



EDUC/PSYC 355 - Critical Disabilities Studies: Seminar and Practicum

Course Syllabus
Spring Semester 2024

Instructors: Alessia Signorelli, PhD (Week 1); Natascia Petringa, PhD (Rest of semester)

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 21 seminar hours and 33 practicum hours

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Days & Time: Mondays, 2:15pm-3:45pm (Seminar); Wednesdays, 2:15pm-5:30pm (Practicum)

Office Hours: by Google Sheets ([link](#))

Course Type: Seminar and Practicum

Course Fee: USD\$75

Course Description

The course intends to give a multicultural view on differently-abled persons and how societies respond and handle the issue of critical disability. Focus is posed on the different forms of disability (acquired vs. inborn), how to empower a differently-abled person in order to reinforce resilience and how to assist people to reach as much independence as possible. Students will gain insight on how different countries respond to disabilities and which policies of integration are adopted.

All students enrolled in this course will complete three contact hours per week with VIVA Sports Association, which is an athletic program for children and young adults with motor and/or intellectual disabilities in Perugia. Students will assist the professional staff in managing the athletic activities, helping children and adults with a variety of disabilities play sports, including fencing, ping-pong, volleyball, and basketball in order to develop social and motor skills. In addition, students will also collaborate with VIVA staff in designing new activities for participants.

The goal of this course is to foster greater awareness of the experiences of differently-abled people and to reflect on inclusion of individuals with disabilities into society by assuming a critical perspective. It also introduces students to cultural engagement based on mutual benefit and growth through dialogue and hands-on experience. 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. For more information on VIVA: VIVA's website (www.asd-viva.blogspot.it/)

Introductory video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmdrpGNE_LU&feature=youtu.be) Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/376396449052026/)

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Below are the learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

By the end of the course students will be able to:	Assessment Measures used to assess achievement for each outcome:
<i>List and summarize</i> the main forms of disability	Course Journal, Final Exam
<i>Understand and describe</i> cultural variations in the approach to improve societal integration for differently -abled people	Class Discussion and Practicum Participation Reflective Paper
<i>List and summarize</i> the aims of a programme to encourage participation and build resilience for differently-abled people	Course Journal, Final Exam
<i>Analyze and evaluate</i> a programme to encourage participation and build resilience for differently-abled people	Practicum Participation Class Activity

Course Materials

Readings

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Assessment

Attendance	10 %
Weekly Moodle Quizzes	10 %
Course Journal	15 %
Reflective Paper	
● Outline	5%
● Draft	10%
● Final paper	15 %
Office Hours	5 %
Final Exam	25%
End of semester Community Engagement Presentations	5%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero.

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)

Please note: Decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences per course without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Moodle Quizzes (10%)

Students will be assigned short quizzes throughout the semester, which will be due before class time and will not be reopened. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the highest grade they receive. There will be a combination of *content*, *technical*, and *methodological questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the week's teachings and readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class's policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument and assessing sources.

Course Journal (15%)

Students will keep a notebook at the start of the semester, which they will use as a personal space through which to reflect on course material and ideas. In-class assignments (e.g., summaries of assigned readings, analyses of primary sources, mental maps, reflections, predictive exercises) will be regularly scheduled and graded three times throughout the semester, i.e. early in the semester (Week 4), mid-semester (Week 7) and towards the end of the course (Week 11). Each of these checks is worth 5% of your grade, for a total of 15%. See the full prompt on Moodle for more information.

Reflective Paper (30%)

The reflective paper will amount to 30% of the final grade divided as follows: Outline (5%), Draft of paper (10%), and final paper (15%). Full rubrics will be available on Moodle.

Office Hours (5%)

Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask

for help. It also might help for you to ask questions about the various assignments or discuss a paper idea. In this course, you get 5% of your grade for coming to see me one time before Week 9. Please sign up on the Google sheet link on Moodle.

Final Exam (25%)

Students will sit an end of term written exam, consisting of a mixture of short answers, multiple-choice, True /False questions covering all of the course materials. See the full prompt on Moodle for more information.

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations (5%)

During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the **Community Engagement Final Presentations**. Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break. Participation in this event is MANDATORY and an integral part of the community engagement grade.

Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment except the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. All students are allowed 2 unexcused absences, which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences (8 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

Participation in practicum sessions is imperative to the course. Failure to attend a practicum session will be regarded as an absence. If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness includes: death in immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled. Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided. Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the 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.

Tardiness Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to

15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

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.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

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 set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

Laptop 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 set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation, or if working on a group project and literature searches are an integral part of the lesson.

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy: I ask you to leave your computers in your bags and phones in your pockets and use a regular notebook. There are four exceptions: 1) if you have a vision or other accommodation; 2) if you are using a tablet to take notes, one which is not connected to the internet; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools; or 4) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss a need.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1 (JANUARY 22-26, 2024)

Introduction to Critical Disabilities

Introduction to the course and definition of critical disabilities

Goals and expectations: What is critical disability?

Introduction to Viva Sport by Gabriele Bartolucci (founder of VIVA).

Introduction of the practicum by Umbra staff

Readings for the week:

Morganti A., Marsili, F., Signorelli A. (2021) The Italian Leadership on Inclusive Education: Myth or Reality?, *Science Insights Education Frontiers*, 9(1) 1241-1263.

United Nations Convention of Rights of persons with Disabilities (2006) p. 1-37.

WHO Report on Disabilities (2011) p.3-p.10, 261-263.

Activity:

Background probe/Previous knowledge analysis

WEEK 2 (JANUARY 29-FEBRUARY 2, 2024)

Defining Disability Practically: Assessments and the Need for Definitions

Practicum at VIVA Sports begins. You will receive an email by Mr Manuel Barbato and Ms Garilli with detailed info about this activity.

Readings for the week:

Ferguson, P. M., & Nusbaum, E. (2012). Disability Studies: What is it and what difference does it make? *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 37(2), 70-80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/154079691203700202>

Fine, M. (2019) Critical Disability Studies: Looking back and forward, *Journal of Social Issues* 75 (3) p.972-984.

Migliarini, V., Elder, B.C. & D'Alessio, S. (2022): A DisCritInformed Person-Centered Approach to Inclusive Education in Italy, *Equity & Excellence in Education*, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2021.2047415 p. 1-18.

Snyder, S.L., Mitchell, D.T. (2001) Re-engaging the body: Disability Studies and the Resistance to Embodiment, *Public Culture*, 13 (3) p. 367-389.

World Health Organisation (2001) *The ICF and Overview* p.1-10.

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/icd/icfoverview_finalforwho10sept.pdf

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

WEEK 3
(FEBRUARY 5-9, 2024)

How to Make Efficient Observations: Undertaking and the Utility of Observational Research

Readings for the week:

K. A. Lorenz, van der Mars, H., Kulinna, P.H., Ainsworth, B.E. Hovell, M.F. (2017) Developing the System for Observing Behavioral Ecology for Youth in Schools Instrument, *Journal of School Health*, 87 (12) p.894-901.

Sudhakar Russell P.S., Jeyaseelan, L. (1999) Family interventions for intellectually disabled children: A Randomised Controlled Trial. *The British journal of psychiatry : the journal of mental science*. 174 p. 254-8.

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

WEEK 4
(FEBRUARY 12-16, 2024)

Communication Skills, Empathy and Disability

Cultural barriers, effective participation and empathetic engagement. Class will review the experiences of the group participation and explore strategies to improve communication.

Readings for the week:

Mirete, A. B., Belmonte, M.L., Mirete, L., García-Sanz, M.P. (2022) Predictors of attitudes about people with intellectual disabilities: empathy for a change towards inclusion, *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*. 68(5): pp.615-623. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2020.1851122>

Moudatsou, M., Stavropoulou, A., Philalithis, A., & Koukouli, S. (2020). The Role of Empathy in Health and Social Care Professionals. *Healthcare*, 8 (26). P.1-9.

St.Pierre, J. (2015) Crippling Communication: Speech, Disability, and Exclusion in Liberal Humanist and Posthumanist Discourse, *Communication Theory*, 25, 330-348.

Assignments:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

First Course Journal submission

WEEK 5
(FEBRUARY 19-23, 2024)

The Utility of Physical Activity in Disabilities: Organising Activities for Differently-Abled People

Readings for the week:

Kapsal, N.J., Dicke, T.D., Morin, A.J.S., Vasconcellos, D., Maïano, C.M., Lee, J., & Lonsdale, C. (2019) Effects of physical activity on the physical and psychosocial health of youth with intellectual disabilities - A systematic review and meta-analyses, *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 16, p.1-9.

Nicholas L. Holt & Kacey C. Neely Positive Youth Development Through Sport: A Review. *Revista de Iberoamericana de Psicología* Vol. 6, no 2, pp. 299-316.

Sancassiani F., Machado S., Preti A. (2018) Physical Activity, Exercise and Sport Programs as effective therapeutic tools in Psychosocial Rehabilitation. *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health* 21 (14) p.6-10. doi: 10.2174/1745017901814010006.

Assignments:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

Outline of Reflective Paper

**WEEK 6 : MIDTERMS
(FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 1ST, 2024)**

Evaluating Programmes for Youths with Disabilities

Readings for the week:

Magnanini, A., Morelli, G. (2022) Primary school pre-service teachers' attitudes on the value of inclusive motor activity and physical education lessons, *Italian Journal of Health Education, Sports and Inclusive Didactics*, 6 (1) p. 1-12.

Shields, N., Anneliese, J.S., Barr, M. (2012) Perceived barriers and facilitators to physical activity for children with disability: a systematic review, *Br J Sports Med* 46, p. 989-997.

Willis, C. & Reid, S. & Elliott, C. & Rosenberg, M. & Nyquist, A. & Jahnsen, R. & Girdler, S.. (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?. *BMC Pediatrics*. 18. 10.1186/s12887-018-1089-8. P.1-15.

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

**SEMESTER BREAK: NO CLASSES
(MARCH 4-8, 2024)**

**WEEK 7
(MARCH 11-15, 2024)**

Challenges and Implications in Development: Inborn and Acquired Disabilities

Readings for the week:

Bogart, K. R. (2014). The role of disability self-concept in adaptation to congenital or acquired disability. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 59(1), 107-115.

Bogart, K. R., Rosa, N. M., & Slepian, M. L. (2019). Born that way or became that way: Stigma toward congenital versus acquired disability. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 22(4), 594–612.

Payne-Sturges D.C., Swanson M., Balmes J., Hertz-Picciotto I. (2019) Healthy Air, Healthy Brains: Advancing Air Pollution Policy to Protect Children's Health, *American Journal of Public Health* 109, p.550-554.

Scarpa, S. (2021) Exploring psychological well-being and bodily identities formation of youth sports adapted practitioners. comparison of people with congenital and acquired disabilities, *Italian Journal of Health Education, Sports and Inclusive Didactics*, 5(2) p. 127-138.

World Health Organisation. (27 February 2023) Factsheet on Congenital Disorders
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/birth-defects>

Assignments:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

Second Course Journal submission

WEEK 8
(MARCH 18-22, 2024)

Review of Course Materials to Date
Reflection and Discussion on Group Participation
Surprise In-Class Activity

Assignments:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

Draft of reflective paper due

WEEK 9
(MARCH 25-29, 2024)

Being Differently-able: Resilience

Readings for the week:

Hart, A. & Heaver, B. & Brunnberg, E. & Sandberg, A. & Macpherson, H. & Coombe, S. & Kourkoutas, E. (2014). Resilience-building with disabled children and young people: A review and critique of the academic evidence base. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*. 5. pp. 394-422.

Mannino J.A. (2015) Resilience and Transition to Adulthood Among Emerging Adults with Disabilities. *Journal of Paediatric Nursing*, pp.131-145.

Srivastava, N., Jaiswal, C., & Kumar, U. P. S. (2022). A Study on Resilience and Quality of Life among Differently Abled Persons. *Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 49(04), pp. 69-74.

Stuntzner, S., & Hartley, M. (2014). Resilience, Coping, & Disability: The Development of a Resilience Intervention. *Vistas Online*. pp. 1-11.

Assignment:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

WEEK 10
(APRIL 1-5, 2024)

Changes in Responses and Treatments of Physical and Mental Disabilities: New Developments and Hope

Readings for the week:

Fidler, D.J., Lanfranchi, S. (2022) Executive Function and Intellectual Disability: Innovations, Methods and Treatment, *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 66 pp. 1-8.

Runswick-Cole K., Goodley, D. (2013) Resilience: A Disability Studies and Community Psychology Approach, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 7 (2), pp.67–78, 10.1111/spc3.12012

Assignments:

Weekly Moodle Quiz

Final Reflective Paper due (printed on paper and stapled)

WEEK 11
(APRIL 8-12, 2024)

Disability and Integration into Society

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentation overview with Umbra staff and preparation.

Readings for the week:

Gastaldi L., Ghezzi A., Mangiaracina R., Rangone A., Cortimiglia M.N., Zanatta M., Amaral F. (2015) Mapping ICT Access and Disability in the Workplace: An Empirical Study in Italy. *Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation*, 51, (2), pp. 293–300.

Vornholt, K., Uitdewilligen, S., van Ruitenbeek, G. and Zijlstra, F. (2021) The Development and Validation of the Workplace Acceptance Scale: Evidence From a Sample of Workers with Disabilities *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 54 135–149.

Assignment:

Third (last) submission of Course Journal

WEEK 12
(APRIL 15-19, 2024)

Conclusion of the Group Project Participation

Taking stock of the experience: Rehearsal for the final presentation week.

End of Semester Community Engagement Presentation overview with Umbra staff and preparation for the event.

Exam Review

WEEK 13
(APRIL 22-26, 2024)

Final Exams and Special Academic Events Week
End of the Semester Community Engagement Presentations