

# Disability Studies @ King's

Vision: Making the world a more inclusive place for disability

Mission: Changing how students imagine disability through crafting an engaging and innovative education that empowers leaders who are both motivated and able to facilitate systemic change.

## Prioritizing students' experiences, needs and goals

Recognizing and valuing the insights, experiences and incipient curiosity that students bring to the classroom. Building in activities and assignments to explore their experiences through course concepts.

Combining student insights with competent knowledge of the field to cultivate their academic consciousness.

Taking student interests, level and future needs, into account in planning a rigorous and innovative curriculum that develops key contemporary skills.

## Cultivating a constructive orientation to ableism

Being constructive in how we analyze, respond to, and diminish the effects of ableism.

Developing curricula that takes seriously the project of making disabled lives better through a praxis orientation to disabling processes.

Exploring DS-based micro- and macro-solutions and existing best practices.

## Disrupting meanings of disability & impairment

Contesting common cultural understandings of impairment and disability.

Reimagining disability as difference, capacity or gift instead of as deficit, dysfunction, or problem.

Unsettling the pervasive tendency to medicalize and 'fix' disabled people in order to prioritize changing disabling attitudes, policies, and structures.

## Valuing diverse positions, people and ideas

Elevating the voices & texts of disabled people and their allies. This includes the full range of perspectives that may or may not cohere with common DS theories.

Welcoming students with diverse disciplinary & demographic backgrounds into the conversation about disability, impairment & ableism.

Promoting a culture that values diverse perspectives through multiple theoretical schools of thought and practical approaches.



# KING'S

Western University

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## Our Distinct Pedagogy

Our DS program employs a distinct pedagogical approach, that responds to both the interdisciplinary nature of DS and the diversity of disability and impairment experiences. People with disability labels share some common ground but also have quite distinct support needs, politics, and intersecting identities. Our pedagogical approach is designed to revel in this diversity.

- ✓ **Plurality of ideas:** Our DS program makes space to start and sustain conversations with students about ideas and phenomena including some that may be controversial. The role of the Professors is not to dictate answers but to support students to learn diverse analytical frameworks. We encourage bringing DS theory into conversation with contrary world-views, not to judge right and wrong, but to apply a DS lens as an alternative to mainstream perspectives.
- ✓ **Inquiry-based learning:** Emphasis on learning research, analysis and communication skills versus 'one right answer'; prioritize opportunities for student engagement in shaping and directing their studies.
- ✓ **Praxis opportunities:** All DS classes include engaged active learning opportunities for students to apply DS course concepts for analyses that lead to the creation of DS alternatives in formats ranging from case studies to field trips, reports to representations, policies to plans.
- ✓ **Flexible Learning Design:** DS Professors believe that students should have an equitable playing field. We strive to integrate adaptable learning options into our assignment instructions, offering multimodal course materials and assessments that are flexible and accessible for all students.