



**College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Fall 2016

EDUC 203 001: Disability in American Culture

CRN: 75287, 3 - Credits

Instructor: Dr. Kristen Merrill	Meeting Dates: 08/29/16 - 12/20/16
Phone: 850-814-7439 (Cell)	Meeting Day(s): Tuesday & Thursday
E-Mail: kmerril2@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm
Office Hours: By appointment	Meeting Location: Fairfax - Finley 114

***Note:** This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.*

Course Description

Examines disability, past and present, in American culture through changes in historical, political, legal and societal responses to people with disabilities. Analyzes the disability experience through social and behavioral science perspectives, including diversity, bioethical and human rights conceptualizations/constructs of disability.

Fulfills Mason Core requirement in social and behavioral science.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-requisite(s): None

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain how individuals, groups, and institutions are affected by disability.
2. Demonstrate awareness of changes in social and cultural constructs relative to disability.
3. Use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral science concepts, terminology, principles and theories in the analysis of disability, both past and present.
4. Apply a disabilities empowerment framework to future environments and consider/identify future engagement in disability-related fields.
5. Identify and promote inclusive behavior in social, workplace, and higher education settings.

Required Textbooks

1. Nielson, K. (2012). *A Disability History of the United States*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
2. Haller, B. (2010). *Representing Disability in an Ableist World: Essays on Mass Media*. Louisville, KY: Avocado Press, Inc.

Required Resources

Computer with access to GMU Blackboard

Additional Readings

As assigned

Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

GMU Policies and Resources for Students:

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly.

All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].

e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services and inform their instructor, in writing, as soon as possible. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance.

Students are expected to (a) attend **all** classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) remain in class for the duration of each session, (d) actively participate and demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom, and (e) complete all assignments with professional quality and on time. All assigned readings should be completed prior to class (Note: assigned readings may be added or removed as the semester progresses). Attendance and professional participation at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session.

Students earn attendance and participation points each class (i.e., Professionalism described on p. 5 in the Assignments section), and these points cannot be made up. Please notify me *in advance* by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class. When absence from class is unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and/or lecture details from another student.

Note: Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration, to send or receive emails, or other non-class activities during class time. The use of electronic devices that produce sound or interfere with the learning of others (e.g., cell phones) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to silent mode before the start of class. Do not read or send texts during class time. Please be *fully* present in class ☺

Late Work.

All assignments are due on the dates indicated. Please contact me in advance if there is a problem. For every 24-hour period that an assignment is late, a 10% point deduction will occur.

Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit the (*NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE*) to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Tk20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Tk20 (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Tk20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	% of Points
A	95-100%
A-	90-94%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

Students earn points for each assignment based on an instructor-developed rubric. Course grades are calculated by summing the points earned on assignments and participation, and dividing by the total possible points.

Assignments

Performance-based Assessment (Tk20 submission required).

None

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required).

N/A

Other Assignments.

- A. **Professionalism (15 points):** Attendance, punctuality, and active participation in each class session and assigned activity are expected. Please refer to the Attendance Policy (listed above on p. 3-4) for detailed course expectations. For each session, students will earn up to 2 Professionalism checks for attendance and participation. At the end of the course, the total checks earned will be summed and divided by all possible checks (i.e., 2 checks for each class session held). This proportion will be multiplied by 15 (the total possible Professionalism points) and used to calculate the student's course grade.
- B. **Blackboard Discussion Boards (20 points):** Throughout the semester, there will be four Blackboard discussion boards. Students will provide a comprehensive response to the prompts and to at least 2 classmates' postings. Each discussion board will be worth 5 points, for a total of 20 possible points. To earn full credit, you must submit your postings by the due date and time (9 am of the due date), and *no late submissions will be accepted*. Your response should address the discussion board topic AND include a thoughtful reaction to at least 2 of your classmates' postings. An instructor-created rubric will be provided.
- C. **Personal Experience Paper (25 points):** For this assignment, students will be expected to *either* (a) visit a program that serves children or adults with disabilities *OR* (b) interview a person with a disability or a family member of a person with a disability. Students will then write a paper that explains the setting/interview, synthesizes the experience and connects it to course content, and describes a personal reaction. An assignment description and instructor-created rubric will be provided.
- D. **Media Analysis Paper (25 points):** Students will write an analysis of the portrayal/representation of disability in film, TV, print media, literature, or web-content. After reading or watching the selected content, students will write a paper to describe the content, analyze its portrayal of disability, synthesize the information with course content, and react to the media content. The analysis must link explicitly to class resources (especially the Haller text), readings, and/or speakers. Students must obtain prior approval

from the instructor for the plan of analysis (Note: I am happy to help guide your decisions and make recommendations). An assignment description and instructor-created rubric will be provided.

- E. **Raising Awareness Project (30 points):** As a culminating activity (and the designated performance-based assessment), this project offers an opportunity for students to draw upon the resources encountered in this course to advocate for disability awareness and inclusive actions for people with disabilities. This project will address key issues discussed throughout this course, such as: What are the important conversations and controversies that need to be addressed? How do we approach and discuss disability? What do people need to know to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for people with disabilities to experience inclusions?

Students will select an idea for this project, such as a public service announcement, an information guide, or a multi-media presentation, and will submit a proposal for the project to obtain prior approval. Students will submit their project to the instructor and deliver a 10-15 minute presentation during a class session to their peers and the instructor about their Raising Awareness Project. An assignment description and instructor-created rubric will be provided.

EDUC 203 Self-Monitoring Course Performance <i>Use this self-monitoring tool to track your performance throughout the semester</i>		
Assignment	Points Earned by Student	Total Points Possible
A. Professionalism		15
B. Blackboard Discussion Boards (4 discussions, 5 points each)		20
C. Personal Experience Paper		25
D. Media Analysis Paper		25
E. Raising Awareness Project		30
Total	Total points earned _____	115
	$\frac{\text{_____}}{115} = \text{_____} \%$ <small>Total points earned / Total points possible = Grade</small>	

Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Readings Due	Assignments Due
1	T 8/30 R 9/1	Course Overview & Syllabus Review Introduction to Disability Awareness Constructs & Definitions of Disability	Ensure successful access for Blackboard for this course Nielson Chapters 1-2	Email Dr. Merrill a Picture of You ☺
2	T 9/6 R 9/8	Historical Perspective: Solidification of disability as a rhetorical, legal, and social category Microaggression Disability Etiquette & Person First Language	Nielson Chapters 3-4 PFL Handouts	Discussion Board 1 by 9am on R 9/8
3	T 9/13 R 9/15	Historical Perspective: Laying the groundwork for disability activism and civil rights Ableism & <i>Without Pity</i> Disability Rights as Civil Rights	Nielson Chapters 5-6	Discussion Board 2 by 9 am on R 9/15 Plan for Media Analysis Paper due (T or R)
4	T 9/20 R 9/22	The ADA: A new era of Civil Rights for Disability 1. ADA then 2. ADA reauthorized 3. Recent court cases Introduction to Inclusion & <i>Including Samuel</i>	Nielson Chapters 7-8	Plan for Personal Experience Paper due (T or R)
5	T 9/27 R 9/29	Inclusion & <i>Including Samuel</i> Race, Class, Culture and Disability	Haller Chapters 1-2	Discussion Board 3 by 9 am on R 9/29
6	T 10/4 R 10/6	<i>Educating Peter</i> Models of Disability: Physical, sensory, and other “Visible” disabilities cross the lifespan	Haller Chapters 3-5	Discussion Board 4 by 9 am on R 10/6
7	T 10/11 R 10/13	T No class 10/11 (GMU calendar) R Online class 10/13: IRIS Module & Blackboard Reflection	Haller Chapter 6	
8	T 10/18 R 10/20	T No class 10/18: Independent work day (project proposal due online) Models of Disability: Cognitive, psychological, and other “Invisible” disabilities across the lifespan	Haller Chapters 7-8	Proposal for Raising Awareness Project due T 10/18 (on Blackboard)
9	T 10/25	Disability in Media: Portrayals over	Haller Chapters 9-10	Personal Experience

	R 10/27	time Reflection on Personal Experience project		Paper Due T 10/25
10	T 11/1 R 11/3	Disability in... The Home and the Community Education The Workplace Guest Speaker (T 11/1): Christopher Nace Guest Speaker(s) (R 11/3): LIFE students	Blackboard Readings TBD	
11	T 11/8 R 11/10	Disability in... The Home and the Community Education The Workplace IDEA & School Services Independent Living	Blackboard Readings TBD	Media Analysis Paper Due T 11/8
12	T 11/15 R 11/17	Disability in... The Home and the Community Education The Workplace Guest Speaker: Karen Ingram Guest Speaker: TBD	Blackboard Readings TBD	
13	T 11/22 R 11/24	Technologies that are changing the social, educational, and employment landscapes R No class 11/24 (Thanksgiving)		
14	T 11/29 R 12/1	UDL & Accessibility Course reflections Presentations of Raising Awareness Projects		Raising Awareness Project Due T 11/29
15	T 12/6 R 12/8	Presentations of Raising Awareness Projects		