

WRITING 101: Disability and Representation

Professor: Marion Quirici, Ph.D. (Dr. Q)

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Email: marion.quirici@duke.edu

Office hours: MW 12:00 – 1:00pm

Office: Art Building 200 O

Course details:

101.26: MW 1:25 - 2:40, Bell Tower West 113

101.27: MW 3:05 - 4:20, Art 116

Website: www.sakai.duke.edu

Course Description. Representation is a cornerstone of modern democracy. Traditionally, however, representation and rights have been reserved for citizens who meet particular standards of fitness and ability. American values of self-reliance and competition enable a narrative in which the “haves” are somehow more deserving than the “have nots.” This course considers the consequences of these ideals, especially for disabled people, who are the world’s largest minority.



AP Photo / Jacqueline Martin

We will discuss multiple forms of “representation”—within the legal and public sphere, as well as in the world of culture, arts and entertainment, work, the marketplace, and the physical environment. In our current political climate, a “survival of the fittest” philosophy rules in economic proposals that cut Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, and immigration policies that punish so-called “public charges.” How do we define strength and weakness in our national culture? How do these values impede our professed commitment to equality and civil rights?

Our course theme is **interdisciplinary**, and I encourage you to pursue projects that appeal to your interests, whether those include the health sciences, law, politics and government, the social and behavioral sciences, education, architecture and engineering, business, or the arts and humanities.

We will work with an assortment of **texts**: including critical essays by disabled activists, as well as representations of disability in literature, television, films, and the media. Our exploration of articles and essays addressing disability justice will prepare you to **engage with current ideas** and **contribute to an ongoing conversation**, both **in speech and in writing**.

In an online **discussion forum**, you will write responses to the readings and other course content across the semester, and interact with your classmates.

Your first paper is a **textual analysis** (four to six pages). You will choose a representation

of disability from literature, film, television, advertising, or the media.

Your final paper is a **researched essay** (six to eight pages). Our **class discussions** of a variety of subjects, from language to history, civil rights, the law, medical ethics, institutions, mental disability, chronic illness, race, and the constructed environment (infrastructure, buildings, transportation, public space, and technology) will help you define your topic.

We will devote classtime in the final weeks of the semester to **drafting, workshopping, and revising** your writing. You will work toward the final assignment with an **annotated bibliography** that summarizes your reading on the topic, a **research statement** that clarifies your argument, and a short **class presentation**.

By taking this course, you will learn to enter into important conversations, support your ideas effectively, and to raise social consciousness.

Goals and Practices. As we address the questions this course raises, in conversation and in writing, we will learn:

- To **engage with the work of others**, including disability studies scholars and activists, scholars in our own disciplines, writers addressing disability from non-academic perspectives, and your fellow students.
- To **articulate a position** and sustain an argument using research and critical analysis.
- To **situate our writing** appropriately according to audience, genre, and context.
- To **transfer writing knowledge**—skills of critical thinking, textual analysis, and cultural critique—into situations beyond Writing 101.

To meet these goals, we will practice:

- Close reading
- Crafting analytic responses to texts, objects, cultural beliefs, and environments
- Researching a topic of choice using library resources
- Identifying a specific research question
- Workshopping our writing in both large and small group settings
- Revising our work in response to feedback
- Editing

As a reflection of Duke's commitment to intellectual inquiry, Writing 101 provides a foundation for students to learn new kinds of writing, preparing them to identify relevant questions and articulate sophisticated arguments in their future work, both inside and outside the university.

(For the more extensive version, visit <http://twp.duke.edu/faculty/writing-101/course-goals-practices>).

I. Writing Assignments

Discussion Forums. On eight occasions this semester, I will ask you to post a paragraph (around 200 words) on the Sakai Discussion Forum. The content of each forum post will vary: some forum posts will be in response to course readings, discussions, and activities. Others will be in preparation for writing assignments. The final post will be a critical analysis of your own earlier work, to assess learning. The forums are designed to facilitate interactions with your classmates outside of class: please engage in dialogue by making reference to your classmates' posts. You may start your own thread, or you may respond to a thread started by a classmate. **Everyone is required to read the entire forum before class.** To give us time to do so, be sure that you have posted to the Forum **no later than 12:00 noon on the day we have class.**

Textual Analysis. As a demonstration of your close reading skills, you will critically analyze a textual object, using insights from our discussions of disability. The text you analyze may be an episode of a television program, an advertisement, a short story, a film, a news article or report, a song, a cartoon, a website, or even a public space. Depending on what text you choose, your guiding question will be different, but here are some examples: Does the text reinforce negative social attitudes about disability? Does it offer a critique of those attitudes? Does it try to teach us something about disability and difference, and if so, what? Does it offer a critique of "normalcy"? Your analysis should cohere into a supported argument.

Researched Essay. We will spend the majority of the semester working toward this paper, to be turned in at the end. You will make a specific, supported argument based on our discussions and your thinking in the course about disability-related issues in society. You may choose to pursue a project relevant to your own anticipated academic field. How does an awareness of disabled perspectives enrich a given field of study, and how can your work have an impact on disability advocacy and empowerment? Our readings and discussions will generate a long list of potential research topics, so be on the lookout for subjects or inquiries that interest you.

Research Statement and Annotated Bibliography. As you compile your research and determine your argument, you will put together a research statement—a one-page document summarizing the critical consensus (or lack thereof) on your topic, with specific reference to the sources you have read, and announcing your argument. Describe the importance of your research and analytic work. Then, list your sources in an MLA-style bibliography. Each entry should be followed by a concise paragraph describing the source: its argument, its methods, what you learned from it, or perhaps, its failures and inadequacies. How will each source be of use to you in your researched essay?

Presentation Paper. Toward the end of the semester, you will present a seven-minute talk to the class about your researched essay. You will read the presentation from a paper you have written for the purpose of sharing out loud. Tell us about your topic and your research. Then, describe your argument and why it is important. The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop confidence in speaking publicly to an audience of your peers. There will be a short question-and-answer period following the presentations.

II. Readings and Resources

Readings. All course readings will be made available on our **Sakai course site** under the Resources tab, in a folder called “Readings.” Please read the assigned texts and take notes before coming to class. Bring a copy of the reading and your notes to class for discussion. Printing is recommended but not required. The use of laptops or tablets in class is permissible unless it becomes a distraction. I prefer that students do not use cell phones to access readings in class.

Sakai. In addition to course readings, you will find recommended articles, sample student writing, web links, and key course documents on our Sakai course site. This is also where you will post to the Discussion Forum, and submit writing assignments. <https://sakai.duke.edu/>

Style guides. We will not be using a writing handbook in this class, but there are good free resources available to you. Here is a link to Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), which offers style guides, advice on research, grammar and mechanics, and so on: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

TWP Writing Studio. All students are encouraged to visit the Writing Studio, located on East Campus in Bivins 107, and on West Campus in Perkins 112. Here you will find a place beyond our classroom to work collaboratively with an attentive, non-evaluative reader. You can visit at any stage in your writing process, including before you have even started writing.

Visit <http://twp.duke.edu/twp-writing-studio> to schedule a face-to-face or online appointment and to learn more about Writing Studio resources.

Course Librarian. Our course librarian is Ira King (ira.king@duke.edu). He will help familiarize you with Duke's library system and assist you with formulating and pursuing your final research project. Ira will lead us in a large-group workshop and is available for individual consultations.

Student Disability Access Office (SDAO). We all learn differently, and I will do my best to make sure that there are multiple means of accessing and demonstrating knowledge. I welcome your input on things I can do to make the course materials, my lessons, and the classroom experience more inclusive. If there is an accommodation that could improve your experience in my class, please let me know, or contact SDAO at (919) 668-1267 to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. For accessibility software and other information, check out the Disability Management System site: <https://access.duke.edu/>

Duke Disability Alliance (DDA). DDA is a student group committed to disability justice on campus. Interested students are encouraged to join! The group provides a friendly intellectual community for disabled students and allies, hosts events related to our course content, and coordinates an annual campus-wide Disability Pride Week in the spring.

<https://sites.duke.edu/disabilityatduke/dda/>

DukeWrites Enrichment Suite. For international and intercultural writers: an online suite of videos and quiz tutorials about U.S. classroom and U.S. English academic writing practices (essay structure, verbs, citation practices, intercultural norms, etc.) designed by TWP experts in intercultural communication.

<https://dukewritessuite.com/>

Deliberations: A Journal of First-Year Writing at Duke University. *Deliberations* is published annually, in the fall semester. The Thompson Writing Program invites submissions of student writing, of any type or length, from any Writing 101 course. For submission guidelines, visit:

<http://twp.duke.edu/deliberations/submission-information>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/caps/about-us>

The Academic Resource Center: <http://duke.edu/arc/index.php>

The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity: <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/csgd>

III. Course Policies

Class Discussions: Education is an opportunity to engage with difference. Sometimes we might talk about things that are challenging or uncomfortable: this is the space where learning happens. If you disagree with someone, listen first, and think carefully about your reasons for disagreeing. All perspectives are welcome, but do not blame others if you find yourself unprepared to defend an opinion. Let's all agree to be open to rethinking our assumptions, and respecting each other's differences. Becoming an ethically engaged scholar demands that you attend to and take responsibility for the effects that your ideas have on the world and your peers.

Classroom Etiquette: The expectation to always sit still in class can sometimes get in the way of learning. I welcome you to stand up, move your body, stretch, pace, stim, prop a leg, or do whatever else you need to remain comfortable and engaged during class. If you need to visit the

restroom, you may discreetly exit without interrupting the class to ask my permission. I only ask that you remain committed to the work of our learning, and respect your classmates' boundaries. Respectful conduct will have a positive impact on your final grade, and vice versa.

Disclosure Statement: In a course about disability and mental health, you may feel compelled to disclose your own personal relationship to these issues. Often, sharing personal experiences can enrich a discussion. It is important to me that this decision remains yours. Do not feel pressured to disclose if it makes you uncomfortable. How, when, and indeed *if* you bring in something from your own life is up to you.

Attendance and Participation: Writing 101 courses at Duke are small workshop-seminars, and the general expectation is that students arrive on time and prepared for every class. Of course, illness and other life circumstances can sometimes get in the way of this ideal. You are permitted up to three absences without penalty (with or without submitting a STINF). If you miss class, turn in the homework as soon as you can, and check Sakai or ask a classmate for the discussion notes. Typically there are grade deductions if you miss more than three class sessions, so let's agree to communicate if that situation arises. Perfect attendance and timeliness will earn you a bonus point on your final grade.

Formatting for Assignments: Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must be typed, using Times New Roman 12-point font, double line spacing, and one-inch margins all around. Rules for formatting, including your heading, title, and page numbers, are detailed in a Formatting Checklist that I provide. Student samples on Sakai serve as models. Be sure to proofread carefully! Refer to the Purdue OWL for guidance on MLA-style formatting for citations.

Submission of Assignments: All formal writing assignments will be submitted electronically to Sakai Assignments. All discussion forum posts, drafts, and peer review documents will be submitted to the designated Sakai Forum. Discussion forum posts are due by noon; everything

else (drafts, etc.) is due by classtime. On occasion, you may be asked to bring hard copies of your work to class.

Late Work: Because we're operating on a structured academic schedule, much of our learning has to happen on a timeline. For me, timeliness actually matters more for routine, low-stakes homework assignments than it does for our formal papers. **Low-stakes** coursework, like reading, notetaking, forum posts, drafts, and peer review is difficult to make up after a given class session has passed. For **higher-stakes** coursework, such as formal writing assignments, I typically have a "soft" deadline: a two-day period over which students can submit their papers to Sakai. If you would benefit from having an **extension** of a few days, just ask me in advance. If you do not ask for an extension, late penalties apply: the grade for that assignment gets one letter-grade lower for every day that the paper is late.

Technology: Please have cell phones silenced and put away for the duration of class unless directed otherwise. Laptops are permitted, but I reserve the right to ask you to put them away. Therefore, be prepared to take notes without your computer. On days when we are peer reviewing our writing, please bring your laptop to class.

Integrity: Academic writing is seldom self-contained with respect to its ideas and proof. Quoting and citing sources strengthens your writing by explicitly situating your argument within an ongoing conversation and body of evidence. There are several systems for documenting sources. In this course, we will learn and employ MLA style citation. We will discuss quotation, paraphrase, and citation in class.

On occasion, a student attempts to disguise his or her sources, sometimes because he or she feels unprepared to complete an assignment, and sometimes because he or she is under time constraints. Copying without attribution from the work of a classmate, from a printed text, or an electronic text weakens your integrity as a student and writer and prevents you from engaging

properly with other scholars through writing. Reusing your own work from another course, at Duke or elsewhere, is also not permitted. Getting caught carries very serious consequences. If I suspect anyone of plagiarism, I am *obligated* to report it to the Duke University Office of Student Conduct. Plagiarism on any aspect of our course work will result in failure of the course.

Recall the [Duke Community Standard](#): 1. I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors, nor will I accept the actions of those who do; 2. I will conduct myself responsibly and honorably in all my activities as a Duke student. Please ask me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. You may also consult: <http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism>.

Email: Email will be an important means of communication for the course, so please check your Duke email regularly. I might write an email to the class to clarify the homework, or to add something important to our ongoing discussions. If you have a question outside class, you may contact me over email. Remember that email is a genre of writing too: complete sentences and attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization will make your message more professional and thus invite a more thoughtful response. Include a greeting and a signature to help distinguish this mode of writing from more casual electronic conversations. If you wish to discuss a grade, please make an appointment to do so in person.

IV. Grading

Grading is based on a 100-point system. The number of points you earn will correspond to your final letter grade. This is how the grade breaks down:

Project 1: Textual Analysis	20 points
Project 2: Researched Essay	40 points

- A) Research Statement and Annotated Bibliography 10 points
- B) Presentation Paper 10 points
- C) Final draft 20 points

Process: 40 points

- A) Discussion Forum 20 points
- B) Peer Review 10 points
- C) Attendance, preparedness, conduct 10 points

Letter grades map approximately onto the following scale, which I will use in calculating your final grade for the course:

- A (93–100), A- (90–92)
- B+ (87–89), B (83–86), B- (80–82)
- C+ (77–79), C (73–76), C- (70–72)
- D+ (67–69), D (63–66), D- (60–62)
- F (0-59)

Acknowledgments: This syllabus reflects the input of the community of scholars in the Thompson Writing Program at Duke University, as well as the Disability and Access Initiative. I thank Jen Ansley, Denise Comer, Mike Dimpf, Danielle Dvir, Ashley Elrod, Nathan Kalman-Lamb, Emily Parks, Marcia Rego, Sandra Sotelo, and Miranda Welsh for their inspiration and feedback.

Course Bibliography: Below is an MLA-style bibliography for all course texts.

- Baynton, Douglas C. "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History." *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 17-33.
- Ben-Moshe, Liat. "'The Institution Yet to Come': Analyzing Incarceration through a Disability Lens." *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 132-143.
- Bérubé, Michael. "Disability, Democracy, and the New Genetics." *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 100-114.
- Chasnoff, Salome, dir. *Code of the Freaks*. Personal Hermitage Productions, 2019.
<http://personalhermitage.com/code>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2019.
- Clare, Eli. *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*. Duke UP, 2017.
- Davis, Lennard J. "Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Narcissism, and the Law." *Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2000, pp. 193-212.
- . "Introduction: Normality, Power, and Culture." *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 1-14.
- Erevelles, Nirmala, and Andrea Minear. "Unspeakable Offenses: Untangling Race and Disability in Discourses of Intersectionality." *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 354-368.
- Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. "Disability and Representation." *PMLA*, vol. 120, no. 2, 2005, pp. 522-527.
- Haller, Beth. "Diversity Toolbox: Covering Disability Issues." *Society for Professional Journalists*. <https://www.spj.org/dtb5.asp>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2019.

- Hendren, Sara. "All Technology is Assistive." *Wired*. Backchannel, 16 Oct. 2014, <https://www.wired.com/2014/10/all-technology-is-assistive/#.ra4fkpmfu>. Accessed 22 Aug. 2017.
- Ilea, Ramona. "The Mutant Cure or Social Change: Debating Disability." *X-Men and Philosophy: Astonishing Insight and Uncanny Argument in the Mutant X-Verse*, edited by Rebecca Housel and J. Jeremy Wisnewski, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009, pp. 170-182.
- Linton, Simi, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity*. New York UP, 1998.
- Lorde, Audre. "Breast Cancer: Power vs. Prosthesis" (1979). *The Cancer Journals*. Aunt Lute Books, 1980, pp. 56-78.
- Mingus, Mia. "Changing the Framework: Disability Justice" *Leaving Evidence*, 12 Feb. 2011, <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/02/12/changing-the-framework-disability-justice/>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2019.
- Price, Margaret. "Defining Mental Disability." *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 298-307.
- Rembis, Michael. "Yes We Can Change: Disability Studies – Enabling Equality." *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2010, pp. 19-25.
- Schweik, Susan. *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public*. New York UP, 2009.
- Siebers, Tobin. "Disability and the Right to Have Rights." *Disability Theory*, U of Michigan P, 2008, pp. 176-186.
- Steinfeld, Edward, and Jordana Maisel. "Barriers and their Social Meanings." *Universal Design: Creating Inclusive Environments*, Wiley, 2012, pp. 1-25.
- Walker, Nick. "Throw Away the Master's Tools: Liberating Ourselves from the Pathology Paradigm." *Neurocosmopolitanism.com*, 16 Aug. 2013,

<http://neurocosmopolitanism.com/throw-away-the-masters-tools-liberating-ourselves-from-the-pathology-paradigm/>. Accessed 16 Jan. 2019.

Wendell, Susan. "Unhealthy Disabled: Treating Chronic Illnesses as Disabilities." *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th ed., edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 161-173.

Wong, Alice, ed. *Resistance and Hope: Essays by Disabled People*. Disability Visibility Project, 2018.

Young, Stella. "I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much." TEDxSydney, 2014.

https://www.ted.com/talks/stella_young_i_m_not_your_inspiration_thank_you_very_much?language=en. Accessed 15 Aug. 2019.