



**Disability Studies 1010A (670)
Exploring Disability
Fall/Winter 2025-2026**

Instructor: Dr. Billie Anderson
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

Explores provocative ethical and practical Disability Studies topics using a Liberal Arts framework. Students actively engage both sides of cases with legal, medical, and recreational significance. Examines how disability, mental health and neuro-diversity intersect with modern culture and social institutions.

Prerequisite(s):

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: DISABST

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course, or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Exploring Disability Disability Studies 1010A 670

Instructor: Dr. Billie Anderson (bander49@uwo.ca)

Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00, online

Lectures: Asynchronous online

Academic Calendar Description

Explores provocative ethical and practical Disability Studies topics using a Liberal Arts framework. Students actively engage both sides of cases with legal, medical, and recreational significance. Examines how disability, mental health and neurodiversity intersect with modern culture and social institutions.

Antirequisite(s): The former Interdisciplinary Studies 1010 A/B

Prerequisite(s): n/a

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours, 0.5 course. (King's) Entry course for DS Minor

Module: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/disability-studies/> but open to non-module students.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Scheme

As a non-essay course, written work is < 2500 words.

Concept-in-the-Wild	20
Annotated Readings	20
Midterm	30
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>30</u>
Total	100

Course Texts

All required readings will be available free via the online Course Readings tabs on Brightspace.

Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will explore and critically examine frameworks that deepen our understanding of disability as a socio-cultural, economic, and political construct, and recognize its relevance to all aspects of our lives. Success in this class is defined by students achieving the following outcomes:

- **Challenge Conventional Views:** Understand and question the common perception of disability as merely a personal tragedy or a deficit to overcome.
- **Connect Disability to Broader Issues:** Identify the links between disability-related concerns and wider social issues.
- **Engage Respectfully:** Develop the ability to discuss disability and respectfully interact with disabled people, avoiding inadvertent offence.

- **Enhance Everyday Interactions:** Feel equipped to engage meaningfully with disabled people in daily life.
- **Integrate Disability Studies:** Gain an understanding of Disability Studies and how it offers diverse perspectives on disability.
- **Recognize Individual Identity:** Appreciate that disability does not define a person but can uniquely influence their experiences.

The primary aim of this course is to immerse students in the dynamic and often contentious debates within Disability Studies and teach them to apply a Disability Studies perspective to contemporary discussions. While many debates in this field are longstanding, their relevance extends beyond disability issues to broader societal concerns, such as:

- **Value of Life:** Who deserves to live and what are we willing to invest in their well-being?
- **Legitimacy in Advocacy:** Who has the authority to speak on disability issues?
- **Concepts of Suffering and a ‘Good Life’:** How are these defined and how do they vary across individuals and cultures?
- **Norms and Acceptability:** What defines ‘normal’ or acceptable, and who determines these standards—parents, children, or society at large?
- **Role of Health and Recreation:** What role do health, recreation, and sport play in well-being and rehabilitation?
- **Specialized vs. Inclusive Options:** How do we weigh the benefits of specialized and segregated versus inclusive and adapted approaches?
- **Government Involvement:** To what extent should governments support or regulate individuals’ lives?
- **Inclusion and Exclusion:** What does it mean to be included or excluded, and what forms can inclusion take?
- **Balance of Care and Control:** How do we find a balance between providing care and exercising control?

These questions are often reshaped by technological and medical advancements, and the answers change day-to-day, scholar-to-scholar, or person-to-person. The goal of this course is not to resolve these issues but to demonstrate their significance in public discourse, highlighting that disability is not just a problem to be fixed but a complex experience that transcends mere biological differences.

Course Outline

Week	Theme	Reading
1 May 4	Introduction to Disability Studies	Mallet and Runswick-Cole – Approaching Disability
2 May 11	Core DS Perspectives	Roehner – Perspectives on Disability Linton – DS/Not DS
May 15	Midterm	
3 May 18	Case 1: D/deafness	Sparrow – Implants and Ethnocide
4	Case 2: Bioethics	Jones – The Perfect Baby

May 25		
5 June 1	Case 3: Charity Model	Shakespeare – Cultural Representations of Disabled People
6 June 8	Case 4: Mental Health	Menzies et al. - Introducing Mad Studies
June 12	Final Exam	

Course Assessments

To support different schedules and working styles, most assignments in this course do not have fixed weekly deadlines. Instead, work must be completed within the following milestones:

Before the Midterm:

- 2 Concept-in-the-Wild submissions
- 1 Annotated Reading

Before the Final:

- 2 Concept-in-the-Wild submissions
- 1 Annotated Reading

All course work must be submitted by Friday, June 12 at 11:59pm.

Concept-in-the-Wild (20%)

Due: May 17, June 12

Across the term, students will complete **four “Concept-in-the-Wild” submissions**. For this assignment, you will identify a real-world example (e.g., social media post, advertisement, news story, everyday interaction) that engages with disability. You will then briefly explain how a course concept or framework is visible in that example in no more than 250 words.

Submissions should be concise and focused, using specific details rather than general summaries. The goal is not to find a “perfect” example, but to practice noticing how disability is represented and understood in everyday life. This assignment emphasizes observation, application, and interpretation over correctness.

Annotated Readings (20%)

Due: May 17, June 12

Students will complete **two annotated readings** over the course of the term. For each, you will engage directly with a course text by highlighting key passages and adding comments that demonstrate your thinking.

Your annotations should go beyond summary and include:

- identifying key concepts or arguments
- asking questions or noting confusion
- making connections to course themes or real-world examples
- responding critically to the text

The goal of this assignment is to slow down the reading process and practice engaging with ideas as they develop, rather than only focusing on final conclusions.

Midterm (30%)

Due: May 17

The midterm is designed as an early check-in to ensure that you are keeping up with foundational course material. It will focus on key concepts, definitions, and frameworks introduced in the first two weeks of the course.

The format will include primarily multiple-choice questions, along with a small number of short-answer responses. You will be expected to:

- demonstrate understanding of core Disability Studies concepts and perspectives
- accurately use key terms and definitions
- show familiarity with course readings and lecture material

This assessment is less about complex analysis and more about building a strong foundation for the rest of the course. Staying engaged with early course material will make later assignments significantly easier.

Final Exam (30%)

Due: June 23

The final assessment is cumulative and will ask you to synthesize ideas from across the course. You will analyze one or more case studies using multiple Disability Studies frameworks and demonstrate your ability to connect concepts across different weeks.

You will be expected to:

- draw on multiple course readings and concepts
- demonstrate clear, structured analysis
- engage thoughtfully with the tensions and debates explored in the course

This assessment emphasizes synthesis, clarity, and the ability to apply course concepts in a sustained way.

Other notes on the course.

What goals do I care about most?

1. Intense thinking. I will regularly ask questions to which I do not have “the” answer. My job is not to fill you with information nor to train you like a lab animal. Expect open-ended, improvisational conversations that leave room for everyone to learn and grow.
2. Personal maturation. I want every student to leave my courses a little wiser—and wisdom involves action, not just theory. I want you to want to be a better version of yourself: more generous with others, better able to endure hardship, more determined to live with integrity.
3. Genuine community. This does not mean warm fuzzies, nor does it require wholesale agreement. It does mean building trust, pushing beyond superficial identities toward real understanding, and authentic curiosity about others’ lives.

What priorities will make these things possible?

1. Regular presence. Rather than rules about the number of classes missed or the use of electronic devices, I will just say this: I want you to *want* to be present—wholeheartedly—as much as possible. When we recognize barriers to that, let’s figure out how to overcome them. If you start missing too many classes, though, I’ll want to talk about alternate routes.
2. Productive disagreement. I’m not here to clone myself, and none of us should be here to “win” arguments. We’ll talk regularly about controversial topics, and we’ll get better at being frank but not blunt, tactful but not wishy-washy. Our culture needs more gracious candour.
3. Process above outcomes. Grades matter, but how you get them matters more. Think back across the best classes you’ve ever taken. What memories made them special? It’s not the

label that the registrar puts on your transcript, but the stories that you, your peers, and your faculty can tell.

What can you count on from me?

1. Availability and responsiveness. In some ways, tuition is like a gym membership. My job is to make regular spaces ready for you to grow, both in classes and during office hours, and your job is to take advantage of them—and not just when deadlines are approaching!
2. Honest, encouraging feedback. A good coach both competes alongside you and holds you accountable concerning the steps required by your goals. A grade reflects your work's status relative to peer benchmarks, but what matters most is your growth across our weeks together.
3. Fairness and consistency. I will assign grades with an eye to all concerned, including peers past and present, and will discuss them as desired.

Things to consider as a member of this class:

Nothing about us without us: to understand disability is to understand the perspectives of disabled people.

Our classroom (and its online manifestations) is a disability-forward space: differences are the norm, not the exception. We will learn with and from disability. But disability encompasses many different things, some of them contradictory.

More than one thing can be true: cultural analysis only works if it is possible to hold onto apparently contradictory ideas at once and explain how they can both be true in specific circumstances.

You have the right to be wrong: part of learning is changing one's own perspective. This is only possible where ideas can be expressed and challenged, and people are allowed to change their minds. But: no "devil's advocates" will be allowed.

It is everyone's job to imagine a better world: any critique of how something is raises the question of how it ought to be. You will be asked to think carefully and imaginatively about alternatives to the way things are.

Follow the golden rule: treat others as you would want to be treated.

Course Policies/Etiquette

Course AI Policy

Within this course, the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is **not permitted** for work submitted for evaluation. All submitted work must reflect your own thinking and engagement with course material. Unauthorized use of AI will be treated as a violation of academic integrity.

I will not be using AI-detection tools, as they are often inaccurate and can unfairly penalize original work. I will assess submissions based on familiarity with student writing, course

engagement, and consistency of thought. If I have concerns that a submission does not reflect your own work, **the assignment will receive a grade of zero**, and you will be required to meet with me to discuss it. After this meeting, you may be permitted to resubmit the assignment as original work. If concerns about AI use arise again in a subsequent submission, the assignment will receive a permanent zero. Repeated concerns (more than two instances) will be referred to the appropriate academic integrity office for further review.

This policy is in place to ensure fairness for all students and to respect the time and effort that genuine engagement with the course requires.

Universal/Resonant Design

My courses are intentionally designed to be modular and flexible and to address different learning styles and needs. Nevertheless, aspects of this syllabus—requirements, expectations, etc.—may conflict with your access needs. I can be flexible if you come to me within the first two weeks of class to discuss your access needs. Note that some accommodation requests could potentially conflict with others' access needs (or mine), and/or the pedagogical goals of the course, in which case they might need to be negotiated.

Etiquette:

1. I expect you to really try (which means it's also okay to fail).
2. Good faith and good humour toward your colleagues in the classroom. For both: disagreements are expected and encouraged, but please keep nitpicking to a minimum; personal attacks and intimidation are not acceptable under any circumstances. Follow the Golden Rule. Encourage basic questions as well as advanced ones.
3. Your job as a participant is to listen actively to what others have to say and advance the discussion. If you are a confident contributor, use your confidence for good and not evil. Help bring others into the discussion, refer to your classmates by name, and be encouraging about the contributions of those who do not say as much.
4. While personal anecdotes are allowed, keep in mind this is a shared space. Others may disagree with your interpretation of your experience. This is encouraged and allowed. If you are not comfortable with this, do not share your story. If you share your story and then decide you are uncomfortable with others discussing it, just ask us to stop and I will move the discussion along.
5. Awkward silences and hesitation are okay. Don't feel you need to rush to speak and don't worry if you need a little time to articulate something. Contributing to the class discussion is more than the frequency of the times your hand goes up and the number of words you say. **If you are struggling to articulate something, that's probably a sign that you are saying something that is new and not obvious.**
6. Difficult subject matter: As your prof, I will never do anything intentionally to shock or traumatize students. At the same time, it's our job to discuss difficult subjects in class, and nobody can predict the effect some materials may have on someone. I will try and give previews of the kinds of subject matter you will encounter before you encounter it, but I cannot guarantee I will preview the important thing. If I forget, feel free to ask. If you are having difficulty dealing with a class discussion or reading or recording, you may raise the issue as part of the discussion (keeping in mind #4 above), or you may simply

discretely leave class. A note to me (the prof) would be helpful after the fact so that we know what happened and don't think you just got up and left.

While life does happen, excessive absences that are not discussed with me ahead of time could result in a reduction of your final grade if you have not compensated for it in your course contributions. There are no "excused" or "unexcused" absences, and you never need to show me a doctor's note, you just need to get in touch with me before the last minute.

King's University College General Course Policies 2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [here](#).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course. Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course. For further information, please see:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/exams/index.html.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/personal-counselling>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>

GBSV Support:

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/gender-and-sexual-violence>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/student-code-of-conduct>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [here](#).

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/OriginalityReports-TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member.

Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.