

**U.S. Disability History**  
**History 4388-008, Fall 2010**  
**Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00 am-12:20 pm**  
**University Hall 008**

**Professor:** Dr. Sarah Rose  
**Office:** University Hall 328  
**e-mail:** [srose@uta.edu](mailto:srose@uta.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 6-7 pm; Thursday, 2-4 pm; and by appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Twenty percent of Americans have a disability, but the experiences of most disabled people remain invisible to us. This course will explore the changing lives of people with disabilities—from railroad workers and rights activists to cyborgs and participants in freak shows—as well as the history of disability policy and conceptions of disability. Rather than treating disability as merely a medical impairment, we will investigate the historical and cultural variability of disability during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Our explorations in disability history will also offer a new way of looking at classic topics in U.S. history, such as citizenship, work, gender, education, and the civil rights movement. This course will be taught as a seminar-style course with limited lectures. We will spend most of our time in class discussing the readings, films, or historical documents. This course fulfills requirements for the History/Pre-Law major.

**COURSE GOALS**

- 1) Students will be able to discuss major themes in U.S. disability history, such as the rise of asylums, the impact of the eugenics and rehabilitation movements, and the development of the disability rights movement and disability culture(s).
- 2) Students will be able to explain the ways in which policymakers and ordinary people have defined and experienced disability and how these notions and experiences have changed throughout U.S. history.
- 3) Students will be able to create well-supported arguments about the history of disability in the United States using both primary and secondary sources.

**REQUIRED TEXTS (available on 2-hour reserve at the Central Library)**

Susan Burch and Hannah Joyner, *Unspeakable: The Story of Junius Wilson* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007)  
Ernest Freeberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman: First Deaf and Blind Person to Learn Language* (Harvard University Press, 2001)  
Nora Ellen Groce, *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard* (Harvard University Press, 1985)  
Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, eds., *The New Disability History: American Perspectives* (NYU Press, 2001)  
Joseph P. Shapiro, *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (Three Rivers Press, 1994)

**WebCT MATERIALS**

All other readings will be available on the class WebCT site. You can access materials marked as being on WebCT by navigating to <http://www.uta.edu/webct> and logging in with your UTA NetID and NetID Password. Select HIST 4388-008; then select "Readings". The readings are organized by the due date.

Please bring all readings under discussion to class.

## **GRADING**

Participation and attendance	20% (200 points)
Reading responses	20% (200 points)
Two short papers	10% each (200 points total)
Midterm	20% (200 points)
Final	20% (200 points)

**Grading scale:** A = 900-1000 points; B = 800-899 points; C = 700-799 points; D = 600-699 points; F = 599 points and below. I will take improvement into account when calculating your final grade.

I will post grades for blog entries, papers, and the exams on WebCT, as well as a midterm progress grade for participation.

**Regular class attendance and participation (20%):** As with any course, participation is crucial for success in this class. Good participation involves three inter-connected elements: preparation, attendance, and engaged participation.

Preparation: I expect you to prepare by critically reading the assigned materials *before class*. I strongly advise that you mark up the readings and/or take notes and bring these notes to class. *Please bring make sure to bring all readings under discussion to class.*

Attendance: You cannot participate unless you attend class and arrive on time. I understand that the unexpected can occur, and you are *allowed three unexcused absences* without affecting your grade. Regular tardiness or leaving early will also affect your grade. If you miss class for a legitimate reason (documented family emergency, illness, athletic team event, etc.), you must contact me in advance if at all possible. Each class, I will pass around a sign-in sheet. It is your responsibility to make sure that you sign in.

0-3 unexcused absences	A = maximum participation grade
4 unexcused absences	B = maximum participation grade
5 unexcused absences	C = maximum participation grade
6 unexcused absences	D = maximum participation grade
7+ unexcused absences	F = maximum participation grade

Engaged Participation: Good participation means contributing thoughtfully to discussions and in-class activities and demonstrating careful consideration of the readings. It also means asking good questions just as much as knowing how to answer a question. During discussions, please keep in mind that the goal is balanced participation. If you find yourself hogging the floor, please yield it; if you find yourself being a wallflower, please speak up. At the midpoint of the semester, I will give each student a written progress report on how I think she or he is doing and also post a tentative progress grade on WebCT.

**Reading responses (20%):** Before every class (by 8 a.m.) you must make a 1-2 paragraph post on the class blog at <http://blog.uta.edu/fall10hist4388008/> responding to the question that I post (I will post ~1 week of questions in advance on the blog's "upcoming questions" page). Your response should directly engage with the readings (e.g., quotes or examples); please give a page number if you use a quote. I strongly encourage you to read each other's responses.

Starting on September 2, I will grade entries for thirteen days on an unannounced basis. However, I will drop the lowest three scores. You will have the opportunity to do a trial run on August 31<sup>st</sup> I will send comments on those entries but will not grade them). If you miss class for an excused absence, please try to post your reading response on time. If that is not possible, please contact me to make alternate arrangements. Each graded entry will be worth 20 points (or 2% of your total grade). No blog is required for the following days: August 26, September 14, October 12, November 4.

**Two short papers (10% each):** For the first paper (~2 pages), I will ask you to interview a person with a disability and then use your interview to think through the definitions of disability that we have talked about in class. The first paper is due Tuesday, September 14 at 11 am. No blog will be required that day. I will post this assignment on WebCT by August 31.

The second paper (~3 pages) will focus on the film *Freaks* and related readings and will be due via e-mail on Friday, November 5 at 5 pm (we will not be meeting on Thursday, November 4). I will post this assignment on WebCT by October 21.

Grades for written work will be based on both the content and the quality of writing. Your paper must be typed in a standard 12-point font (e.g., Times, not Courier). You must properly cite all quotes, paraphrases, and ideas. We will discuss proper citation format in class.

I will be happy to look at outlines and drafts if given advance notice (i.e., not the night before a paper is due). You may also wish to consult with the Writing Center (<http://www.uta.edu/owl/services.htm>). *Make sure to have someone else proofread your paper for you before you turn it in.*

**Take-home midterm (20%):** The midterm essay questions will be posted on WebCT before class on Tuesday, October 5. The midterm is due in class on Tuesday, October 12 at 11 am. There will be no reading (or blog) for October 12, but we will have class that day.

**Take-home final or research paper (20%):** The essay questions for the final will be posted on WebCT before class on Tuesday, December 7. The final (or research paper) is due Tuesday, December 14 at 12 pm. The final will be comprehensive in nature but will focus on the second half of the class.

Alternatively, you may choose to write a 6-7 page research paper on a disability history topic of your choosing (approved by me). Please meet with me to discuss potential topics by October 15; I will also ask you to submit a short proposal (one page maximum) with a summary of your topic and your planned sources by November 11.

### **Etiquette**

I strive to create a respectful, distraction-free learning environment. Please be respectful of the class and your fellow students. *You are expected to arrive on time and remain for the duration of the class.* Please inform me if you need to leave early. *Cell phones and pagers must be turned off during class.*

If you are regularly absent, routinely arrive late or leave the room during the middle of class, use your laptop for anything other than taking notes, read non-course materials during class, engage in chitchat during class, or otherwise neglect to participate, I will not give you the benefit of the doubt if your final grade is on the border between two grades.

### **Other notes on grading**

- 1) I will grant extensions on the short papers in cases of legitimate need, but you must request an extension at least 24 hours before the paper is due (except in case of emergency). Late assignments will be docked one grade per day. Make-up exams will only be offered with a documented, legitimate excuse (e.g., police report or doctor's note).
- 2) I will consider improvement in your work over the course of your semester when calculating your final grade.
- 3) You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

### **IMPORTANT POLICIES**

This syllabus is subject to revision over the course of the semester. I will notify you about any changes in class and by e-mail.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities can be made by talking with the professor as early in the semester as possible. Solutions that benefit one student can end up helping the class as a whole, so please feel free to come forward with any questions or suggestions inside or outside of class. In order for me to make accommodations, you must document your disability through the Office for Students with Disabilities (University Hall Room 102; 817-272-3364). Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

**Dishonesty Policy:** It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

"Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

**My Plagiarism Policy:** If you copy someone else's words or ideas—from the internet, books, other people's papers, encyclopedias, among other sources—without crediting them and using quotation marks for any direct quotes, you are committing plagiarism. If you change just a few words and do not credit the author, that is also plagiarism. If you have any questions, please see me or consult Charles Lipson's *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Chicago, 2008) in the library.

Penalties for plagiarism on the papers or exams will range from a zero on the assignment to an F in the class. I also will report you to the Office for Student Conduct, which might lead to expulsion if you have a record.

**Drop Policy:** I am not allowed to drop you if you stop attending class. You will need to drop this course yourself. The final day to do so is November 5.

**E-Culture Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UT-Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation are only sent to students through email.

All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at [www.uta.edu/email](http://www.uta.edu/email). New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT-Arlington. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly.

**Student Support Services Available:** The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, veterans' services, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 (<http://www.uta.edu/uac/maverickscholars/student-success-programs>) for more information and appropriate referrals.

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **Thursday, August 26: Introductions**

- Print and read the full syllabus and e-mail me with any questions (srose@uta.edu)

#### **Tuesday, August 31: What is disability?**

- Shapiro, *No Pity*, introduction and ch. 1 (pp. 3-40)
- [optional: Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, "Introduction: Disability History: From the Margins to the Mainstream," in Longmore and Umansky, *The New Disability History*, pp. 1-29]

#### **Thursday, September 2: What is disability? (continued)**

- Groce, *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language*, introduction and ch. 5-8 (pp. 1-11, 50-110)

### **DISABILITY IN EARLY AMERICA**

#### **Tuesday, September 7: Early conceptions of disability**

- Parnell Wickham, "Conceptions of Idiocy in Colonial Massachusetts," *Journal of Social History* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 935-954 (**WebCT**)
- Philip M. Ferguson, "The Legacy of the Almshouse" from *Mental Retardation in America: A Historical Reader*, ed. Steven Noll and James W. Trent, Jr., (New York University Press, 2004), pp. 40-64 (**WebCT**)
- Excerpt from colonial Massachusetts poor law (**WebCT**)

#### **Thursday, September 9: Life with a disability in Early America**

- Dea H. Boster, "An 'Epeleptick' Bondswoman: Fits, Slavery, and Power in the Antebellum South," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 83, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 271-301 (**WebCT**)
- Penny L. Richards and George H. S. Singer, "'To Draw Out the Effort of His Mind': Educating a Child with Mental Retardation in the Early Nineteenth-Century South," *Journal of Special Education* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1998): ppp. 443-466 (**WebCT**)
- Excerpt from Simon PP. Newman, *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 111-113 (**WebCT**)
- Excerpt from Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many Headed-Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Beacon Press, 2000), pp. 160, 163-164 (**WebCT**)

### **THE RISE OF ASYLUMS AND DISABILITY CELEBRITIES**

#### **Tuesday, September 14: The asylum movement**

- Paper #1 due in class at 11 am
- No blog required today
- Freeberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman*, introduction and ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-28)
- Excerpt from Dorothea Dix, *Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts, January 1, 1843* (**WebCT**)
- Samuel Gridley Howe, "A Selection from *Report Made to the Legislature of Massachusetts Upon Idiocy* (1848)" from *Mental Retardation in America*, pp. 23-26 (**WebCT**)

#### **Thursday, September 16: Disability celebrities**

- Freeberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman*, ch. 3-4 (pp. 29-90)

#### **Tuesday, September 21: Disability and science**

- Freeberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman*, ch. 5-8 (pp. 91-172)

#### **Thursday, September 23: Evaluating nineteenth-century asylums**

- Freeberg, *The Education of Laura Bridgman*, ch. 9-10 and "Legacy" (pp. 173-221)

## **CITIZENSHIP AND EUGENICS**

### **Tuesday, September 28: Reconstructing disability after the Civil War**

- Davis McDaid, "How a One-Legged Rebel Lives': Confederate Veterans and Artificial Limbs in Virginia," in Katherine Ott, David Serlin, and Stephen Mihm, eds., *Artificial Parts, Practical Lives: Modern Histories of Prosthetics in America* (NYU Press, 2002), pp. 119-143 **(WebCT)**
- Douglas C. Baynton, "A Silent Exile on this Earth': The Metaphorical Construction of Deafness in the Nineteenth Century," *American Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (June 1992): pp. 216-243 **(WebCT)**

### **Thursday, September 30: Disabled citizens?**

- In *The New Disability History*: Douglas C. Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," ppp. 33-57
- Douglas C. Baynton, "The Undesirability of Admitting Deaf Mutes': American Immigration Policy and Deaf Immigrants, 1882-1924," *Sign Language Studies* 6, no. 4 (Summer 2006): ppp. 391-415 **(WebCT)**
- Examples of "ugly laws" from Susan M. Schweik, *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* (New York University Press, 2009), pp. 201-206 **(WebCT)**

### **Tuesday, October 5: The Deaf community**

- Burch and Joyner, *Unspeakable*, introduction and ch. 1 (pp. 1-30)
- In *The New Disability History*: Susan Burch, "Reading between the Signs: Defending Deaf Culture in Early Twentieth-Century America," pp. 214-235
- Albert Ballin, *The Deaf Mute Howls* (Gallaudet University Press, 1998), pp. 26-35 **(WebCT)**
- Questions for take-home midterm posted on WebCT

### **Thursday, October 7: Jim Crow and the eugenics movement**

- Burch and Joyner, *Unspeakable*, ch. 2-3 (pp. 31-72)
- Martin Pernick, "Defining the Defective: Eugenics, Aesthetics, and Mass Culture in Early-Twentieth-Century America," in *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability*, ed. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 89-110 **(WebCT)**

### **Tuesday, October 12: MIDTERM DUE**

- No blog required today (we will watch *Front Wards, Back Wards*)

### **Thursday, October 14: Life in institutions**

- Burch and Joyner, *Unspeakable*, ch. 4-7 (pp. 73-142)
- Excerpt from *The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic* (Bellevue Literary Press, 2008) **(WebCT)**

### **Thursday, October 19: The limits of deinstitutionalization**

- Burch and Joyner, *Unspeakable*, ch. 8-11 (pp. 145-216)

## **DISABILITY AND WORK**

### **Thursday, October 21: Life as a disabled worker**

- Paper topic #2 posted on WebCT
- In *The New Disability History*: Hannah Joyner, "'This Unnatural and Fratricidal Strife': A Family's Negotiation of the Civil War, Deafness, and Independence," pp. 83-106
- Stephen Mihm, "'A Limb Which Shall Be Presentable in Polite Society': Prosthetic Technologies in the Nineteenth Century," in *Artificial Parts, Practical Lives*, pp. 282-299 **(WebCT)**
- Robert M. Buchanan, *Illusions of Equality: Deaf Americans in School and Factory, 1850-1950* (Gallaudet University Press, 1999), ch. 5 (pp. 69-84) **(WebCT)**

**Tuesday, October 26: The exclusion of disabled workers**

- In *The New Disability History*: John Williams-Searle, "Cold Charity: Manhood, Brotherhood, and the Transformation of Disability, 1870-1900," pp. 157-186
- Paul K. Longmore and David Goldberger, "The League of the Physically Handicapped and the Great Depression: A Case Study in the New Disability History," *Journal of American History* 87, no. 3 (2000): 888-922 (**WebCT**)
- Excerpts from The American Blind People's Higher Education and General Improvement Association, *The Problem* (1900-1903) (**WebCT**)

**Thursday, October 28: Freak Shows**

- Robert Bogdan, "The Social Construction of Freaks," in *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (1996), pp. 23-37 (**WebCT**)
- David A. Gerber, "The 'Careers' of People Exhibited in Freak Shows: The Problem of Volition and Valorization," in *Freakery* pp. 38-54 (**WebCT**)

**REHABILITATION****Tuesday, November 2: The rise of the rehabilitation movement**

- In *The New Disability History*: Brad Byrom, "A Pupil and a Patient: Hospital-Schools in Progressive America," ppp. 133-156
- In *The New Disability History*: Richard K. Scotch, "American Disability Policy in the Twentieth Century," pp. 375-392
- Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Jimmy's Fight for Independence* (pamphlet, 1910) (**WebCT**)

**Thursday, November 4: NO CLASS: Papers on *Freaks* due Friday, November 5 at 5 pm**

- No blog required today

**Tuesday, November 9: The pressures of rehabilitation**

- Hugh Gregory Gallagher, *FDR's Splendid Deception: The Moving Story of Roosevelt's Massive Disability and the Intense Efforts to Conceal It from the Public* (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985), ch. 2-8 & 10, ppp. 10-67, 88-105 (**WebCT**)

**Thursday, November 11: Disabled veterans**

- Optional: research paper proposal and sources (1 page) due in class
- In *The New Disability History*: K. Walter Hickel, "Medicine, Bureaucracy, and Social Welfare: The Politics of Disability Compensation for American Veterans of World War I," ppp. 236-267
- David Serlin, "Engineering Masculinity: Veterans and Prosthetics after World War Two" in *Artificial Parts, Practical Lives*, pp. 45-74 (**WebCT**)
- Magazine articles on disabled World War II veterans (**WebCT**)

**DISABILITY RIGHTS & DISABILITY CULTURE(S)****Tuesday, November 16: Forerunners of disability rights**

- Mary Tremblay, "Going Back to Civvy Street: A Historical Account of the Impact of the Everest and Jennings Wheelchair for Canadian World War II Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury," *Disability & Society* 11, no. 2 (1996): 149-169 (**WebCT**)
- Steven E. Brown, "Breaking Barriers: The Pioneering Disability Students Services Program at the University of Illinois, 1948-1960," in *The History of Education in U.S. Education*, ed. Eileen H. Tamura (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 165-192 (**WebCT**)
- Susan Schwartzenberg, *Becoming Citizens: Family Life and the Politics of Disability* (University of Washington Press, 2005), pp. 5-9, 18-27, 35-41, 63-65 (**WebCT**)

**Thursday, November 18: The disability rights movement**

- *No Pity*, ch. 2-3 (pp. 41-104)

**Tuesday, November 23: The ADA**

- *No Pity*, ch. 4-5 (pp. 105-210)

**Thursday, November 25: THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS**

**Tuesday, November 30: Introduction to disability culture(s); Autism culture**

- Browse the websites of AutCom and ASAN: [www.autcom.org](http://www.autcom.org) and [www.autisticadvocacy.org](http://www.autisticadvocacy.org)
- Read "About Donna" on Donna Williams' website: <http://www.donnawilliams.net/about.0.html>
- M.A. Gernsbacher, M. Dawson, and H. Hill-Goldsmith, "Three reasons not to believe in an autism epidemic," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14, no. 2 (2005): 55-58 (**WebCT**)
- R. Jones, C. Quigney, and J. Huws. "First-hand accounts of sensory perceptual experiences in autism: A qualitative analysis," *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 28, no. 2 (2003): 112-121 (**WebCT**)
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**Thursday, December 2: Disability sports and identity**

- Readings TBD

**CONTEMPORARY DISABILITY ISSUES IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

**Tuesday, December 7: Assisted suicide**

- Questions for take-home final posted on WebCT
- *No Pity*, ch. 8 (pp. 237-257)
- Paul K. Longmore, "The Resistance: Disability Rights and Assisted Suicide," in *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability* (Temple University Press, 2003), pp. 175-204 (**WebCT**)
- Peter Singer, "Taking Life: Humans," excerpted from *Practical Ethics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cambridge University Press, 1993) (**WebCT**)

**Thursday, December 9: Cyborgs & cochlear implants**

- Leslie Swartz and Brian Watermeyer, "Cyborg anxiety: Oscar Pistorius and the boundaries of what it means to be human," *Disability & Society* 23, no. 2 (March 2008): 187-190 (**WebCT**)
- *New York Times* articles on Oscar Pistorius (**WebCT**)
- Excerpt(s) TBD on cochlear implants (**WebCT**)

**Tuesday, December 14: FINAL (OR RESEARCH PAPER) DUE AT 12:00 PM**