



DISABILITY STUDIES 3311F (570)
Changing Contexts & Practices
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Erika Katzman, PhD, OT Reg. (Ont.)

Email: ekatzma2@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description: Introduces students to key innovations in leadership, rights, laws, policy and practices in the human services and modern disability sector. Research and cases highlight the tensions and possibilities between conceptual ideals and the constraints of practice.

Prerequisite(s): [Disability Studies 2201F/G](#).

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 hours

Course Weight: 0.5

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: DISABST

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course, or special permission from your Dean to 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.

Course Description

Disability policy and practice in Canada have undergone significant transformation over the past century, shaped by changing understandings of disability and sustained activism by disabled people and allies. Policy approaches that locate disability within the individual have given way to socio-political perspectives that recognize the role of social, environmental, and structural conditions in shaping disabled people's lives. This course examines changing policy contexts and practices through a critical disability studies lens, exploring the relationships among policy, activism, citizenship, and community. Through cases that consider key developments in Canadian disability policy and activism, students will explore the roles and relationships of disabled people and allies in efforts to challenge existing systems that shape social and policy contexts. Coursework provides opportunities for students to critically engage with course concepts and topics of individual interest, connecting historical and contemporary disability activism to ongoing debates about policy, rights, inclusion, and social change.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Describe major shifts in approaches to disability policy and practice in Canada.
2. Analyze how changing understandings of disability have shaped policy responses.
3. Critically examine the role of disabled people and allies in social change.
4. Apply critical disability studies concepts to case studies of disability activism.
5. Evaluate the relationships, tensions, and power dynamics between disabled people, allies, families, and other actors involved in disability advocacy and activism.
6. Connect historical and contemporary disability movements to ongoing debates about disability rights, citizenship, inclusion, access, and social justice.
7. Conduct independent inquiry into a disability policy or activism topic of interest, drawing on relevant scholarly and other sources to develop a critical analysis.

Course Outline

09-15 Week 1 – Welcome & Introductions
 09-22 Week 2 – Disability Policy & the Models
 09-29 Week 3 – Disability Policy & Critical Disability Theory I
 10-06 Week 4 – Disability Policy & Critical Disability Theory II
 10-13 Week 5 – Reading Week
 10-20 Week 6 – Disability Policy & Critical Disability Theory III
 10-27 Week 7 – Disabled People, Allies & Social Change I: Deinstitutionalization
 11-03 Week 8 – Disabled People, Allies & Social Change II: Independent Living
 11-10 Week 9 – Disabled People, Allies & Social Change III: Direct Funding
 11-17 Week 10 – Disabled People, Allies & Social Change IV: Civic Participation
 11-24 Week 11 – Disabled People, Allies & Social Change V: Community Safety
 12-01 Week 12 – Project Work
 12-08 Week 13 – Project Showcase

Required Texts

Links to all readings and other required materials are posted on Brightspace. There are no costs associated with accessing these materials.

Required Readings

09-15 Week 1: Welcome & Introductions

No new readings assigned this week.

09-22 Week 2: Disability Policy & The Models

1. Jongbloed, L. & Crichton, A. (1990). Difficulties in shifting from individualistic to socio-political policy regarding disability in Canada. *Disability, Handicap & Society*, 5(1), p. 25-36.

09-29 Week 3: Disability Policy & Critical Disability Theory I

1. Devlin, R. & Pothier, D. (2006). Introduction: Toward a critical theory of dis-citizenship, In R. Devlin & D. Pothier (Eds.) *Critical Disability Theory: Essays in Philosophy, Politics, Policy, and Law* (pp. 1-22). UBC Press.

10-06 Week 4: Disability Policy & Critical Disability Theory II

No new readings assigned this week.

10-13 Week 5: Reading Week

No new readings assigned this week.

10-20 Week 6: Disability Policy & Critical Disability Theory III

1. Ciuria, M. (2023). Ableism and ChatGPT: Why people fear it versus why they should fear it. <https://blog.apaonline.org/2023/03/30/ableism-and-chatgpt-why-people-fear-it-versus-why-they-should-fear-it/>
2. Cowe, H. (2026). Using AI to help generate disability scholarship. *Disability & Society*, 41(4), p. 1149-1153.
3. Gaeta, A. (2025). Hyperfocus: What could the AI boom mean for neurodivergent people? <https://www.understood.org/en/podcasts/adhd-channel/hyperfocus-what-could-the-ai-boom-mean-for-neurodivergent-people>

10-27 Week 7: Disabled People, Allies & Social Change I: Deinstitutionalization

1. The Influence of World Events. In *Truths of Institutionalization Student Workbook* (pp. 35-37).
2. Jones, C. (2017). Writing institutionalization and disability in the Canadian culture industry: (re)producing (absent) story. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 6(3), p. 150-182.

11-03 Week 8: Disabled People, Allies & Social Change II: Independent Living

1. Lord, J. (2009). Chapter 1: Independent living: a meaningful social movement. In *Impact: Changing the Way We View Disability* (pp. 13-28).

11-10 Week 9: Disabled People, Allies & Social Change III: Direct Funding

1. Katzman, E. (2021). Nothing about “us” without whom? (Re)cognizing alliance between disabled people and care workers in direct-funded attendant services. *Disability Alliances and Allies Research in Social Science and Disability*, 12, p. 133–153.
2. Katzman, E. (2023). From identity politics to internalized oppression: navigating positionality in disability research. *Revista Mundaú*, 13, 156–168.

11-17 Week 10: Disabled People, Allies & Social Change IV: Civic Participation

1. Spagnuolo, N. & Shanouda, F. (2017). Who counts and who is counted? Conversations around voting, access, and divisions in the disability community. *Disability & Society*, 32(5), pp. 701-719.

11-24 Week 11: Disabled People, Allies & Social Change V: Community Safety

1. Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. (2018). To survive the Trumpocalypse, we need wild disability justice dreams. <https://truthout.org/articles/to-survive-the-trumpocalypse-we-need-wild-disability-justice-dreams/>
2. Crippling Abolition: <https://abolitionanddisabilityjustice.wordpress.com/opening/>
3. Guiding Principles Based in Disability Justice: <https://abolitionanddisabilityjustice.wordpress.com/guiding-principles/>

12-01 Week 12: Project Work

No new readings assigned this week.

12-08 Week 13: Project Showcase

No new readings assigned this week.

Course Requirements & Evaluation Scheme

Attendance & Participation	20%
Generative AI Policy Project	
Worksheet	10%
Analysis	20%
Open Topic Policy Project	
Proposal	10%
Project	30%
Showcase	10%
Total	100%

Assignment Details

Attendance & Participation (20%)

Students will prepare for weekly in-class discussions and activities by completing readings and other assigned preparatory work. Participation grades will reflect preparedness for class and active engagement during the class. Regular attendance is expected. If you anticipate frequent absences from class, please arrange to meet with Dr. Katzman to discuss an accommodation plan for this course component.

Participation will be evaluated for quantity and quality. High-quality participation will demonstrate critical engagement with readings and discussion topics, as well as thoughtful and respectful interaction with fellow students, the professor, and classroom guests. A participation self-evaluation tool on Brightspace will create opportunities for you to self-assess participation and give input on your participation grade.

Generative AI Policy Project (30%)

Worksheet (10%)

In Week 3 the class will begin a multi-week project exploring use of Generative AI in the classroom. Students will complete a structured worksheet designed to guide the extraction of information from a key course reading. Students will choose whether to complete the worksheet with or without support from Generative AI. In addition to questions about the reading contents, the worksheet will support documentation of and reflection on the process.

Due date: October 5th, 11:55 pm

Analysis (20%)

In Week 6 we will practice applying course concepts to analyze institutional Generative AI policies. Students will have an opportunity during class time to ask clarifying questions about course concepts and their application to support policy analysis from a critical disability perspective. After class, students will complete and submit an analysis.

Option 1: Write a Narrative Policy Analysis (approx. 1,000 words). Apply course concepts to critically evaluate the current institutional Generative AI policy from a critical disability perspective.

Option 2: Revise the Current Generative AI policy. Apply course concepts to revise the current institutional Generative AI policy to reflect a critical disability perspective.

Due date: October 26th, 11:55 pm

Open Topic Policy Project (50%)

Proposal (10%)

The culminating course project invites students to demonstrate comprehension of and critical engagement with course concepts by applying them to analyze a disability policy topic of their choice. Students will submit a project proposal detailing the topic and intended output format. The proposal will also identify relevant course readings, course concepts, and other sources of information.

Due date: November 9th, 11:55 pm

Project (30%)

Drawing on course readings and information from external sources, students will critically examine how a policy represents disability, whose perspectives and interests shape the representations, and the effects of representation on disabled people and communities. Students will consider how changing understandings of disability influence policy and will propose or envision alternative approaches. Students may present their analysis through a conventional written format or a creative medium, such as a podcast, social media campaign, or collaboration with a community partner.

Due date: December 7th, 11:55 pm

Showcase (10%)

In Week 13 all students will share an informal presentation of their policy project. During the café-style showcase, students will take turns showcasing their work to small peer groups and taking in the work of their peers. Students should be prepared to share a 3-minute summary of their work, and to answer questions.

Course Policies

Device Policy

I welcome and encourage 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. Examples of appropriate use of technology during class time include using a device to take notes or to reference readings or other materials relevant to class. I also encourage using the internet to find information related to class discussion, provided it does not hinder your engagement. Examples of inappropriate use of technology during class include using social media and accessing content that is not directly related to class discussions or activities. 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 safe in our shared space. I ask each member of the classroom community to be mindful of language and actions that may be experienced as disrespectful or discriminatory. Please consider your own needs and preferences alongside those with whom you share space. Please be in touch at any time if you are feeling unsafe in the classroom.

Communication Policy

I am available during office hours to clarify concepts and engage in discussion about course material. I also encourage you to communicate with classmates about course materials and evaluations. Before you contact me 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 me by email, you can usually expect a response within 1-2 business days (Monday-Friday). I do not typically respond to emails over the weekend. At busy times of the semester, it may take longer to get a response.

Support & Accommodations

Through intentional design choices I have done my best to reduce barriers and need for accommodation in this course. I am nonetheless happy to support any formal accommodations. Whether you have formal accommodations or not, I encourage you to reach out at any point if your access needs are not being met. I welcome feedback and will do what I can to adapt. If you need support beyond the classroom, I will do my best to connect you with available resources.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Academic Integrity

All students are responsible to review and abide the Western Senate Policy on Academic Offences and King's University College's Guidelines for AI Use. Unless otherwise specified, all coursework is to be your own original work, written in your own words and communicating your own ideas. Within this course, generative AI tools such as Chat GPT are permitted exclusively for information-gathering and planning purposes. Generative AI should not be used to write, re-write, or copy edit your work. If AI tools are used, students must submit a transparency statement naming the tool that was used, describing how it was used, and sharing any prompts or draft text submitted for revision. Unauthorized use of generative AI will be subject to academic discipline. The standard penalty for a first offence will normally be a grade of 0 on the assignment.

**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.