



Disability Studies 2221A (570)
Health and Rehabilitation
Fall/Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: Stephanie LeBlanc-Omstead

Email: slebla8@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course uses Disability Studies concepts to explore disability and chronic illness in the context of health professional practice. Students learn how medical and psychiatric lenses shape understandings of disability among disabled people, families, and professionals. Students consider innovative applications for Disability Studies perspectives in healthcare via case scenarios.

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

Antirequisite(s): [Disability Studies 2292A/B](#) if taken in 2021-22, [Disability Studies 3395F/G](#) if taken in 2018-19, 2019-20, and [Disability Studies 3321F/G](#) if taken prior to 2021-22.

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.

DS 2221A: Disability Studies in Health and Rehabilitation

King's University College @ Western University

Instructor Information

Stephanie LeBlanc-Omstead, PhD, OT Reg. (Ont.)

email: slebla8@uwo.ca

Office Hours:

Office hours will be held virtually every Friday from 2:00pm-3:00pm.

Course Description

This course examines how disability is constructed and imagined in the applied health (e.g. personal support work, social work, nursing, medicine) and rehabilitation (e.g. occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language pathology) fields. Through participation in the final presentation project, students can expect to gain a more in-depth understanding of several of these applied healthcare fields. Through readings, lectures, and in-class discussions, we will explore how disability becomes medicalized in the applied health fields, as well as tensions between the way that disability studies and applied health fields think about and approach disability. This course uses a “flipped classroom” model and small discussion groups to support students in becoming more comfortable and confident interacting and sharing ideas with peers.

Learning Outcomes

This second-year course builds on knowledge developed during the first year of study in the Disability Studies module. By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe how disability is defined in the applied health fields.
- Compare definitions of disability from disability studies and applied health fields.
- Identify disability studies concepts of relevance for applied health fields.
- Apply disability studies concepts to analyze applied health fields.
- Explore how the applied health fields unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes around disability, madness, d/Deafness and chronic illness.

- Discuss how stereotypes may be internalized by stakeholders (i.e. clients, clinicians, family members, administrators).
- Work effectively in groups using feedback, communication and collaboration skills.

Mode of Instruction

This is an in-person course. Beyond taking responsibility for your own learning, you are asked to contribute to a respectful, collaborative, and engaged classroom. Please come to each class prepared to participate thoughtfully and with a willingness to learn with and from one another. Each of you brings valuable knowledge, experience, and perspective to our learning community. Together, we will use course materials (e.g., readings, discussions, lessons, and more) to support collective learning and critical reflection.

Technical requirements: Course reminders/updates, links to course readings, weekly lecture slides, and additional resources are shared through our course OWL Brightspace site. Assignment submissions and examinations are also completed and/or submitted online. You will need a computer as well as stable high-speed internet connection to access course materials.

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topics
1	09/10	Introduction to Disability in Health and Rehabilitation
2	09/17	What are the “Health Professions”?
3	09/24	Professional Knowledge, Perspectives & Models
4	10/01	Experiential Knowledge and ‘Service User Involvement’
5	10/08	DS-Informed Health Professional Practice
6	10/15	<i>Reading Week</i>
7	10/22	Rethinking Popular Health Professional Perspectives
8	10/29	Midterm Assignment: Crippling the Case Study
9	11/05	Disabled Clinicians: Breaking The Binary
10	11/12	Knowledge Exchange Café
11	11/19	Exploring (More) Tensions and Opportunities for Conversation
12	11/26	Writing Week
13	12/03	Wrap-Up & Review

Required Texts

Links to all readings and other required materials are posted on OWL Brightspace.

Course Requirements & Evaluation Scheme

In-Class Participation	5 %
Weekly Mini Assignments (5 x 4%)	20 %
Midterm Assignment: Crippling the Case Study	20 %
Re-Imagining Health Care Resources	25 %
Final Exam	30 %
Total	100%

Assignment Details

1. In-Class Participation (5%)

Participation is an important part of this course. Diverse forms of participation are valued, including:

- Regular attendance
- Active listening during lectures and discussions
- Contributing to both small- and large-group discussions
- Asking or answering questions
- Sharing a relevant article, video or other resource along with a brief explanation of its connection to course concepts

Participation will be evaluated based on both the quantity and quality of your engagement. Your participation will be assessed holistically over the course of the term, recognizing that meaningful engagement can take many different forms.

At the end of the term, you will have an opportunity to reflect on your own participation and engagement in the course. This self-reflection will be considered alongside my observations, particularly in situations where there may be differences between my observations and your own understanding of your participation.

2. Weekly Mini Assignments (5 x 4% = 20%)

Throughout the semester, you will submit **five** brief reflections based on the weekly readings directly through Brightspace. These mini assignments are designed to support your ongoing engagement with course concepts, encourage you to make meaningful connections between Disability Studies and health professional practice, and prepare you for our in-class discussions.

For each submission, you will choose one of two formats:

1. *Critical Connection*: Reflect on an idea, concept, or quote from the weekly readings that stood out to you. You may connect this idea to your own experiences, other courses, current events, media, future professional practice, or other course concepts.
2. *One Thing Every Health Professional Should Know*: Communicate one important idea from the weekly readings that you believe all health professionals should understand. Your goal is to translate a Disability Studies concept into accessible language and explain why it matters for practice.

Length: approx. 150–250 words.

Built-In Flexibility: We have assigned readings during Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 11. You are only required to complete **five** mini assignments, which means you may choose to skip **two** weeks without penalty.

Due: Wednesdays by 8:00pm (ongoing)

Complete assignment details are available through our OWL Brightspace course site.

3. Midterm Assignment: Crippling the Case Study (20%)

Case studies are commonly used across health and rehabilitation professions to explore practice scenarios, develop professional reasoning, and work through complex questions or dilemmas. However, the ways disability is represented within case studies can unintentionally reinforce dominant (often ableist) assumptions about disability, health, independence, productivity, and "successful" healthcare outcomes.

In this assignment, you will critically examine a health professional case study through a Disability Studies lens and re-imagine it using concepts and principles from our course. You will identify assumptions embedded within the original case and consider what it might look like if it were written from a disability studies-informed stance; one that prioritizes lived experience, accessibility, and more socially accountable approaches to health and care.

Your submission will include:

- a. The original case study with your annotations/analysis,
- b. Your revised ("crippled") case study, and
- c. A reflective summary explaining your revisions and connecting them to course concepts.

Note: We will begin working on this assignment in class together during our Week 8 lecture on Thursday, October 29th. You will have dedicated time during this class to discuss ideas, ask questions, and begin your analysis before completing the assignment independently.

Due: Friday, November 6th at 11:59 p.m.

Complete assignment details are available through our OWL Brightspace course.

4. Re-imagining Health Care Resources (25%)

For your final project, you will continue to move beyond critique and explore how Disability Studies can inform more accessible, inclusive, and disability-affirming approaches to health care practice. You will select an existing health or rehabilitation resource and reimagine it through a Disability Studies lens.

You will have flexibility in how you present your redesigned resource. Possible formats include, but are not limited to:

- Webpage (e.g., website home page or FAQ page)
- Brochure or pamphlet
- Infographic
- Parent education resource
- Social media campaign
- Canva presentation
- Poster
- Video
- Podcast

Your redesigned resource should be engaging, accessible, and appropriate for its intended audience.

Your submission will include:

- a. the original resource and your analysis of its assumptions/messages,
- b. your redesigned resource, and
- c. a critical reflection explaining how Disability Studies concepts informed your design choices.

Due: Friday, November 27th by 11:59pm

Complete assignment details are available through our OWL Brightspace course and will also be reviewed (along with examples) during class time.

5. Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will take place during the University's scheduled examination period. The exam will assess your understanding and application of key concepts explored throughout the course. You are permitted to bring a 2-page study sheet with you to the exam.

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 may be distracting to you, other students, and the professor, and will not be tolerated.

Examples of appropriate use of technology during class include:

- Using a device to take notes.
- Accessing course readings or other materials relevant to class discussions.
- Using the internet to find information related to class discussions, provided that doing so does not interfere with your engagement in the class.

Examples of inappropriate use of technology during class include:

- Using social media.
- Accessing content unrelated to class discussions.
- Using devices in ways that distract from your own or others' learning.

Please excuse yourself from the room if you need to check email, send messages or texts, or make or take phone calls.

Safer Space Policy

Effective learning can only happen when everyone feels safe and respected in our shared learning environment. Each member of our classroom community is asked to be mindful of language and actions that may be experienced as disrespectful, harmful, or discriminatory.

Students are encouraged to communicate their own needs and preferences while also remaining attentive to the needs and preferences of others. Please alert the professor at any time if you have concerns about your experience in the classroom or feel that support is needed.

Communication Policy

Students are encouraged to make use of the professor's office hours to clarify concepts, ask questions, or engage in further discussion about course material beyond what is covered during

class time. You are also encouraged to communicate with your peers about course materials and evaluations.

Before contacting the professor with questions about assignments, please ensure that you have carefully reviewed 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 weekends. During particularly busy times of the semester, response times may be longer.

Support & Accommodations

I am happy to support any formal accommodations recommended by Accessibility, Counselling & Student Development (ACSD: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>) or the Academic Dean's Office (ADO: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>) .

Please communicate with me (Dr. LeBlanc-Omstead) early and often so that we can collaborate to support your full and equitable participation in this course.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are taken seriously. Students are encouraged to review the appropriate policies, including 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 through commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. Use of this service is subject to the licensing agreement currently in place 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 ChatGPT are permitted exclusively for information-gathering and preliminary research purposes (for example, developing an essay outline). If AI tools are used, students must acknowledge their use and explain how the tool was used. Unauthorized use of AI tools 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.