



## EDUC/PSYC 354: Critical Disabilities Studies (Summer)

### Course Syllabus

Summer Semester 2019

**Instructor:** Doris Kessenich

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Prerequisites:** None

**Class Hours:** TBA

**Office Hours:** by appointment

**Course Type:** Standard Course

**Lab Fee:** TBA

#### Course Description

The course will examine theories and models on critical disability studies from an international and cross-cultural perspective. Through discussion of readings, sharing of experiences, group work, and focused assignments, students will increase their understanding on how culture influences our perspectives and behaviours towards disability, as well as reflect on the several approaches underlining the integration and inclusion of people with disabilities into society.

The goal of this course is to foster greater awareness of the experiences of disabled people and reflection on inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the society by assuming a critical perspective. The course is designed for students willing to broaden their cultural perspectives, develop a heightened sense of intercultural awareness and sensitivity, and see different communities from a comparative, global standpoint. Students who commit to this course should keep an open mind, be motivated to actively learn, and be flexible.

#### Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

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

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome
Explain their knowledge and comprehension of key concepts and theories in critical disability studies	Midterm and Final Exam
Respond appropriately when engaging with people with disabilities	Class exercises
Demonstrate enhanced intercultural competencies and communication skills	Class discussion, Reflective Paper
Engage in critical observation, reflection, and thinking	Field trip and exercises in class

## Course Materials

### Readings

Lorenz K.A. et al. (2017) Developing the System for Observing Behavioral Ecology for Youth in Schools Instrument, Journal of School Health

World Health Organization (2011). World report on disability.

APA (2013) Cultural Formulation. In DSM-5 (pp. 749-759). Washington, DC: Author.

Ferguson, P. M. & Nusbaum, E. (2012). Disability Studies: What Is It and What Difference Does It Make?

Mannino J.E. (2015) Resilience and Transition to Adulthood among Emerging Adults with Disabilities

Willis C.E., et al. (2018) A realist evaluation of a physical activity participation intervention for children and youth with disabilities: what works, for whom, in what circumstances, and how?

Movie: Intouchables; (available in the library)

Persson L.O., Ryden A. (2006) Themes of effective coping in physical disability: an interview study of 26 persons who have learnt to live with their disability

Fillary R., Pernice R. (2005) Workplace culture analysis where people with intellectual disabilities work: A case study approach

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available at a local copy shop for about 15 €. Please see “Umbra Institute Course Material- Textbook and Readers” handout provided in the orientation folder for more information.

### Assessment

Participation	15%
Reading Highlights	10%
Reflective Paper	25%
Mid Term	25%
Final Exam	25%

### Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

### Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following:

#### *Participation (15%)*

Class participation grades are based on oral contributions to the collective learning experience. Participation means active engagement in the course: being prepared for class (having carefully read that day's assignments), asking questions, responding to questions, and attentively listening to others. Please consider that only physical presence is not corresponding to class participation.

### *Reading Highlights (10%)*

Each lesson, students are required to read the assigned reading and submit three to five reading highlights to the instructor. Highlights are a short collection of 85-character bullet points (including spaces) that convey the core messages and provide a quick textual overview of the reading. These bullet points describe the essence of the reading and highlight what is distinctive about it.

### *Reflective Paper (25%)*

Students will have to submit a reflective paper at the end of the course. They will be required to select and discuss a topic from the lesson in a personal reflection, citing five recent authoritative sources. The paper should be approximately 2,500 words long. A specific paper handout will be provided at the beginning of the course.

### *Mid-Term Exam (25%) and Final Exam (25%)*

Students will be required to complete written mid-term and final exam. Both exams will be comprised of different types of questions (e.g., definitions, short essays, short answers), and at least 50% of these exams will be essay questions that will require students to utilize critical thinking skills and to apply knowledge learned from class and from required readings. Students will be asked to describe and discuss key concepts in the field of critical disabilities and apply these concepts to case examples. Students will need to describe various research methods as well as their strengths and limitations.

### Attendance Policy

Class attendance is **mandatory**. Students are allowed **one “free” absence**, which do not need to be justified. **It is the students’ responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class)**. Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students’ grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

Except in case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled: tests cannot be made up. **Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason.** Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Presence during field trips is especially important for student performance in class. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and Umbra academic Director in a timely manner, will lower students’ final grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

### Academic Integrity

All forms of **cheating** (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and **plagiarism** (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

### Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate **respect** for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that **cell phones** must be turned off before the beginning of each class.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### WEEK 1

Introduction to the course and definition of critical disabilities  
Goals and expectations: What is critical disability?

#### Readings

WHO Report on Disabilities (2011) p.21-p.41, 283-294

Observation of interactions  
How to make efficient observations: exercise in class

#### Readings

Lorenz K.A. et al. (2017) Developing the System for Observing Behavioral Ecology for Youth in Schools

Ferguson & Nusbaum (2012) Disability: What Is It and What Difference Does It Make?

### WEEK 2

Field Trip to Viva Sports Association  
Definition and Importance of context

Cultural Response to Disability  
Comparison of response and treatment disorders

#### Readings

APA (2013) DSM-5 p. 749-759

### WEEK 3

How did Italian Society respond to mental disabilities and how did it evolve in recent years

Being differently able: Resilience  
Challenges and implications in development

**Midterm Exam:** Once the midterm exam is finished students are allowed to leave in advance.

#### Readings

Mannino J.A. (2015) Resilience and Transition to Adulthood among emerging Adults with Disabilities

## WEEK 4

Feedback on the midterm exam.  
Disability and Integration  
Watching the movies “Intouchables” and discussion of the movie

Sport and Disabilities  
Utility of physical activity in disabilities

### Readings

Willis C.E. et al. (2018) A realist evaluation of a physical activity participation intervention for children and youth with disabilities: what works, for whom, in what circumstances and how

Persson L.O., Ryden A. (2006) Themes of effective coping in physical disability: an interview study of 26 persons who learned to deal with their disabilities

## WEEK 5

A Future Outlook: the workplace and successful coping  
How to integrate disabilities in employment and how out make the best out of a situation

### Readings

Filary R., Pernice R. (2005) Workplace culture analysis where people with intellectual disabilities work: A case study approach

Persson L.O., Ryden A. (2006) Themes of effective coping in physical disability: an interview study of 26 persons who have learnt to deal with their disabilities

Taking stock of the experience  
In class discussion  
Hand in your reflective paper

### **Final Exam**

Time of the final exam will be communicated during the course