



Disability Studies 1010A (570)
Exploring Disability
Fall/Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Preston
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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 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.

DS 1010 A: Exploring Disability

2026/2027

King's University College @ Western University

Professor Jeff Preston, PhD Associate Professor, Disability Studies

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The way society imagines disability, chronic illness & mental health is constantly evolving. Students in this course are not told what to think. You are taught unconventional, new frameworks to broaden your imagination and your ability to understand disability anew.

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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.

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

Prerequisite(s): n/a

Extra Information: 2 lecture hours + 1 tutorial hour, 0.5 course. (King's) Entry course for DS Minor Module: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/our-programs/disability-studies/> but open to non-module students.

Course Requirements & Evaluation Scheme:

All Readings are found on OWL. As a non-essay course, written work is < 1800 words.

Tutorial Assignments	40
Midterm Exam	20
Final Exam	30
Weekly Quizzes	10
Total	100%

Course Delivery:

Designed as a blended learning experience, this course will combine synchronous in-class lecture/tutorial and asynchronous online content. Most weeks will include self-directed learning through readings, guided OWL lessons and in-class lectures. Students will also be asked to participate in weekly 50-minute tutorial sessions, where assignments will be completed.

Students may need access to a microphone to participate in online discussions. Webcams are strongly encouraged but not required. Assignments will be completed and submitted via OWL, including the three worksheets and final exam.

Course Outline :

Week	Theme
Sept 10	Introduction & What is Disability Studies
Sept 17	Model Mayhem: Exploring core disability studies perspectives (Part 1)
Sept 24	Model Mayhem: Exploring core disability studies perspectives (Part 2)
Oct 1	In-class Space Analysis Assignment
Oct 8	CASE 1: Is being Deaf a disability or a culture?
Oct 15	Reading Week
Oct 22	CASE 2: Down Syndrome , bioethics and the “value” of (certain) life
Oct 29	In-class Midterm
Nov 5	CASE 3: Inspiration porn, overcoming and the Charity Model
Nov 12	CASE 4: Paralympic Sports and models of inclusion
Nov 19	CASE 5: Biology or Culture? Is ADHD ‘epidemic’ a neuro-biological crisis or cultural construction?
Nov 26	CASE 6: Mental Health? Checking in on “Wellness Checks”
Dec 3	Concluding Thoughts
	Final Exam (during exam period)

Course Outcomes:

In this class, students will engage with and debate frameworks that help us to better understand disability as a socio-cultural, economic and political construct, as well as to learn about its relevance in all our lives. I consider the class a success if students learn to:

1. Recognize the inaccuracy of the typical view of disability as personal tragedy, deficit or problem to overcome.
2. See the connections between so-called “disability issues” and broader social concerns.
3. Be capable of discussing disability and engaging respectfully with disability without fear of causing inadvertent offence
4. Feel better prepared to interact with people living with disability labels in everyday life
5. Understand what Disability Studies is and how it helps us to rethink disability (in many different ways and from multiple perspectives).
6. See that people are not defined by their disability, but can be uniquely shaped by it.

The central aim of this course is to introduce students to some of the fascinating and controversial discussions going on in the Disability Studies field today, and to teach students how to apply a Disability Studies lens to what they read or hear about these issues. Many of the debates are age-old and, while rooted in disability, have general relevance:

- Who deserves to live and how much are we willing to pay for them?
- Who speaks with legitimacy about disability issues?
- How do we define suffering & a ‘good life’? How do these vary across people & culture?
- What is ‘normal’ or acceptable and who gets to decide? Parents? Children?
- What role can health, recreation, and/or sport play in well-being or rehabilitation?
- How do we compare “specialized & segregated” versus “inclusive & adapted” options?
- To what extent should governments support or regulate people's lives?
- What does it mean to be included? Excluded? What different forms can inclusion take?
- What’s a good balance between care and control?

Often these timeless questions have new, sharper edges due to technological or medical developments that create new understandings and new options (e.g. Cheetah Blades, anti-psychosis medications, concussion research). The point of the course is not to solve these problems, but to expose students to how relevant the questions they raise are to our general public debates, not just to the 14% of the population that live with a disability. This class illustrates why the disability experience is about more than the biological difference of impairment, and why it is inaccurate to think of disability as a ‘problem’ that needs ‘fixing’.

Required Texts:

All required readings are available from the UWO & affiliate libraries or available on the course website (owl). (No textbook to buy)

Course Assessments:

Weekly Quizzes (10%)

Due: Sundays

Each week students will engage with the readings and course content through a series of brief questions, in the format of an OWL "quiz." These weekly quizzes are less about reading comprehension but to help deepen and broaden your understanding of the week's content through guided reflection.

DS Perspectives Tutorial Assignments (30%)

Due: At the end of tutorial

After learning about the core DS perspectives, students get to practice using these tools tackling mini case studies and assignments in small groups during tutorial. For each of these assignments, students will need to use lecture and reading materials to support their work.

Assignment #1 – Space Analysis

Part 1

Sept 21st / 23rd

Part 2

Oct 5th / 7th

Assignment #2 – Normalcy Advertisement

Part 1

Nov 9th / 11th

Part 2

Nov 16th / 18th

Midterm Exam (30%)

Due: October 29th

- ◆ The format will include material from all 6 preceding weeks; fixed choice questions & short written answers.
- ◆ 90min exam, in-person, written with cheat sheet that is submitted with exam

Final Exam (30%) (during formal Exam period - date determined by registrar)

- ◆ The format will include material from all 13 weeks; fixed choice questions & short written answers.
- ◆ 3h exam, in-person, written with cheat sheet that is submitted with exam

Late assignments will be penalized 10% per calendar day, including weekends, to a maximum of 5 days. After 5 days, the assignment will receive 0. Non-medical absence and /or missed assignments, tests or exams must be addressed through the Academic Deans Office. Where ADO approval is provided make up tests or exams, extensions, alternative format or reweighting will be granted. If used, Self-Reported Absences (SRAs) grant students an additional 48 hours to submit the assignment without penalty, after which standard late marks will apply. It is the STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY to contact the professor immediately after submitting an SRA to verify the revised due date.

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (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](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this assessment.
- If instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs. (For example, if students need to submit X of Y assignments, this flexibility already provides consideration.)
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** 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 (i.e., you are scheduled to write 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](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their 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.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

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

Western’s Mental Health Services site provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's 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 (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. 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://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

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.

6. 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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.