



Disability Studies 1010A (670)
Exploring Disability
Fall/Winter 2026-2027

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: Online/Asynchronous.

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 1010A (670) – Fall 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: Mondays 4:00 – 5:00 pm via Zoom.
Mode of Instruction: Online Asynchronous

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 less than 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 per week.

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 posts, 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 – **READING WEEK**

Week 7 – **Midterm – No Class**

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:

“Accessible” Space Review	15%
Mid-Term Exam	30%
Film Review	20%
Final Exam (online) – Scheduled for Fall Final Exam Period	35%

Total	100%
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Detailed Student Evaluation

Accessible Space Review

Throughout the course, we will learn that not all spaces are inclusive or welcoming, even when labeled this way. This assignment involves a 3-page written assignment by students on a space of their choosing. You can choose any location convenient and familiar to you. Be in that space (bus, bus stop, entrance way, library etc...) and review its accessibility. Is

it easy to find? Who is it built for? Who might it leave out? Looking at spaces we frequent every day in new ways with new course information is helpful. A more detailed set of questions to help you with your review will be posted in the course space on OWL Brightspace.

Due Date: October 8th by 11:55 pm

Midterm Exam – Online

A midterm exam will be facilitated online the week of October 19th. Any student unable to complete this assessment at this time will require documentation

Film Review

Many new course concepts will help you answer some key question about a film about disability, and what it means to be included/excluded. Students will write a 3-4 page film review answering a specific set of questions and using course concepts and readings for assistance.

Due Date: November 19th, 2026, by 11:55 pm

Final Exam – Scheduled during Final Winter Exam Period

35%

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.
- Because this is an online, asynchronous course, you should check into the course site regularly for announcements, discussion posts and updates. Your lecture(s) will be posted once a week by Wednesday at 4:00 pm. You can review at any point in the week but be sure to review them for course information, answers to frequently asked student questions, and information about the course.

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>).

AI Policy: 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. Students should reach out if they are struggling with how to prepare their papers and to obtain assistance from the professor as necessary.

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. You do not need to email the instructor about using your grace days, as all late days are logged in OWL.

Communication Considerations:

- I host office hours virtually for all students via zoom. 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.

Pedagogical Method:

I. Lecture

I will be posting your lectures in video form alongside copies of the slide decks each week. Please note that information on the slide decks can be helpful but the video lectures contain much more detail with examples, answers to student questions, exam updates etc... Please set aside time to review the lecture material each week and to take notes on the material to help you best prepare for exams and assignments. I try to break up lectures online into “themes” so they are easier for students to focus on and complete. I also review sites and areas and bring my camera out into the City so you can see real world accessibility impacts. My slide decks are provided but they are not complete without the recorded lecture material.

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 midterm exam and final exam will both require knowledge of reading material from the course.

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
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.