



**Disability Studies 1010B (575)
Exploring Disability
Fall/Winter 2025-2026**

Instructor: Dr. Melanie Stone
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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: 0.5

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 1010 – Winter Term 2026

Syllabus

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.” – **Audre Lorde**

Course Overview

This course 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):

Prerequisite(s):

Professor: Dr. Melanie Stone mstone33@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Upon request. Zoom also available.
Mode of Instruction : in-person

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours, 0.5 course.

Required Text

There is no required text for this course. All readings are on OWL on our course site in the resources section. Readings must be done before each lecture as key concepts are taken up in our class discussions.

Course Requirements & Evaluation Scheme:

All Course Readings are found on OWL Brightspace. As a non-essay course, written work is < 1800 words. You are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each lecture. All assigned readings are listed beside each corresponding lecture. All of the course readings are posted on OWL. Lecture time is approximately 3 hours.

Course Text: There is no course text for this class. All class readings are posted to OWL Brightspace through the course readings link.

Course Description

This course introduces students to Disability Studies as a dynamic and interdisciplinary field that challenges conventional understandings of disability. Rather than viewing disability as individual deficit, personal tragedy, or medical problem, students will explore disability as a social, cultural, political, and economic construct—deeply relevant to all our lives.

We will engage with some of the most urgent and provocative questions in the field, such as:

- Who decides what counts as a “normal” or “good” life?
- How do we define suffering, and who gets to speak about disability with legitimacy?
- What tensions exist between care and control, support and autonomy?
- How does language shape how we understand disability and people’s lived experiences?
- What does true inclusion look like—in education, community, sport, and public life?

Through readings, media, discussion, and reflection, students will learn to apply a Disability Studies lens to contemporary debates and everyday life. Many of the issues we’ll tackle, like rights, regulation, access, and representation, are not exclusive to disability but cut across broader public conversations about equity, justice, and humanity.

Course Objectives

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

1. Critically analyze dominant narratives that frame disability as deficit, tragedy, or personal problem.
2. Recognize the intersection between disability and broader social issues such as poverty, education, healthcare, and cultural norms.
3. Engage respectfully and confidently in conversations about disability without fear of causing harm.
4. Identify and assess barriers to accessibility and inclusion—whether structural, attitudinal, or systemic.
5. Understand foundational concepts in Disability Studies and how they may help reframe disability from multiple perspectives.
6. Appreciate disability as a source of identity, knowledge, and community, rather than simply a condition to be managed or overcome.

Course Outline:

Week 1 – What is Disability Studies?

Week 2 – Introducing new ways of thinking about disability: Models of Disability

Week 3 – Pity, Tragedy, Charity? Re-examining constructions of Disability

Week 4 – Disability Studies & Disability Rights and the construction of “risk”

Week 5 – Complicating narratives of disability

Week 6 – Midterm – In Class

Week 7 – **READING WEEK**

Week 8 – Understanding Inclusion, Disability Rights and Accommodations

Week 9 - Mad Studies: A brief introduction and history

Week 10 – Wellness, Mental Health, and Social Media

Week 11 - Building Connections and Intersectionality

Week 12 – Disability Studies and Social Change

Student Evaluation:

Tutorial Case Study Assignments (4x5%)	20%
Participation & Attendance	10%
Mid-Term Exam – February 26 In Class	25%
Final Reflection Assignment	15%
Final Exam – Scheduled for Fall Final Exam Period	30%
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Total	100%

Detailed Student Evaluation

Tutorial Case Study Assignments

At 4 tutorials students will be presented with small group Case Study assignments. These are worth 5% each. You will have time in tutorial to complete the assignment, for submission the following week.

Accessibility Space Audit – In Class Work Week of Jan 26	5%
Inclusion Case Study – In Class Work Week of March 2nd	5%
Sensory Accessibility Case Study – Week of March 9 th	5%
Student Mental Health & Wellness – Week of March 23 rd	5%

Final Reflection Assignment

This assignment asks you to reflect critically on your learning over the course of the term in *Introduction to Disability Studies*. Rather than a personal reflection alone, this is an academic reflective analysis that requires you to engage directly with **course concepts, readings, and discussions**. As a result, in text citations are required as is a works cited/bibliography. You will examine how your understanding of disability has developed from the beginning of the course to the end, and how disability studies has challenged, expanded, or complicated your prior assumptions. What does disability studies now allow you to see differently, in academic contexts, professional fields, institutions, or everyday life? What questions or responsibilities do you carry forward from this course? How might disability studies continue to matter beyond this classroom? You must meaningfully engage with **at least 4 course readings**. Sources should be integrated analytically, not merely mentioned. Use proper academic citation (APA/MLA/Chicago - choose one and be consistent).

Due: April 6th 2025 to OWL Brightspace.

Participation & Attendance

10%

Consistent attendance and active participation are critical to your success in this course. Disability Studies is a collaborative, discussion-driven field where learning happens through shared insights, critical dialogue, and reflection. Tutorial engagement is critical, as is small group work that takes place in that space. That said, we recognize that access needs, health realities, and caregiving responsibilities can affect how students participate. Engagement can take multiple forms, whether through in-class contributions, online discussions, written reflections, or group work. If barriers arise, please reach out early so we can work together to ensure you stay connected and supported. Showing up matters, and we'll be flexible in how that can happen.

Midterm Exam – In Class February 26

25%

A midterm exam will be facilitated in class on February 26

Final Exam – During Spring Final Exam Period

30%

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>). 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). No other use of AI is permitted in this course, and use of AI is considered academic dishonesty.

Academic Considerations:

- **Grace Days – All students have been given 3 grace days for use throughout the course.** This means you can hand in your assignments late (up to 3 days total) without penalty. Assignments submitted after the grace period will be given a 2% deduction per day. Grace days cannot be applied to exams.

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 and please use office hours to discuss assignments in detail or to meet/discuss course material.

Assignments & Late Policy:

- All assignments are due on the dates listed above. As this is an intensive timeline, please pay close attention to deadlines. If you require any extensions, please contact me at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline to make arrangements. Exams are not considered assignments.

Late Assignments:

- Late assignments handed in after the deadline without advanced permission from the instructor will have 2 points per day deducted (including weekends).

Pedagogical Method:

I. Lecture

I will be lecturing each week for 2 hours and then, you will have tutorials that I will attend alongside our TA's every week to take up important themes and group discussions.

II. Direct Experience with People: Stories

A core value of both disability activists and Disability Studies scholars, is to include people with disabilities in all decisions, teaching, and processes. We achieve this in a few ways in class:

- a) Inclusion of readings written by, or with, people with disability or other labels.
- b) Assignments that encourage you to find first-person as well as scholarly sources.
- c) Guest speakers to share either their personal or professional experience.

III. Readings

There are readings assigned every week. It is most helpful for you to read those before you watch/read/listen to the other material in the unit so that you have that as background.

Your final exam will be cumulative and will require the use of readings to demonstrate your learning in the class.

IV. Inquiry Approach

This course uses an inquiry-based approach, which starts with the understanding that no one has all the answers—especially when it comes to complex and evolving issues. While we recognize the value of existing research and theory, we also acknowledge that perspectives shift over time, particularly in a dynamic, interdisciplinary field like Disability Studies.

In both lectures and grading, this approach means that students are evaluated not on having the "right" answer, but on their ability to identify key issues, engage critically with the material, and support their arguments using course readings, lectures, and Disability Studies scholarship.

You are not expected to agree with the professor or with one particular viewpoint. What matters is that your ideas are clearly reasoned, well-supported, and rooted in academic sources. We value original thinking and recognize the effort it takes to grapple with difficult topics. You're encouraged to question assumptions and explore multiple sides of an issue with a critical lens.

V. OWL

OWL is used exclusively for the class: readings, videos, multi-media, testing, exam tips, changes etc. Students are welcome to post interesting experiences, or relevant media or articles they've unearthed on our shared OWL Brightspace discussion space. Please provide a small sentence about why you are sharing the article you are on this forum. Be thoughtful about what you post. **You must check OWL regularly.**

A Note about Language: Throughout the course we will be learning about language and labels. The goal of this course is to challenge language, and to respect why people are working to change and shift attitudes through the use of better language. Change is good and terms we knew as appropriate will shift and change over time. The goal is never going to be a finality on the issue of language, but of openness to shift and change. We must all recognize that we are all learning and that throughout the course we may stumble or make errors. This is part of university learning and while we may make errors as we go, let's work together to ensure the language we do use is as respectful as possible at all times.

Support & Accommodation: If you require special arrangements or deferrals for tests, lectures or assignments, for whatever reason (sports, SSD, family), we are open to accommodating this with enough notice. For disability supports, please go through **official SSD procedures** at the beginning of term.

http://www.uwo.ca/kings/Student_Services/services.htm

Evaluation:

If you would like your paper or exam re-evaluated:

- Write an email in paragraph form detailing what you believe was not addressed in the grading. Refer to the rubric given to you in advance of the assignment and the comments you received on the assignment. You should also include why you disagree with the mark given and note which page/paragraph you are referring to. I will read your thoughts and reevaluate your assignment within 1 week.
- Understand that re-marking can take a grade **up or down**.

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
Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

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 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](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.