



DISABILITY STUDIES 3311F (570)
Changing Contexts & Practices
Fall/Winter 2025 - 2026

Instructor: Dr. Melanie Stone
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Course Information

Calendar Description: Introduces students to key innovations in leadership, rights, laws, policy and practices in the human services and modern disability sector. Research and cases highlight the tensions and possibilities between conceptual ideals and the constraints of practice.

Prerequisite(s): [Disability Studies 2201F/G](#).

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 hours

Course Weight: 0.5

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: DISABST

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course, or special permission from your Dean to enroll 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.

King's University College
DS 3311 – Changing Contexts and Practices
Fall 2025

“If access is only for some of us, it’s not access. If access doesn’t come with a politics of collective liberation, it’s just aesthetics.”

— *Mia Mingus*, disability justice activist

Course information:

Course Name, Number, Section: DS 3311

Instructor(s): Melanie Stone

Contact Information: mstone33@uwo.ca

Office hours: See Brightspace

Course description: Introduces students to key innovations in leadership, rights, laws, policy and practices in the human services and modern disability sector. Research and cases highlight the tensions and possibilities between conceptual ideals and the constraints of practice.

Course learning outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze key disability-related policies and legislation at local, national, and international levels (e.g., AODA, CRPD, ODSP, Accessible Canada Act).
2. Critically evaluate how disability policy is shaped by social, political, economic, and historical contexts, including colonialism, neoliberalism, and ableism.
3. Explain the impact of disability policy on the lived experiences of disabled people, particularly those at the intersections of race, gender, class, and Indigeneity.
4. Assess the roles of government, non-profit, and grassroots actors in shaping, implementing, and resisting disability policy.
5. Apply principles of disability justice and human rights to evaluate the inclusivity and effectiveness of existing policies and programs.
6. Interpret and critique policy language and design, identifying gaps, barriers, and unintended consequences for disabled communities.
7. Develop policy recommendations or alternative frameworks that promote access, equity, and self-determination for people with disabilities.
8. Reflect on their own role as future professionals, advocates, or policymakers in advancing disability rights and dismantling systemic ableism.

Mode of Instruction: In-Person

Course textbooks/materials: All course material is listed on the OWL Brightspace course site. There is no required textbook for this course.

Method of evaluation:	Attendance & Participation	15%
	Critical Policy Analysis & Redesign	20% Due October 21
	Reimagining Public Participation – Designing Inclusive Policy	
	Engagement for Disability Justice	35% Due December 2
	Final Exam	30%

Course Overview

This course critically examines disability policy through historical, legal, and intersectional lenses. Students will explore how laws, institutional frameworks, and neoliberal ideologies have shaped the lives and rights of disabled people in Canada and globally. Key policies such as the Accessible Canada Act, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and income support programs (e.g., ODSP, SSI, CPP-D) will be analyzed in relation to ableism, surveillance, and economic exclusion. Through case studies, students will assess how policies are developed, contested, and resisted, particularly by disability-led movements. Emphasis will be placed on policy as a site of both constraint and possibility, encouraging students to imagine and advocate for more just and accessible futures.

Course Outline

September 9th - Week 1 – Course Introductions & Course Overview

Readings:

- No Readings

September 16th - Week 2 – Introduction to Disability Policy

Readings:

- Jongbloed, L. (2003). Disability Policy in Canada: An Overview. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 13(4), 203-209.
- Dinan S, Boucher N. Disability and Employment Policy in Canada: National Policy Variation for Working Age Individuals. *Journal of Social Policy*. 2023;52(4):719-739. doi:10.1017/S0047279421000878

September 23 - Week 3 – Public Participation & Public Disability Research

Readings:

- Ripat J, Sibley KM, Giesbrecht E, Curtis B, Touchette A, Borisoff J, Ethans K, Li Y, Morales E. Winter Mobility and Community Participation Among People Who Use Mobility Devices: A Scoping Review. *Arch Rehabil Res Clin Transl*. 2019 Nov 15;2(1):100018. doi: 10.1016/j.arrct.2019.100018. PMID: 33543060; PMCID: PMC7853381.
- Spagnuolo, N., & Shanouda, F. (2017). Who counts and who is counted? Conversations around voting, access, and divisions in the disability community. *Disability & Society*, 32(5), 701–719. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1324765>

September 30th – NO CLASS – National Day of Truth and Reconciliation**October 7th - Week 4 – AODA & Accessible Standards Act – Canadian Disability Policy****Readings:**

- Segal, H. (2014, November 26). *A remarkable 20-year struggle for disabled rights*. Social Policy in Ontario. <https://spon.ca/a-remarkable-20-year-struggle-for-disabled-rights/2014/11/26/>
- Kovacs Burns, K., & Gordon, G. L. (2009). Analyzing the Impact of Disability Legislation in Canada and the United States. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 20(4), 205-218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207309344562>

October 14th - Week 5 – Policy Close to home – Municipal and Transit Policy**Readings:**

- Mansilla, J. C., Boucher, N., & Routhier, F. (2024). Public Transport in the Disabling City: A Narrative Ethnography of Dilemmas and Strategies of People with Mobility Disabilities. *Disabilities*, 4(1), 228-261. <https://doi.org/10.3390/disabilities4010015>
- Wright, S. (2022, Spring). In praise of the humble sidewalk. *Planning*. <https://planning.org/planning/2022/spring/in-praise-of-the-humble-sidewalk/>
- Lindsay, S. (2019). Accessible and inclusive transportation for youth with disabilities: exploring innovative solutions. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 42(8), 1131–1140. <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1080/09638288.2018.1517194>

October 21st - Week 6 – Punishing Policies – ODSP, Benefit Supports and Cutbacks

- Smith-Carrier, T., Montgomery, P., Mossey, S., Shute, T., Forchuk, C., & Rudnick, A. (2020). Erosion of Social Support for Disabled People in Ontario: An Appraisal of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Using a Human Rights Framework. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9(1), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.15353/cjds.v9i1.594>
- David, K. M., Martin, B., McDowell, T., Ferdosi, M., Ederer, R., & Ma, A. (2024). “I Was Trusted for Once”: Imagining More Humane Income Supports Through the Ontario Basic Income Pilot. *Social Policy and Society : A Journal of the Social Policy Association*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746424000551>

October 29th Week 7 – Designing Inclusion Policy – In-Class Work Week**Readings:**

- Young, W. R. 1947-(William R. (2015). Organizing survival and resistance in austere times: Shifting disability activism and care politics in Ontario, Canada. In *Disability [sic] : socio-economic aspects and proposals for reform* / (Vol. 30, Issue 7). Library of Parliament, Research Branch., <https://doi.org/info:doi/>
- Chapter 4 - Storytelling as Activism in *Sins Invalid* (2016) in Kafai, S. (2021). *Crip Kinship : The Disability Justice and Art Activism of Sins Invalid*. (1st ed.). Arsenal Pulp Press.

November 3-7th Week 8 – Reading Week**November 11th - Week 9 – Disability Justice****Readings:**

- Chapter 1 in Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. (2018). *Care work : Dreaming disability justice*. Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Mingus, M. (2018) Disability Justice is just another word for Love. <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2018/11/03/disability-justice-is-simply-another-term-for-love/>

November 18th - Week 10 – Education & Accessibility Policy**Readings:**

- Titchkosky, T. (2008). “To Pee or Not to Pee?” Ordinary Talk about Extraordinary Exclusions in a University Environment. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 33(1), 37–60. <https://doi.org/10.29173/cjs1526>
- Edelist, T., Zaman, S., Katzman, E., & Jarus, T. (2024). ‘Patient’ or ‘professional’? Negotiating accommodations and identity in fieldwork education. *Medical Education*, 58(9), 1107–1116. <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.15365>

November 25th - Week 11 – Work & Accessibility Policy**Readings:**

- Keene, J. (2001). The Ontario Human Rights Code and the Right to Accommodation in the Workplace for Employees with Disabilities. *Journal of Law and Social Policy*, 16(1), 185–206. <https://doi.org/10.60082/0829-3929.1056>
- Buettgen, A., & Tompa, E. (2023). From the Standpoint of Employees with Disabilities: An Analysis of Workplace Accommodation Processes in the Non-Profit Sector. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 12(1), 161–190. <https://doi.org/10.15353/cjds.v12i1.976>

December 2nd - Week 12 – Final Presentations & Exam Review – Designing Inclusive Policy

Readings: None.

Course Evaluation Details

Attendance & Participation – 15% - Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in group discussions which will take place in class. Participation involves both discussion as well as submission of worksheets/collaborative whiteboards/google docs.

Critical Policy Analysis and Redesign – 20% - Students choose an existing disability-related policy (e.g., AODA, ODSP, institutional accommodation policies, public transit standards, etc.)

and analyze it through a critical disability studies lens. Project will be approximately 1200-1800 words in length.

Part 1: Critical Analysis

Students must:

- Identify the purpose and intended outcomes of the policy.
- Examine how it frames disability (e.g., medical, individual, systemic).
- Analyze who benefits, who's excluded, and whose voices shaped the policy.
- Identify ableist assumptions, gaps, or consequences — especially for multiply-marginalized disabled people.
- Connect to course theories: e.g., neoliberalism, disability justice, intersectionality, surveillance, or colonialism.

Part 2: Redesign or Response (creative or applied)

Choose one:

- Rewrite a section of the policy using disability justice principles.
- Create an alternative framework or infographic that communicates the policy in plain language or ASL-accessible video.
- Draft a policy brief or community submission proposing changes.
- Make a zine or podcast episode amplifying the real-life impact of this policy.

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop skills in applied policy analysis.
- Practice bridging academic theory and lived experience.
- Engage creatively with disability justice frameworks.
- Consider how public policy impacts autonomy, access, and dignity.

“Disability Futures Policy Hack” – Group Simulation & Presentation – 35%

Goal: Students work in small groups to design a new policy or program that addresses a disability-related issue through a justice-oriented lens.

Your team must design and present:

1. The Process Plan (1200-1500 words AND 8–10 minute oral/visual presentation)

- What is the *goal* of the participation process?
- Who are you reaching — and how?
- What methods are you using? (Examples: story circles, drop-in kitchen table sessions, ASL poetry nights, TikTok campaigns, sensory-safe gatherings, traveling consults)
- How will access and care be woven into every step? (Think: child care, plain language, food, transport, trauma-informed space, Crip time, translation, honoraria)

- Who may attend and how might they disrupt the construct of the Public Participation Meeting?

2. *Accountability + Evaluation Plan*

- How will you ensure the process isn't extractive or performative?
- How are participants involved in shaping outcomes, not just giving input?
- What feedback loops or mechanisms will allow for ongoing access, leadership, and correction?

3. *Creative Supplement*

- Design a flyer, video ad, storyboard, zine, infographic, or web mock-up of your consultation model.
- Think community-centred, not government-centred.

Key Concepts to Draw From:

- Disability justice
- Intersectionality and power
- Participatory action research
- Mad studies / user-led models
- Trauma-informed engagement

Final Exam – 30% - A final exam will take place during the fall exam period and will be scheduled by examination services.

Academic Considerations:

- **Grace Days** – All students have been given 5 grace days for use throughout the course. This means you can hand in your assignments late (up to 5 days total) without penalty. Assignments submitted after the grace period will be given a 2% deduction per day.

Communication Considerations:

- I host office hours and am regularly on campus to support student inquiries and their learning. Please drop by my office hours to discuss or book a zoom meeting to chat about your questions. I will respond to all student emails within 48 hours. Please use only your official student email for communication purposes.

Inclusive Classroom:

- This course is built on the idea that learning is not a solo act, but something we do together through shared time, care, and accountability. We all come into the classroom with different experiences, needs, and ways of knowing. An interdependent classroom means we make space for one another, and help one another, by listening deeply, offering flexibility, respecting access needs, and engaging with perspectives that may challenge our own. This is not just about being polite; it's about practicing the kind of community we want to build beyond the classroom. Interdependence is a strength, not a weakness, and your presence, your voice, and your care matter here.

OWL Brightspace – Course Site

- The OWL course site contains all information about the course including assignment details and rubrics, lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations and regular updates and announcements. Students should check OWL Brightspace regularly and keep up to date on course details.

Academic Integrity / Remote Proctoring:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf 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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)..

Statement on the use of AI:

Within this course AI tools such as Chat GPT are permitted exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes (i.e., development of an essay outline). If AI tools are used, students must acknowledge use and state how the tool was used. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Schedule of Classes, Readings, Assessments:

- *See Course Outline Memo for this year's academic calendar dates*

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 https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

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://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

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 (under [Special Examinations](#)).

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://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-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/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

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://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/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.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

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://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

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

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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 your 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/Originality_Reports - 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.