



Disability Studies 3392F (570)
Special Topics: Disability and Work
Fall 2026

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Course Information

Calendar Description: Selected topics of current interest in Disability Studies. A course description will be available at time of registration.

Prerequisite(s): Disability Studies 1010A/B and Disability Studies 2201F/G, or permission of the Instructor.

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 lecture 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 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.

Course Description

Despite laws against employment discrimination, disabled people continue to experience high rates of unemployment. At the same time, navigating accessibility, healthcare, and social supports requires time and energy. While tasks and responsibilities associated with disability and health management are not usually thought of as work, they shape employment possibilities for many disabled people and caregivers. This course explores work through a critical lens, applying concepts from disability theory to expand common definitions of work. Topics include the historical emergence of disability as a work-related concept, contemporary workforce and labour market conditions, participation in paid and unpaid work, and disability-affirming futures for just and accessible work. Students will reflect on the role and meaning of work in our current cultural contexts, and the value of orienting to work through a critical disability lens.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Describe apparent and non-apparent (i.e., hidden) forms of disabled labour, including access work, care work, and advocacy.
2. Apply critical disability studies concepts to analyze the historical and contemporary relationships between disability, work, productivity, and citizenship.
3. Critically evaluate labour market participation, employment policies, and workplace practices using critical disability studies perspectives.
4. Critically assess and compare diverse theoretical and political perspectives on work, including the right to work, the right not to work, and disability justice approaches.
5. Evaluate disability-led and alternative approaches to organizing work and economic participation, including social enterprise and “crip” approaches to labour.
6. Apply critical disability studies and disability justice frameworks to formulate possibilities for more just, accessible, and disability-affirming futures of work.

Course Outline

- 09-11 Week 1: Welcome & Introductions
- 09-18 Week 2: Disability & Work I (Definitions)
- 09-25 Week 3: Disability & Work II (History)
- 10-02 Week 4: The Right to Work I (Access & Inclusion)
- 10-09 Week 5: The Right to Work II (Income & Employment Supports)
- 10-16 Week 6: Reading Week
- 10-23 Week 7: The Right to Work III (Austerity, "Cruel Optimism," Neoliberal Ableism)
- 10-30 Week 8: Disabled Labour I (Activism & Advocacy)
- 11-06 Week 9: Disabled Labour Labour II (The Work of Being Disabled)
- 11-13 Week 10: Disabled Labour III (Crip Time)
- 11-20 Week 11: Crip Futures I (Social Enterprise)
- 11-27 Week 12: Crip Futures II (Decolonizing Our Worth)
- 12-04 Week 13: Crip Futures III (The Right Not to Work)

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

09-11 Week 1: Welcome & Introductions

1. Mahipaul, S. & Katzman, E. (2020). What does it mean to be productive? A conversation between disability allies. <https://medium.com/spark/what-does-it-mean-to-be-productive-a-conversation-between-disability-allies-e1bf32976ca2>

09-18 Week 2: Disability & Work I (Definitions)

1. Rose, S. (2015). Work. In D. Serlin, B. Reiss, & R. Adams (Eds.), *Keywords for Disability Studies* (pp. 187-190). New York University Press.

09-25 Week 3: Disability & Work II (History)

1. Galer, D. (2014). "A place to work like any other?" Sheltered workshops in Canada, 1970-1985. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 3(2), 1-30.
2. Linton, M. (2022). Sheltered workshops and sub-minimum wage labour. *Invisible Institutions Podcast*. <https://invisibleinstitutions.com/invisible-institutions-podcast-episode-2>

10-02 Week 4: The Right to Work I (Access & Inclusion)

Note: Students will choose and read one of the following readings.

1. Buettgen, A., & Tompa, E. (2023). From the Standpoint of Employees with Disabilities: An Analysis of Workplace Accommodation Processes in the Non-Profit Sector. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 12(1), p. 161–190.
2. Vick, A. (2014). Living and working precariously with an episodic disability: Barriers in the Canadian context. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 3(3), 1–28.
3. Wilson-Kovacs, D., Ryan, M. K., Haslam, S. A., & Rabinovich, A. (2008). 'Just because you can get a wheelchair in the building doesn't necessarily mean that you can still participate': Barriers to the career advancement of disabled professionals. *Disability & Society*, 23(7), p. 705-717.

10-09 Week 5: The Right to Work II (Income & Employment Supports)

1. Smith-Carrier, T., Montgomery, P., Mossey, S., Shute, T., Forchuk, C., & Rudnick, A. (2020). Erosion of social support for disabled people in Ontario: An appraisal of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) using a human rights framework. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 9(1), 1–30.

10-16 Week 6: Reading Week

No new readings assigned this week.

10-23 Week 7: The Right to Work III (Austerity, "Cruel Optimism," Neoliberal Ableism)

1. Runswick-Cole, K., & Goodley, D. (2015). Disability, austerity and cruel optimism in Big Society: Resistance and "the disability commons". *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 4(2), 162–186.

10-30 Week 8: Disabled Labour I (Activism & Advocacy)

1. Kelly, C. (2013). Towards renewed descriptions of Canadian disability movements: Disability activism outside of the non-profit sector. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 2(1), p. 1–27.

11-06 Week 9: Disabled Labour II (The Work of Being Disabled)

Note: Students will choose and read one of the following readings.

1. Katzman, E., Kimpson, S., Mahipaul, S., Zaman, S., & Jarus, T. (2024). Disability and access work in fieldwork education. In Branzei, O. & Zeyen A. (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Disability and Work*, Routledge.
2. Katzman, E. & Kinsella, E. A. (2018). 'It's like having another job': The invisible work of self-managing attendant services. *Disability & Society*, 33(9), p. 1436-1459.
3. McCoy, L. (2009). Time, self and the medication day: a closer look at the everyday work of 'adherence.' *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 31(1), p. 128–146.
4. Senteio, C., & Veinot, T. (2014). Trying to make things right: adherence work in high-poverty, African American neighborhoods. *Qualitative Health Research*, 24(12), p. 1745–1756.

11-13 Week 10: Disabled Labour III (Crip Time)

1. Malhotra, R. & Moizer, J. (2025). Crip time, Castoriadis, and transcending the duty to accommodate in the workplace. *Dalhousie Law Journal*, 48(1), 51-82.

11-20 Week 11: Crip Futures I (Social Enterprise)

1. Zeyen, A., Branzei, O., Costales, E., Given, K., Katzman, E., Mihelcic, C. A., ... Wade, W. (2025). Minor miracles – the play: a co-ethnographic exploration of intimate encounters at work by diverse bodies and minds. *Culture and Organization*, 1–24.

11-27 Week 12: Crip Futures II (Decolonizing Our Worth)

1. Ineese-Nash, N., & Wilcox, K. (2026). Sovereign Desires: Disability, Land, and Indigenous Bodies as Sites for Justice. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 41(1), 1-19.

12-04 Week 13: Crip Futures III (The Right Not to Work)

1. Graby, S. (2015). Access to work or liberation from work? Disabled people, autonomy, and post-work politics. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 4(2), 132–161.

Course Requirements & Evaluation Scheme

Attendance & Participation	20 %
Peer-Led Knowledge Exchange (2 x 5%)	10 %
Critical Analysis I	15 %
Critical Analysis II	20 %
Mini-Reflection	5 %
Final Project	30 %
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.

Peer-Led Knowledge Exchange (2 x 5% = 10%)

In Weeks 4 and 9, students will share responsibility for completing an extended reading list and come prepared to participate in a knowledge exchange process. Before class, each student will complete and submit a worksheet (2 x 5%) summarizing their reading. During class, we will take up the worksheet, comparing similarities and differences between the articles.

Worksheet 1 is due Thursday, October 1st by 11:55 pm.

Worksheet 2 is due Thursday, November 5th by 11:55 pm.

Critical Analysis I (15%)

Select a reading or case study from the first part of the course (Weeks 1-7) and explore how it challenges conventional understandings of work, productivity, or employability. Apply concepts from at least three readings to critically analyze how dominant assumptions about work and productivity shape the work and life experiences of disabled people. Discuss what the reading or case study reveals about the relationship between disability, work, and human value.

Length: 1,000 words (approx. 4 pages)

Due date: October 29th, 11:55 pm

Critical Analysis II (20%)

Select one specific activity, process or context and identify the forms of labour that are required, but not recognized as work. Create a map that represents the different people and forms of labour involved, and the relationships between them. Apply concepts from at least three readings to critically analyze what labour is required for disabled people to participate in work and society, why that labour is required, and why some forms of labour are often unrecognized.

Length: 1,000 words (approx. 4 pages)

Due date: November 19th, 11:55 pm

Mini-Reflection (5%)

In Week 1 students will write a short reflective statement on your orientation to work and motivations for taking a course on disability and work. In Week 13, part of course wrap up and review will include a group reflection on key takeaways and lessons learned. In preparation for the discussion, students will submit a short reflection, referring to specific course concepts and readings, on how your thinking has changed over the course of the term and applications for course concepts in your personal and/or professional life.

Length: 250 — 500 words (maximum 1 page)

Due date: December 3rd, 11:55 pm

Final Project (30%)

The culminating course project invites students to develop a proposal for reimagining some aspect of work, employment, or economic participation through a disability studies or “crip” lens. You may present your proposal through a conventional essay format or a creative medium, such as a policy brief, podcast, video essay, or social media campaign. The proposal must:

1. Articulate a specific problem and explain why it is a problem.
2. Propose an alternative approach. Be clear about what needs to change, why and how.
3. Apply at least three course concepts to justify the proposed changes.
4. Discuss tensions and limitations of the proposed approach.

Length: 1,500 — 2,000 words (approx. 6 — 8 pages)

Due date: December 11th, 11:55 pm

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.