

Disability Studies 2201F (570)
Rethinking Disability
Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Melanie Stone
Email: mstone33@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

Disability Studies challenges the historical, medical and mainstream views of disability and mental illness as personal tragedies or solely problems to be fixed. We explore diverse approaches to imagining disability, changes over time, and associated symbolic and material outcomes.

Prerequisite(s): Disability Studies 1010A/B.

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 2 lecture hours, 1 tutorial hour.

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.

Rethinking Disability

Disability Studies 2201F

Instructor Information

Melanie Stone, PhD mstone33@uwo.ca
Office Location: Virtual
Office Hours: Monday, 5:00-6:00

Course Information

Prerequisite: Disability Studies 1010 A/B
Antirequisite:

3 hours (or equivalent) of weekly lecture content, 0.5 course (King's) Part of the DS Minor and DS Major Module: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/disability-studies/>

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written 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.

Disability Studies challenges the historical, medical and mainstream views of disability and mental illness as personal tragedies or solely problems to be fixed. We explore diverse approaches to imagining disability, changes over time, and associated symbolic and material outcomes.

Course Description

How do we imagine disability? What societal factors shape our understanding?

The way we talk about disability in Disability Studies often differs from the ways mainstream societies imagine non-normative bodies and minds. This course begins with two assumptions: first, that the category of disability is socially constructed through thought, language and media; and second, that social constructions of disability shape our everyday lives. In this course, we explore historical and contemporary constructions of disability, and the role of dominant ideas about disability in shaping the treatment of disabled people throughout modern history. We trace evolutions in thinking about physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural diversity, and discuss how changing popular understandings of disability have shaped social practices related to disability. Major topics include institutionalization, medicalization, inclusion and representation.

The class employs cases and research to expose students to shifts in the understanding and management of disability over time. We explore various aspects of the disability experience, including the historical and cultural legitimization of differential, exclusionary, and discriminatory treatment of people with disabilities in policy, professional practice and popular culture. We also explore a parallel history of disability activism and scholarship, in which people who live with disability and their allies have fought against marginalizing mainstream approaches. Students will think critically about the value and limits of Disability Studies perspectives, such as tensions between scholarly Disability Studies approaches and perspectives grounded in lived experiences with disability. Additionally, we will work towards developing an understanding of our personal relationship to the social category of disability, and to the field of Disability Studies.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Discuss disability and related topics in a confident and respectful manner.
2. Discuss the evolution of ideas about disability and related social practices in contemporary society and recent history.
3. Explain what Disability Studies is and how it helps us to rethink disability.
4. Differentiate and compare mainstream and Disability Studies perspectives on a range of key topics.
5. Apply Disability Studies perspectives to topics beyond those discussed in this course.
6. Assess and communicate the nature of their own relationship to the social category of disability and to the field of Disability Studies.

Course Outline

09-11 Week 1: Welcome to DS 2201
09-18 Week 2: Defining Disability
09-25 Week 3: Bodies in Context
10-02 Week 4: Ongoing Fights for Justice & Rights
10-09 Week 5: Back to the body
10-16 Week 6: Reading Week
10-23 Week 7: Situating Ourselves
10-30 Week 8: Midterm Test
11-06 Week 9: Ableism
11-13 Week 10: Barriers & Access
11-20 Week 11: Identity & Culture
11-27 Week 12: What is an Ally? Examining allyship care and work

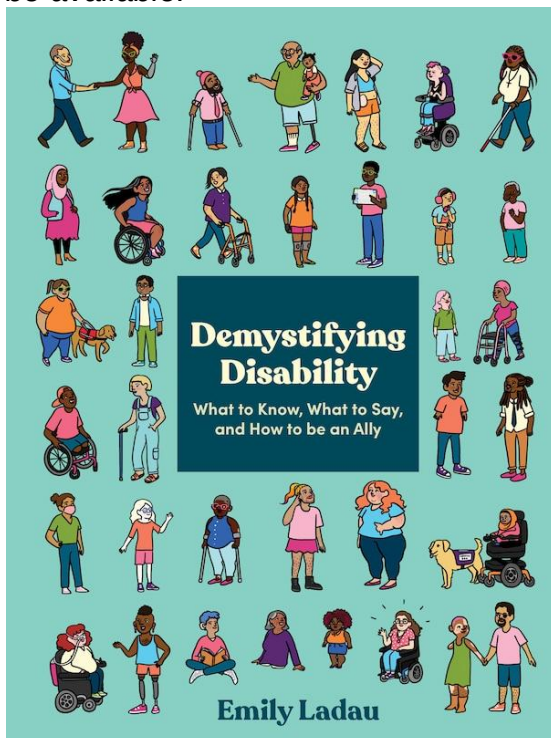
Course Requirements & Evaluation Scheme

Classroom Engagement	10 %
Reflection 1 – Early Learning Reflection	15 %
Midterm Evaluation	25 %
Reflection 2 – Action Based Reflection	20 %
Final Exam	30 %
Total	100 %

Required Texts

1. Ladau, E. (2021). *Demystifying Disability: What to know, what to say, and how to be an ally*. Ten Speed Press.

This book is available through the Western Bookstore or other online booksellers for \$22.00 can be loaned for free from Western Libraries. Secondhand copies may also be available.



2. Links to additional readings and other required materials are posted on Brightspace.

Assignment Details

Classroom Participation & Engagement (10%)

Participation is an important aspect of this course. Regular attendance and participation in in-class discussion is expected. To earn top marks for classroom engagement, complete assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss. Diverse forms of participation are valued, and there will be opportunities for active participation during and outside of class. If you anticipate or experience challenges with classroom engagement, please communicate with Dr. Stone to discuss potential accommodations.

Reflection 1 (15%) - Unsettled: Tracing a Shift in Disability Thinking

Choose one specific assumption, expectation, or "common sense" belief about disability that you held before or during DS1010. Using at least two course concepts or readings from this course, trace how that assumption has been complicated, contradicted, or reframed and identify what specifically in the scholarship did that work. Where did a reading create friction with what you already believed, and how did you resolve (or fail to resolve) that friction? Did something make you mad or unsettled? Why?

Your reflection should also account for social location: how might someone with a different positionality than yours have encountered the same readings differently, or arrived at a different tension point altogether?

This is not a chronological account of "what I learned each week." It is an argument about how a specific belief was disrupted, using the readings as evidence.

Length: 1000-1300 words or 4-5 pages (without title page or bibliography/works cited)

Due: Friday, October 9, 2026, by 11:59pm to OWL Brightspace

Collaborative Midterm Evaluation (25%)

The midterm test is designed to provide an opportunity for cooperative and collaborative learning. During class time on October 30th, students will work in small groups to discuss, debate and compile information in preparation for the the midterm. Please prepare accordingly. After class, you will have until **11:59 pm on November 2nd 2026** to submit your individual answers to the test questions on Brightspace. While the in-class work is collaborative, however your tests are individual. All the answers you submit should be written in your own words.

Important Note: This is an exam, not an assignment. Accommodations for deadline flexibility do not apply to the midterm. Late submissions will not be accepted. Academic consideration requests for absence from or submission of the midterm evaluation require formal approval from ACSD or the ADO.

Reflection 2 (20 %) – Disability Studies in Action

Students will engage in a small-scale, real-world action related to accessibility and inclusion. This could involve, creating a resource guide, creating a podcast or video about a community barrier, preparing a letter to an MPP, MP or City Councillor recommending an inclusive change, facilitating a short awareness activity, designing a “micro” presentation or zine to teach someone about disability studies and disability justice, etc... Students will complete the action and then write an 800-word reflection about the experience. This assignment is to connect theory to practice by critically analyzing how accessibility and inclusion play out in everyday contexts and to recognize the role of individual and collective action in disability studies.

Due: Tuesday April 7th 2026

Final Exam (30%) – Scheduled during the Winter Exam Period

Grace Days – All students are granted 5 grace days to use throughout the term to hand in **non-exam** assignments. You may hand in an assignment a day or two late up to the limit of your 5 grace days (total over all assignments, not exams).

Late assignments after your grace days, will be penalized 2% per day including weekends. 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.

Please note that Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor’s consent.

Course Policies & University Procedures

Device Policy

Students are welcomed and encouraged to make appropriate use of technology during class time. Please be aware that inappropriate use of technology during class time may be distracting to you, to other students and to the professor, and will not be tolerated. Examples of appropriate use of technology during class include using a device to take notes or to reference readings or other materials relevant to class. Using the internet to find information related to class discussion is also encouraged, provided it does not hinder your engagement in the class. Examples of inappropriate use of technology during class include using social media and accessing content that is not directly related to class discussions. Please excuse yourself from the room if you need to check email, message, text, make or take phone calls.

Safer Space Policy

Effective learning can only happen when everyone feels as comfortable as possible in our classroom. Each member of the classroom community is asked to be mindful of language and actions that may be perceived or experienced as disrespectful or

discriminatory. Students are encouraged to communicate their own, and to be cognisant of others', needs and preferences.

Communication Policy

Students are encouraged to make use of the professor's office hours to clarify concepts or to engage in discussion about course material beyond what is covered during class time. You may also communicate with peers about course materials and evaluations. Before you contact the professor with questions about assignments, please ensure you have carefully read all provided instructions, including relevant sections of the course outline and course website.

If you contact the professor by email, you can usually expect a response within 1-2 business days (Monday-Friday). Please do not expect a response over the weekend. At busy times of the semester, it may take longer to get a response.

Support & Accommodations

I am happy to support any formal accommodations recommended by Accessibility, Counselling & Student Development (ACSD, <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>) or the Academic Dean's Office (ADO, <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics>). Please communicate with Dr. Stone early and often so that we can collaborate to ensure your full and equitable participation in this course.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & 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, at the following

Website: 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>). Please note that Turnitin analysis now includes AI detection.

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). Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

**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.