

Eng 199 CHP: Introduction to Disability Studies in the Humanities
Spring 2012
11:00am-12:15 pm TR
59A English Building

Prof. Catherine Prendergast
Office Phone: 333-1006
Office Hours: 10-11:00 am TR (or by appt)
294 English Bldg.
cprender@illinois.edu
Twitter: @cjprender
Blog: www.firstyearcomp.com

Poems with Disabilities

I'm sorry—this space is reserved
for poems with disabilities.
I know it's one of the best spaces in the book,
but the Poems with Disabilities Act
Requires us to make reasonable
accommodations for poems that aren't
normal. There is a nice space just
a few pages over—in fact (don't
tell anyone) I think it's better
than this one. I myself prefer it.
Actually I don't see any of those
poems right now myself, but you never know
when one might show up, so we have to keep
this space open. You can't always tell
just from looking at them, either. Sometimes
they'll look just like a regular poem
when they roll in—you're reading along
and suddenly everything
changes, the world tilts
a little, angle of vision
jumps, focus
shifts. You remember
your aunt died of cancer at just your age
and maybe yesterday's twinge means
something after all. Your sloppy,
fragile heart beats
a little faster
and then you know.
You just know.
And the poem is right
where it
belongs. --Jim Ferris

Course Overview

Disability Studies has emerged as a field of study across several disciplines of the humanities with the common orientation of challenging the notion that disability is primarily a medical fact. Instead, scholars of disability consider how notions of disability are created and sustained through cultural and social processes. The study of disability, in departing from the exclusively medical model, has forced new understandings of human diversity, dependency, ability, and inclusion. In this course we will read key texts from several humanistic disciplines that approach disability as a social designation of identity and an embodied experience. Through these key texts we will examine the history, culture, poetic representations, and civic work of people with disabilities.

This course will coordinate with the [Ethnography of the University Initiative](#). The EUI focus will allow students to use the course readings in conjunction with the university archives to explore U of I's history as an early site of disability activism—we have the oldest post-secondary disability support program in the world, the first wheelchair accessible residence halls and accessible fixed bus route—and the current culture of disability on campus. Students will have the opportunity, if they elect, to present their work at EUI's cross-campus conference, and can publish their work (either under their own name or a pseudonym) in EUI's digital repository of student work (housed within the University of Illinois Library's [IDEALS](#)). The work produced in this course will thus contribute to the history of the U of Illinois, and the history of disability in the United States. We will draw on the work of past Campus Honors Program students, currently housed in IDEALS, during our inquiry.

Required Texts

Simi Linton: *My Body Politic*

Susan Schweick: *The Ugly Laws*

Ken Steele: *The Day the Voices Stopped*

Jonathan Lethem: *Motherless Brooklyn*

Gattaca (the movie—rent or acquire on your own)

Other readings will be available through library [e-reserves](#), and through the [IDEALS](#).

Suggested movies to review [or talk to me about a suggestion of your own]

Jupiter's Wife

The King's Speech

A Beautiful Mind

Twitch and Shout

Million Dollar Baby

The Elephant Man

Murderball

As Good as it Gets

Course Management System

Our course will have a Moodle page where content, assignments, and responses to assignments will be posted. <https://course.las.illinois.edu>.

Other Useful Links

Disability Resources and Education at the University of Illinois

<http://www.disability.illinois.edu/>

Student Life and Culture Archives at the University of Illinois

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/archives/slc/>

University of Michigan Initiative on Disability Studies:

<http://www.umich.edu/~uminds/>

The Disability History Association

<http://dha.osu.edu/>

Society for Disability Studies:

<http://www.uic.edu/orgs/sds/>

Requirements

In order for us to enjoy all the benefits of a small class, the active participation of everyone in the course is necessary. Participation includes attending regularly, coming prepared with the reading and assignments for that day completed, taking an active role in the discussion, making comments and suggestions on the work of other students in the class, and listening attentively when other students have the floor. Two absences are allowed before your participation grade will be affected. Late submissions of assignments are downgraded.

The major project of the course will be an 8-10 page paper on some aspect of the history and/or present context of disability at the University of Illinois. In your conclusion you will make recommendations based on your research to the Campus Honors Program. Virtually all the shorter assignments in the course will aid you in completing this assignment. We're going to do it bit by bit, in other words, helping each other along the way. The final paper, due on the last day of class, will take the place of a final exam.

Grading Breakdown

Participation and Attendance (20%)

Discussion of CHP's student's work (5%)

Campus Map (5%)

Document/Image/Artifact from the Archives (10%)

Proposal and Initial Question (10%)

Source Annotated Bibliography (10%)

Short Assignment: Movie Review (10%)

Presentation of movie scene (5%)

Response to *Motherless Brooklyn* (5%)

Final Paper (20%)

Calendar

T. January 17: Introduction to course

R. January 19: *My Body Politic*, chapters 1-3 (pp 1-55)

T. January 24: *My Body Politic*, chapter 4 (pp. 56-69)

CHP Alum Alexandra Ginos: "Overlooked and Overshadowed: The Experience of Women with Disabilities at the University of Illinois in the Post World War II Era"
<http://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/13174>

R. January 26 *My Body Politic*, chapters 5 through 9

T. January 31 *My Body Politic*, chapter 10

CHP Alum Guangyung Koh: "Disability Rights as Civil Rights: A Case Study at the University of Illinois" <http://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/13172>

R. February 2: **Campus Map due**

T. February 7: Meet at Student Life and Culture Archives. SLAC is located in the Archives Research Center, room 105, at 1707 S. Orchard Street in Urbana, Illinois, 61801. This facility is in the former Horticulture Field Laboratory Building (built in 1923), just east of the University of Illinois President's house. Parking is available, and the Orchard Downs #8 bus goes there.

R. February 9: *My Body Politic*, chapter 11

T. February 14: *My Body Politic*, chapter 12

CHP Alum Joshua Glaser: "University Admissions of Students with Disabilities: Is Equality Really Best?"
<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/13175>

R. February 16: **[Class Cancelled: We Will have Individual Meetings in Lieu of Class. Time TBD]**

Document/Image/Artifact from the Archives Assignment due (in Student Research project Field)

T. February 21: *My Body Politic*, chapters 13 and 15

CHP Alum Tony Greif: "Access Your Letters: The Greek System and Its Place within Disabilities Awareness at the University of Illinois"
<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/13173>

R. February 23: *My Body Politic*, chapter 16

CHP Alum Kara Bartolone: “The American Sign Language Program at the University of Illinois and What It Says About the University’s Views Towards the Deaf <http://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/13177>

T. February 28: Have watched *Gattaca*. **Eugenics and the racial genome: politics at the molecular level**

Sharon L. Snyder & David T. Mitchell (on e-reserves)

R. March 1: **Proposal and Initial Question due (in Student Research Project Field)**

The Ugly Laws, introduction and chapter one

T. March 6: **Feedback on two classmate’s Initial Questions and Proposal due**

R. March 8: *The Ugly Laws*, chapter two and chapter four

T. March 13: **[Class Cancelled: Prendergast out of town. Individual Meetings to be Scheduled]**

R. March 15: **Source Annotated Bibliography Due (in Student Research Project Field)**

The Ugly Laws, chapter seven, chapter eight, and chapter 11 and conclusion

SPRING BREAK: March 19-23 YAAAAAY!

T. March 27: *The Day the Voices Stopped*, (pp. 1-51)

R. March 29: **Revised Question Due (in Student Research Project Field)**

The Day the Voices Stopped (pp. 52-82)

T. April 3: *The Day the Voices Stopped* (pp. 83-162)

R. April 5: **Movie Review Due** Movie Day!

T. April 10: *The Day the Voices Stopped* (pp. 163-end)

R. April 12: *Motherless Brooklyn*

T. April 17: **Draft Due (Student Research Project Field)**

R. April 19: *Motherless Brooklyn*

T. April 24: *Motherless Brooklyn*

R. April 26: *Motherless Brooklyn*

T. May 1: **Final Papers Due (in Student Research Project Field)**