ability**  
**Winter Semester 2015/2016**  
**Credit: Three Semester Hours**

*Preparing Inquiring Educators for Diverse Settings: Developing Knowledge, Application, Dispositions*

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**Course Description:**

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and the effects of a disability will likely impact every person across their lifespan. This course will provide a basic understanding of disability as a social construct and influence students' perceptions of the experience of living with a disability in today's society. Students will explore myths and stigmas about disability as well as issues of access and accommodations within multiple environments. This course is for students with and without disabilities, and may be of special interest to students exploring careers in education, public policy and government, sociology, psychology, technology and health professions.

**Suggested Texts:**

No text is required. Readings will be provided within the courseroom.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Through journal writing and self- analysis, students will identify and evaluate their current perceptions of individuals with disabilities and identify how those perceptions have been influenced and formed.
2. Students will use case studies and reflective writing exercises to examine the political, social, and economic forces that have shaped this country's dominant understanding of disability, and how they are changing through activism.
3. Students will develop a plan that demonstrates an understanding of the need to develop accommodations for individuals with disabilities across several contexts and settings.
4. Students will identify and discuss issues the disability rights movement and issues of self-advocacy for individuals with disabilities, how they have changed over time, and identify and write about issues that should change in the future.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe how individuals achieve physical, emotional, ethical, social, and/or financial well-being. (Meets UCC Program Outcomes 1, 3, 6, 7)
2. Identify barriers to physical, emotional, social, and/or financial well-being. (Meets UCC Program Outcomes 3, 6, and 7)
3. Develop, implement, and evaluate a personal plan that will enable the individual to progress towards achieving physical, emotional, ethical, academic, and/or financial goals. (Meets UCC Program Outcomes 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7)
4. Explain how an individual's well-being interacts with the physical, social, cultural, and/or economic environment. (Meets UCC Program Outcomes 1, 3, 6, and 7)

## **Topical Outline for Course Content**

### What is Disability Studies?

- Definitions of Disability
- Disability vs. impairment vs. handicap
- Who is disabled in our society?
- Medical vs. social view of disability

### Disability Across the Lifespan

- Disability at birth
- Developmental disabilities
- Trauma and acquired disabilities
- Learning and intellectual disabilities in school
- Aging and disabilities

### How Individual Perceptions of Disabilities are formed

- Media representation
- Personal experiences
- Community involvement
- Inclusive practices in schools

### Exclusion vs. Inclusion

- School experiences for students with disabilities
- Community living and involvement
- Employment issues
- Sexuality and family life issues

### Disability Culture

- Global / cultural perceptions of disability over time
- Changes in disability culture
- Deaf Culture
- Self-advocacy and social change

## **Course Requirements:**

***FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS: LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.*** If there is some reason

that you will not be able to turn in an assignment on time, please speak to me ahead of time. In addition, the general presentation of your papers is important. Misspellings and grammatical mistakes will affect your grade. I strongly suggest that you proofread assignments before turning them in. All assignments must be typed and double spaced.

This course is an online course and all the work will be online. It is your responsibility to keep up with the readings and with the discussions. It is suggested that you log on at least once a day to make sure you do not get behind. You are responsible for all due dates and times as listed in the syllabus and in the individual discussion forums.

- 1. Class participation in BlackBoard discussions:** BlackBoard discussions will include reflections, case studies, and responses to the readings and material. All directions and deadlines will be provided within the forum.
- 2. Personal Journal:** Students will keep a personal journal reflecting on their experiences throughout the semester. Prompts will be provided based on readings and activities.
- 3. Personal Plan to become a Disability Advocate:** You will write a 5-8 page paper identifying what aspect of disability advocacy you are interested in, and your personal plan to make a difference. The format for the paper is:

**Part 1 -Introduction (1-2 pages)**

Identify the topic and write about how it impacts you as an individual, your family, your friends or your community.

**Part 2 - Current Status (1–2 pages)**

Research and report on advocacy activities that are all already occurring to raise awareness of this issue. Write about the research that is happening and the awareness activities that are happening both globally and locally. How have these research activities and awareness activities changed over the years?

**Part 3 -Personal Plan (2-3)**

Identify what activities you would like to participate in, and why you chose those specific activities. What has drawn you to these activities and how do you expect it to change your personal beliefs (or how has it changed you if you have already done of these activities) about individuals with disabilities? What societal change do you think you can make by participating?

**Part 4- Ideas for the future (1-2 pages)**

In your opinion, what else can be done? What other advocacy can and should be done in this area? What does society as a whole need to do to make this better for people?

**Grading:**

- 1. BlackBoard discussions:** 50 points
- 2. Personal journal:** 20 points
- 3. Individual Plan:** 30 points

A = 100-95  
A- = 94-90  
B+ = 89-87  
B = 86-83  
B- = 82-80  
C+ = 79-77  
C = 76-74

## **Bibliography:**

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- Shapiro, J.P. (1994). *No pity: People with disabilities forging a new civil rights movement*. New York, NY: Three Rivers.
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- Valle, J. & Conno, D. (2010). *Rethinking disability: A disability studies approach to inclusive practices*. Columbus, OH: McGraw- Hill.

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