**Topics in Disability Studies: Disability and Art**

**DS 3321-001, Spring 2014**

**Tuesday & Thursday, 5:30p.m. – 6:50p.m.**

**Room: UH07**

**Professor:** Janet Morrow

**Office:** UH 205-D

**E-mail:** [jmorrow@uta.edu](mailto:jmorrow@uta.edu)

**Phone:** text only and be sure and include your name 817-296-8467

**Office Hours:** T/Th 3:30p-5:30p; and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Have you ever wondered why people with disabilities are so often portrayed in the arts as either noble heroes (ala *RoboCop* or *The Six Million Dollar Man*) or despicable villains (such as Caliban in *The Tempest* or The Penguin in *Batman Returns*)? What drives these extreme portrayals and how do they affect perceptions of disability and people with disabilities? We will analyze these and many other connections between disability and art. We will look at artists with disabilities making use of their art as a means to interpret and express their own lived experience, as well to as medical professionals regarding art as simply helpful therapy for the disabled. We will think about “the gaze” as it relates to disability art. What makes us look? Why do we stare? Are there contexts in which staring is acceptable or even invited? And who gets to decide these questions; who has a right to speak for people with disabilities?

Since the 1970s, as the disability rights movement has gained momentum, disability art has also emerged as an effective tool for initiating discourse about disability and advocating for understanding and social change. In order to fully explore the multi-faceted relationship between disability and art, we will first establish a framework for analyzing and discussing works of art and then examine the foundational principles of disability studies. We will investigate the numerous ways in which art can be related to disability and the manner in which different media may be used to interpret disability and shape perceptions of disability.

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 and related works of art. We will offer opportunities for guided museum tours for students to experience some of the works we discuss firsthand. Artists with disabilities will be invited to visit the class and discuss their practices. This course is offered as part of the new Minor in Disability Studies.

Requirements**:** active participation in discussion, participation in class blog, two short papers, take-home midterm, take-home final or research paper, and small collaborative art project. This course requires no previous experience in art. Museum or gallery tours arranged during the course of the semester are optional, but highly recommended.

**COURSE GOALS**

1. Students will gain the observational and verbal/written skills to analyze a work of art in terms of both form and content and identify ways in which it might interpret or be otherwise related to disability.
2. Students will have a foundational understanding of disability culture and various definitions and perceptions of disability, including the medical model and the social model.
3. Students will explore and develop their own theories about how art about disability affects everyone; people with disabilities as well as those who are TAB (temporarily able-bodied).

**REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the UTA Bookstore & on 2-hour reserve at the Central Library) (additional readings online):**

* Kendall Buster and Paula Crawford, *The Critique Handbook: The Art Student’s Sourcebook and Survival Guide, Second Edition* (Pearson Education, Inc. publishing as Prentice Hall, 2010)
* Joseph P. Shapiro, *No Pity, People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (Three Rivers Press, 1994)
* Ann Millett-Gallant, The *Disabled Body in Contemporary Art* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2010)
* Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Staring, How We Look* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
* Susan Crutchfield and Marcy Epstein, eds., *Points of Contact, Disability, Art and Culture* (University of Michigan Press, 2012)
* Petra Kuppers, The *Scar of Visibility, Medical Performances and Contemporary Art* (University of Minnesota Press, 2004)

**MAVSPACE MATERIALS**

All other readings with one exception will be available on MavSpace at: <https://mavspace.uta.edu/xythoswfs/webview/fileManager.action?stk=B6CE9A3C827571E>.

You will find the Donna Haraway reading, Cyborg Manifesto, online at: http://www.egs.edu/faculty/donna-haraway/articles/donna-haraway-a-cyborg-manifesto/

Please bring all readings under discussion to class.

**GRADING**

Participation and attendance 200 points (20%)

Reading responses 200 points (20%)

Two short papers 100 points each (20% total)

Art project 100 points (10%)

Midterm 150 points (15%)

Final or research paper 150 points (15%)

**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 Blackboard, as well as a midterm progress grade for participation.

***Regular class attendance and participation (200 points or 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 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 early departures 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 Blackboard.

***Reading responses (200 points or 20%)*:** By 5:30 pm before every class, you must make a 1-2 paragraph post on the appropriate thread on the discussion board in Blackboard responding to the question that I post. 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 January 21, I will grade every entry (25 total) on the following basis, but will drop your 5 lowest scores. Each entry is worth 10 points.

**Strong (9.5 points)**

* Answers *entire* question thoughtfully and covers all assigned readings
* Engages with central points from the reading(s) and supports argument (or “muddiest point”) with appropriate examples and quotes

**Acceptable (8.25 points)**

* Answers most of question well and covers most of readings well (may be stronger on one reading than other)
* Engages with some major points of readings; provides some support for argument/muddiest point but could be more thorough

**Weak (7 points)**

* Answers only part of question
* Minimal or no engagement with readings or offer examples/quotes to support “muddiest point” or argument
* Suggests only a passing glance at readings

**No Reponse (0 points)**

You will have the opportunity to do a trial run on January 16; I will send comments on those entries but will not grade them.

If you must miss class for an excused absence, please do your best to post your reading response on time. If that is not possible, please contact me to make alternate arrangements. Reading responses are not required for the following days: January 13, January 15 (optional trial run), February 4 (first short paper due), March 6 (mid-term due) and April 3 (second short paper due) .

***Two short papers (100 points each; 20% total):***

For the first paper (900 words or more; comes out to be about 3 pages plus images), compare and contrast three works of art that depict or are expressive of disability. Please include images of the works in your paper and be sure to properly cite the source from which you obtain your images. The three works must be related to each other in some way; i.e., reflecting the same disability, or utilizing a similar medium or technique, or created by artists who share the same disability, etc. Use what you have learned about analyzing works of art to comment on the formal elements as well as the content of each piece. Do the three all reflect the same perception of disability or do they contradict each other in any essential ways? The first paper must be uploaded to Blackboard by Tuesday, February 4 at 5:30 pm. No blog will be required that day.

For the second paper (900 – 1200 words or more; about 3-4 pages plus images), research and write a biographical sketch of an artist who creates work about disability. Answer the question, “What is this artist hoping to achieve with his or her work?” Explain what you find interesting about this artist and how they fit within (or do not fit) disability culture. The artist does not have to be famous; he or she may be an “emerging” or local artist. This paper must be uploaded to Blackboard by Tuesday, April 3 at 5:30 pm. A reading response will not be required that day.

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 (150 points or 15%):*** The midterm essay questions will be posted on Blackboard before class on Thursday, February 27. The midterm must be uploaded to Blackboard by Thursday, March 6 at 5:30 pm. There will be no reading or blog due for March 6, but we will have class that day.

***Take-home final (150 points or 15%):*** The essay questions for the final will be posted on Blackboard before class on Tuesday, April 29. The final is due Tuesday, May 6 by 6:50 pm. The final will be comprehensive in nature but will focus on the second half of the class.

***Art Project (100 points or 10%)***

Inspired by the postcard craze of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, each student will create a postcard-sized (4” x 6”) piece of art on card stock or other sturdy material. Any media is acceptable and I will share images of many examples in class. No artistic experience is necessary for the completion of this project. Grading will be based on thought and effort expended in the creation of the postcard as well as reflection of concepts/ideas explored in this class. Assignment will be introduced in class on April 8 and finished postcards are due at the beginning of class on April 27.

**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, this will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade and, in addition, 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 the 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.

**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*, 2nd 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 suspension or expulsion.

**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 March 28.

**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.

**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 Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.*

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

***Week 1***

**Tuesday, January 14: Introductions**

* Print and read the full syllabus and bring any questions to class

**Thursday, January 16: Developing a Vocabulary to Talk about Art and Defining Disability**

* Paper topic #1 posted on Blackboard
* Davis, “Introduction: Normality, Power, and Culture,” *The Disability Studies Reader*: 1-14 **(MavSpace)**
* Buster and Crawford, *The Critique Handbook*, ch. 1: “Formal Matters,” pp. 3-40

***Week 2***

**Tuesday, January 21: Developing a Vocabulary (continued) and Defining Disability (continued)**

* Buster and Crawford, *The Critique Handbook*, 2 and 3: “Meaning,” and “Craft and Appropriation,” pp. 41-84
* We will discuss the readings and practice analyzing images of artwork displayed in class.

**Thursday, January 23: Defining Disability (continued)**

* Shapiro, *No Pity*, Introduction and ch. 1: “Tiny Tims, Supercrips, and the End of Pity,” pp. 3-40

***Week 3***

**Tuesday, January 28: Defining Disability (continued)**

* Shapiro, *No Pity*, ch. 2 & 8: “From Charity to Independent Living,” and “No Less Worthy a Life,” pp. 41-73, 258-288
* Shakespeare, “The Social Model of Disability,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, pp. 214 – 221 **(MavSpace)**

**Thursday, January 30: Defining Disability (continued) and Intersections of the Disabled Body and Art**

* We will watch part of a video, *Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back* (Snyder and Mitchell) in class.
* Millett-Gallant, *The Disabled Body in Contemporary Art*, “Introduction: Enabling the Image,” pp. 1-24

***Week 4***

**Tuesday, February 4: Intersections of the Disabled Body and Art (continued)**

* Paper #1 due in class at 5:30p; no reading response required
* Millett-Gallant, *The Disabled Body in Contemporary Art*, ch. 1 & 2: “Disarming Venus,” and “Sculpting Body Ideals,” pp. 25-82
* Guest artist - TBD

**Thursday, February 6: Intersections of the Disabled Body and Art (continued)**

* Millett-Gallant, *The Disabled Body in Contemporary Art*, ch. 3: “Performing Amputation,” pp. 83-112

***Week 5***

**Tuesday, February 11: Intersections of the Disabled Body and Art (continued) and The Gaze**

* Gallant, *The Disabled Body in Contemporary Art*, ch. 4 and conclusion: “Exceeding the Frame,” and “Conclusion: Staring Back and Forth,” pp. 113-144
* Garland-Thomson, *Staring,* Part 1: “About Staring,” pp. 3-11

**Thursday, February 13: The Gaze (continued)**

* Garland-Thomson*, Staring*, Part 2: “What is Staring,” pp. 13-59

***Week 6***

**Tuesday, February 18: The Gaze (continued)**

* Garland-Thomson, *Staring*, Part 3 & 4: “Don’t Stare,” and “Starers and Starees,” pp. 63-94

**Thursday, February 20: The Gaze (continued)**

* Garland-Thomson, *Staring*, ch. 8 & 9: “Faces,” and “Hands,” pp. 97 – 139

**Saturday, February 22: Guided Tour of The Dallas Museum of Art, TBD**

***Week 7***

**Tuesday, February 25: The Gaze (continued)**

* Garland-Thomson, *Staring*, ch. 10-11 and Part 6: “Breasts,” “Bodies,” and “A Last Look,” pp. 141-196

**Thursday, February 27: Who is Worthy to Speak?**

* Midterm essay questions posted on Blackboard before class
* Crutchfield and Epstein, *Points of Contact*, Introduction, “My Withered Limb” and “Postcards to Sophie Calle,” pp. 1 – 58
* NOTE: Dr. Kim E. Nielsen is scheduled to give her talk on “Saints, Sinners, and BFFs: Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan Macy” today. If it is scheduled during our class time, we will attend her lecture instead of having class.

***Week 8***

**Tuesday, March 4: Who is Worthy to Speak? (continued)**

* Serlin and Perry, “Engineering Masculinity,” and “Re-Arming the Disabled Veteran,” *Artificial Parts, Practical Lives*, pp. 75-101 **(MavSpace)**
* Wade, “I Am Not One of The,” and “Cripple Lullaby,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, pp. 546-547 **(MavSpace)**

**Thursday, March 6: Who is Worthy to Speak? (continued)**

* Midterm due on Blackboard before class; no reading response required
* Paper topic #2 posted on Blackboard
* Cruthfield and Epstein, *Points of Contact*, “But Roosevelt Could Walk,” “The Dramaturgy of Disability,” pp. 68-89, 93-107
* Guest artist - TBD

**Spring Break March 11 & 13**

***Week 10***

**Tuesday, March 18: Who is Worthy to Speak? (continued)**

* Cruthfield and Epstein, *Points of Contact*, “Relatively Disabled,” and “Rehearsal,” pp. 256-261, 238-255 (please read in this order)

**Thursday, March 20: Photography – From Medical Documentation to Enfreakment**

* Cruthfield and Epstein, *Points of Contact*, “The Beauty and the Freak,” and “Talking About Talking Back,” p. 181-217

***Week 11***

**Tuesday, March 25: Photography (continued)**

* Hevey, “The Enfreakment of Photography,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, pp. 432-446 **(MavSpace)**
* We will watch a video, Tod Browning’s *Freaks* in class.

**Thursday, March 27: Blurring the Lines Between Medical Practice and Art Practice**

* (March 28 is last day to drop classes)
* Kuppers, *The Scar of Visibility*, Introduction and ch. 1: “Visions of Anatomy,” pp. 1-54

***Week 12***

**Tuesday, April 1: Blurring the Lines (continued)**

* Kuppers, *The Scar of Visibility*, ch. 2: “Living Bodies,” pp. 55-73

**Thursday, April 3: Blurring the Lines (continued)**

* Second short paper due in class at 5:30P, no reading response required
* Guest artist – TBD
* Kuppers, *The Scar of Visibility*, ch. 3 & 6: “The Collaborative Arts: Pain and Performance,” and “Medical Museums and Art Display,” pp. 74-94, 155-175
* NOTE: There may be a VSA Arts exhibition by artists with disabilities in the University Center Gallery today. If so, we will view the exhibition together.

***Week 13***

**Tuesday, April 8: Postcard Project and Hollywood Looks at Disability**

* Postcard project introduced
* Kuppers, *The Scar of Visibility*, ch. 5: “Monsters, Cyborgs, Animals,” pp. 127-154
* Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto, Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, http://www.egs.edu/faculty/donna-haraway/articles/donna-haraway-a-cyborg-manifesto/

**Thursday, April 10: Hollywood Looks at Disability (continued)**

* O’Reilly, *The Body in Contemporary Art*, ch. 3: “Difference and Solidarity,” pp. 78-111 **(MavSpace)**

***Week 14***

**Tuesday, April 15: Hollywood Looks at Disability (continued)**

* O’Reilly, *The Body in Contemporary Art*, ch. 4: “Nature, Myth, Technology,” pp. 112-147 **(MavSpace)**

**Thursday, April 17: Inside and Outside the Museum – Where Disabiliy Discourse Occurs**

* Dodd, Jones, Jolly and Sandell, “Disability Reframed,” *Re-Presenting Disability*, pp. 92-111 **(MavSpace)**

***Week 15***

**Tuesday, April 22: Postcard Project & Inside and Outside the Museum (continued)**

* Postcard projects due at 5:30p
* Group critique of postcards
* Millett-Gallant, “Sculpting Body Ideals: *Alison Lapper Pregnant* and the Public Display of Disability,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, pp. 398-410 **(Blackboard)**

**Thursday, April 24: Inside and Outside the Museum (continued)**

* Werh and Squire, “Transforming Practice,” *Re-Presenting Disability*, pp. 213-227 **(MavSpace)**

**Saturday, April 26: Guided Tour of The Modern Museum of Art in Fort Worth – TBD**

***Week 16***

**Tuesday, April 29: Performance Art as Disability Discourse**

* Essay questions for take-home Final posted on Blackboard before class
* Crutchfield and Epstein, *Points of Contact*, “Eclipse: A Theater Workshop on Disability, or, Reflections on Ahab’s Tribe,” pp. 262-291

**Thursday, May 1: Performance Art as Disability Discourse (continued)**

* Last day of class
* Jones, “The ‘Pollockian Performative’ and the Revision of the Modernist Subject,” *Body Art, Performing the Subject*, pp. 53-102 **(MavSpace)**

**Tuesday, May 6: FINAL DUE BY 6:50 pm**