

## Freshman Seminar: Human Ability: Unplugged

FSP 121-06 / Fall, '13

**Professor:** Jerry G. Petroff, Ph.D.  
**Class Meetings:** Monday 10:00 – 11:20  
Thursday 10:00 – 11:20  
**Classroom:** Roscoe West 202 or Forcina 226  
**Office Hours:** Monday & Thursday 3:30 - 4:30; Wednesday 8:30 - 10:00 and By Arrangement  
**Office:** Education Building, 3rd Floor  
**Office:** (609) 771-2998  
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### Students with Disabilities:

Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify the professor of this course and/or the Program Coordinator for Differing Abilities Services (771-2571). Accommodations are individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

### Course Description: Human Ability - Unplugged

*“Disability is not a ‘brave struggle’ or ‘courage in the face of adversity’ . . . disability is an art. It’s an ingenious way to live.” - Neil Marcus*

This quote by Neil Marcus reflects the central focus of this seminar regarding the study of human ability and the struggle among people perceived as more different than alike. Mr. Marcus is a poet, humorist, writer, actor and a self-proclaimed adventurer who is creatively endowed with disability. His disability denies his ability to speak, stand, walk and/or control sudden and bizarre movements. The study of disability as a key aspect of human experience equal with race, class, gender, sex, and sexual orientation will be explored through an alternate post modern paradigm that views difference from a variety of angles. The course will commence and terminate with an attempt to define “Human-ness” or the parameters of what makes us “human”. This will be compared to the human variability that we experience in our societies, communities and civilizations. This study of ability has important political, social, and economic import for society as a whole, including both disabled and non-disabled people. Not only can this course of study help elevate the place of people of different abilities within society, but it can also add valuable perspective on a broad range of ideas, issues, and policies. Students will explore models and theories that examine social, political, cultural, and economic factors that define disability and help determine personal and collective responses to difference. At the same time, coursework will focus on de-stigmatizing disease, illness, and impairment, including those that cannot be measured or explained by biological science.

This seminar will be closely aligned to the new course of study at TCNJ for students with intellectual disabilities: Career and Community Studies Certificate Program. This is a grant project in the School of Education that will develop and implement a post-secondary course of study for a small cohort of youth 18-25 with intellectual disabilities that desire a college experience that leads to adult roles and responsibilities. It is expected that through collaborative and controlled experiences, students in this seminar and the new certificate program will jointly benefit from exploring the course themes. In addition, the course will include a variety of instructional methodologies including review of human ability within popular culture, film, and music.

*“With our hearts let us see, with your hands let us break every chain. Then, indeed, shall we know a better and nobler humanity.” - Helen Keller*

## Course objectives:

1. Compare and contrast the major perspectives (Moral, Social and Medical models) of disability.
2. Identify political, economic, and social forces that have shaped Western society's understanding of disability.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the following disability related concepts among others: disability, handicap, impairment, normal, stigma, eugenics, inclusion and discrimination.
4. Articulate an understanding of the disability community's position on a variety of issues to include prenatal testing, Deaf-deaf, physician assisted suicide, inclusion, cochlear implants, etc.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of relationship between disability, race, class, gender, and sexuality.
6. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the rights of people with disabilities.
7. Articulate key moments in the history of the disability rights movement.

## Required Course Text:

Berger, R. J. (2013). *Introducing Disability Studies*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Nielsen, K.E. (2012). *A Disability History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press.

**Required Course Field Trips:** There will be several required field trips in which students will need to support their transportation and entrance fees; approximately **\$75.00** will be needed across the semester.

**Required Readings:** Selected readings will be assigned throughout the semester including:

Davis, L.J. (2010) Chapter 1 & 2 The disability studies reader. Taylor & Francis Group

**Required Film Viewing:** The class is required to view all of the following films according to the schedule. It will be important to discuss the relevance of the film to the class content as well as a critical analysis of the story, theme or deeper meanings. Discussion will occur in response to each of the films regarding the relevance to disability culture and studies. *Each Group is responsible for facilitating discussion and identifying the salient themes of 2 films – see blow*

	Films	Groups
1	Bicentennial Man (1997)	Dr. Petroff
2	Little Man (2006)	Dr. Petroff
3	i am sam (2001)	Group 1
4	Blindness (2009)	Group 2
5	The Sessions (2012)	Group 3
6	Benny & Joon (1993)	Group 4
7	Riding the Bus with My Sister (2005)	Group 5

## Required Internet Sites to Review:

National Organization on Disability  
Society for Disability Studies  
The Center for an Accessible Society  
Not Dead Yet  
Ragged Edge (On-Line)  
Tracy Latimer

<http://www.nod.org/>

<http://www.disstudies.org/>

<http://www.accessiblesociety.org/index.shtml>

<http://www.notdeadyet.org/>

<http://www.raggededgemagazine.com/>

<http://www.chninternational.com/tracybod.htm>

<http://www.robertlatimer.net/>

From Passing to Coming Out (Candice Lee)

<http://www.ragged-edge-mag.com/0903/0903ft2.html>

Culture as Disability (McDermott & Varenne)

[http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/sci\\_cult/culturedisability.html#intro](http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/sci_cult/culturedisability.html#intro)

## Course Requirements

1. **General Student Expectations** (.10 Grade) - **(See Rubric)** *Please note: Do not underestimate these overall expectations, appropriate participation is expected and NOT participating or NOT exhibiting professional student behavior will work against your grade.*

**Additional Credit or Evidence of Participation** - Comment on the required movies on the FSP 121 Blog Class / Film Blog (++, +, -)

2. **Collaborative Team Structure** - (Total .20 Grade) This seminar is designed to assist in the students' initial college experience. The ability to abstract issues and debate differences as well as form collaborative relationships between peers / colleagues is reflective of an individual with a comprehensive liberal education. Please be aware that the Collaborative Team Projects will receive 1 Grade and that will be the grade that will be factored into the individual student grade - 20% of the final grade is influence by the Team Grade. The Teams are a combination of typically enrolled students and those attending the TCNJ Career and Community Studies Program. It is expected that regardless of the program, students are expected to provide support, understanding and patience with each other – thereby, meeting the requirements of community engagement.

## Team Structure

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Bishar, P. Burns, K. Lore, M. Batista, D.	Gaglione, B. Windram, K. Anker, A. Farmer-Smith, R.	LaBella M. Yardeny, A. Sarria, A. Parkinson, U.	LaBella, R. Purri, M. Palacios, A. Alaimo, N.	Pope, A. Slimm, G. Delgado, S. Kreinakker, G.

- 2a) **Collaborative Disability Cultural Highlight:** (.10 Grade). Each group must identify either a series of 3-5 poems, works of art, short stories, news reports or any other collective evidence regarding some aspect of “Human Ability” or “Disability Culture” that they will put together in a 15 minute presentation to the class.
  - 2b) **Ethnography / Oral History Assignment - Interview Project** (.05 Grade) Each Collaborative Team will conduct an interview with an individual with disabilities (to be determined by the professor) and/or a parent/family member of an individual with disabilities to inform the development of an oral history; short story or video documentary. Ethnographic methodology and interviewing skills will be addressed in class. The result will be a written and/or recorded Oral History of the individual with commentary from the student researchers. Interviews will be conducted on-campus and through computer-based video networking avenues (e.g Skype); however, the option to interview and/or film off-campus may be indicated.
  - 2c) **Film Facilitation** (.05 Grade) Each Collaborative Team will be responsible to lead the follow up discussion for one of the required films.
3. **Short Term Assignments** (.20 Grade)
    - 3a) **Personal View Essay, Poem, etc. on “Your perspectives on difference and a determination of how difference is compared to the mean or normal”** (.05 Grade) **Each** student is required to write a personal essay, poem or another literary venue.
    - 3b) **Film Journal** (.05 Grade) - Each student is responsible for keeping an on-line journal of their responses

to each of the required films viewed – Journals Entry MUST be made within 24 hours of watching the film. The Journal Entries should be no more than 300 words, Labeled as Film Response #1,#2, etc.

- 3b) **Community Project at Visitation Home** (.10 Grade) - A 3-5 page reflection paper regarding the community-based work completed at the Visitation Home that must reflect a minimum of 4 hours of on-site work. *Specifics to be determined.*

#### **4. Special Topics/ Issues Paper and Presentation** (.20 Grade)

A special topics / issues paper (10-12 pages) must be developed on a specific topic / issue related to the course content. The paper must reflect a review of the **literature** beyond the class text and should address the opinions of scholars and experts in the area. The "*literature*" refers to all scholarly writings on a specific topic and includes research articles, professional texts, and original research/interview data. Students can decide to do an original research project to fulfill this requirement such as interview or survey or make a film instead of writing a paper. There should be a variety of at least 10-15 sources. A summary statement should be included that reflects the opinions or position of the author. Paper must be presented to the class with a summary PowerPoint presentation.

**APA Resources for Writing Papers** - Appropriate citations are required using APA 5 guidelines. Here are some helpful websites:

- o <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- o <http://apastyle.apa.org/>

#### **5. Mid-Term Quiz** (.10)

The mid-term quiz will be focused on the big ideas of the first half of the semester that include lectures and readings. The form of the quiz will be multiple choice and short answer.

#### **6. Final Examination** (.20)

This final examination is comprehensive final assessment that focuses on integrating the overall course themes. Each student will respond to three out of five essay questions that are designed to reflect the critical and major concepts of the course and a set of multiple-choice questions.

**Extra Credit:** *There may be extra credit opportunities for participating in activities related to the subject of this class. The professor will announce these opportunities as they become available.*

Class Schedule				
Class	Date	Topic	Due / Activities	Class Assignments
1 (Th)	8/29	Course Introduction Review of Syllabus		Credo of Support - <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wunHDfZFxXw">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wunHDfZFxXw</a>
2 (Tue)	9/3	How are our identities formed and influenced? What effects do labels and names have on forming who we are?	In Class Reading - <i>The Steadfast Tin Soldier</i> Segments of the film - FREAKS	Berger (2013) Chapter 1 <b>Additional Reading</b> – From Passing to Coming Out
3 (Th)	9/5	No Class - Optional Viewing of the Film #1 <i>Bicentennial Man</i>		
4 (Mon)	9/9	Identity Politics Models of Disability Definition and Existing Paradigms Defining the Movement - Social Construct of Disability Culture	Discuss Film #1 & Journal Entry	Berger (2013) Chapter 2 Davis (2010) Chapter 1 & 2
5 (Th)	9/12	Historical Views of Disabilities - Early and Global Attitudes & Treatment of People with Disabilities: Ancient - Medieval - Age of Enlightenment - Progressive Era (Early 20th Century)	<b>Due:</b> Difference Essay	Berger (2013) Chapter 3 pgs. 51-62 Nielsen (2012) Chapter 6
6 (Mon)	9/16	Eugenics Movement, Sterilizing the Unfit & Breeding the Fit Not Dead Yet – Tracy Laitmer		Berger (2013) Chapter 3 pgs. 62 - 78 Smith & Wehmeyer (2012) Chapter 9
7 (Th)	9/19	Deinstitutionalization & Independent Living The Rights of People with Disabilities - Disability Law & Civil Rights		Nielsen (2012) Chapter 7
8 (Mon)	9/23	In-Class Film - Abandoned to their Fate		
(Wed)		8:30 - 10:30 <b>Film #2</b> Little Man		
9 (Th)	9/26	Bio-Ethical Issues of Disability	Discuss Film #2 & Journal Entry	
10 (Mon)	9/30	Disability and the Family		Berger (2013) Chapter 4
(Wed)	10/2	8:30 - 10:30 <b>Movie #3</b> i am Sam		
11 (Th)	10/3	Is there a Disability Culture? Humor and Disability Art and Disability	In-Class Film: Able to Laugh by M.J. Dougan Discuss Film #3 & Journal Entry	Berger (2013) Chapter 7
12 (Mon)	10/7	Deafness Culture - Guest Speakers	<b>Due:</b> Term Paper - Topic	Berger (2013) Chapter 6
(Wed)	10/9	8:30 - 10:30 <b>Film #4</b> Blindness		
13 (Th)	10/10	Blindness Culture - Guest Speakers	Discuss Film #4 & Journal Entry	
14 (Mon)	10/21	Group Culture Presentations	Groups 1, 2, 3	
15 (Th)	10/24	Group Culture Presentations Mid-Semester Review Activities	Groups 3,4	
	10/28	Fall Break		

16 (Th)	10/31	Ethnography / Techniques for Oral History Development	Mid-Term Quiz	
17 (Mon)	11/4	Group Interview of People with Disabilities		
(Wed)	11/6	8:30 - 10:30 <b>Film #5</b> The Sessions (2012)		
18 (Th)	11/7	Sexuality	Discuss Film #5 & Journal Entry	
19 (Mon)	11/11	Voices without Speech & Being Physically Different - Guest Speakers		
(Wed)	11/13	8:30 - 10:30 <b>Film #6</b> Benny & Joon (1993)		
20 (Th)	11/14	Hidden Disability: Mental Health	Discuss Film #6 & Journal Entry	
21 (Mon)	11/18	Neuro-Diverse People - Autism	<b>Due:</b> Special Topic Paper	
	11/21	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>		
22 (Mon)	11/25	Guest Panel of Self-Advocates		
(Wed)	11/27	8:15 - 10:30 <b>Film #7</b> Riding the Bus with My Sister (2005)		
23 (Th)	11/28	Oral History Presentations	Discuss Film #7 & Journal Entry <b>Due:</b> Oral History Project	
24 (Mon)	12/2	Individual Paper Presentations		
25 (Th)	12/5	Individual Paper Presentations Final Exam Review		

**Please note:**

*This syllabus including schedule and requirements are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor (with advance notice).*