Talia Schaffer Wed 11:45-1:45pm, 4422

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**Your project:**

The field of disability studies is exploding, with new materials being published and posted constantly. So in this course I want to avoid the ‘mastery’ model in which an expert introduces novices to a field. I want to flip that and have you each acquire expertise on one field in disability studies, which you will research throughout the semester and present at the end as your final project. This may take the form of a traditional 20-pp seminar paper (especially recommended should you wish to publish it), or a more innovative online database/wiki/website/etc. I am aiming for a collaborative classroom in which we all share expertise.

You may follow up on one of the areas we are doing in the course: autism, blindness, deafness, cognitive difference, freakery, arts, disability theory’s relation to queer theory/feminism/race theory, social model/identity politics, etc. Other possible areas to explore: learning disabilities, chronic illnesses, disability in other eras, disability in other texts, obesity, dwarfism, eating disorders, limb impairments, mobility issues, HIV/AIDS, accommodations, prostheses, or conditions whose understanding have changed substantively between the 19th century and today (hysteria, brain fever, nerves, consumption, learning disabilities, spinal injuries, cognitive deficits). You may also work intensively on a Victorian novel we are not doing in class in which you see disability playing an important role (see list at end of syllabus for some suggestions).

**This course:**

This course investigates the burgeoning field of disability theory, with special attention to the Victorian period as an era with interestingly different ideas about minds, social relations, and bodies – formulations that may help us to fresh understandings of disability today. What did disability mean in a period with profoundly other ideas about cognition, physical capacity, and social relations? We will start with some of the formative disability studies theoretical and critical texts, by Lennard Davis, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Alison Kafer, Tobin Siebers, Robert McRuer, Martha Stoddard Holmes, and Ato Quayson, looking at the invention of the normate, the social model versus the medical model, the way disability challenges normative ideas of identity, and the way disability studies intersects with both queer theory and feminism. The course will focus on recent disability studies work in particularly interesting fields: neurodiversity (particularly around autism), sensory issues (including blindness and Deaf culture), and social conditions (including the built environment and the gaze). We are pairing these studies with the two nineteenth-century novels that are turning out to be the central ones for disability studies in the period: *Our Mutual Friend* and *Jane Eyre*. A third text may either be a noncanonical novel (*The Heir of Redclyffe*) or a modernist novel (*The Wings of the Dove*) depending on the class’s preference. This course will also ask a major question: can the philosophy of ethics of care be employed as a literary-critical methodology? We will be reading care ethicists including Nel Noddings, Eva Feder Kittay, and Virginia Held, to see how care theory might lead us to think performatively rather than diagnostically about disability, and how it might alter ideas of gender and community.

Required books:

Buy your books through the Mina Rees Library’s amazon.com link and support our library: http://library.gc.cuny.edu/info/amazon.html

\*Readings with an asterisk are available via the “Disability Studies and Nineteenth-Century Literature” site on Academic Commons: http://disability19th.commons.gc.cuny.edu/. This is also where you’ll post your blogs.

Required texts

• Lennard Davis, ed, *The Disability Studies Reader*, 4th Edition (Routledge) ISBN: 978-0415630511 [*DSR* on syllabus]

• David Bolt, Julia Miele Rodas, Elizabeth J. Donaldson, eds., *The Madwoman and the Blindman* (Ohio State) ISBN: 0-81425226-5 [*MB* on syllabus]

• Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Oxford) ISBN: 978-0199535590

• Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (Oxford) ISBN:  978-0199536252

*Special case:*

• Charlotte Yonge, *The Heir of Redclyffe* (Oxford World’s Classics, ed. Barbara Dennis)

try Abe Books: http://www.abebooks.com/book-search/isbn/0192831321/

[OR Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove* (Penguin)]

ISBN: 978-0141441283

Course Schedule

Feb 3 **introduction**

Disability Studies handout; Price handout

\*Ne’eman, \*Rosen, \*Hevda

*DSR* ch. 20, 21, 33

Feb 10 **core issues in disability studies:**

*DSR* ch. 1, 15, 16, 17, 23

\*Garland Thomson,\*Kafer Ch. 6

Feb 17 **autism**:

*DSR* ch. 34

\*Savarese & Zunshine, \*Dekel

\*Silberman Ch. 11, 12

Feb 24 ***Jane Eyre,* first half: cognitive disability Lauren**

*MB*: Gabbard, Donaldson, Rodas chapters

Mar 2 ***Jane Eyre* to end: blindness Lindsay**

*MB* Bolt chapter

*DSR* ch 32

\*Hartmann, \*”19” Blindness Forum

Mar 9 **ethics of care: Elissa, Sarah**

\*Noddings, *Caring*; \*Noddings, *Starting*

\*Held, \*Kittay, \*Nowviskie

Mar 16 ***Heir of Redclyffe,* first half: queerness and passing Tara**

[OR *Wings of the Dove* first half]

\*Siebers Ch.5, \*Bourrier

*DSR* ch. 24

Mar 23 NO CLASS: FRIDAY DAY

Mar 30 ***Heir of Redclyffe* to end: feminism Sophie**

[OR *Wings of the Dove* to end]

*DSR* ch. 25

\*Siebers, “Withered”, \*Bailin

Apr 6 **deafness**: **Joseph**

*DSR* ch. 19

\*Esmail, ch. 3, 4, \*Solomon ch. 2

Apr 13 ***Our Mutual Friend,* first half: freakery Lou**

\*Free, \*Schotland, \*Stoddard Holmes

April 20 ***Our Mutual Friend* to end: disabled arts Jeff, Dale**

*DSR* ch 29, 31

\*Siebers (aesthetics), \*Straus

[slides: Judith Scott; “Alison Lapper Pregnant”; outsider art; autistic art]

April 22-30 SPRING BREAK

May 4 Reports 1

May 11 Reports 2

May 18 final discussion

**submit final project**

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Learning goals:

In this course students should

1. Learn the fundamental ideas undergirding disability studies

2. Explore the newest emerging fields of disability studies

3. Locate and critically engage with relevant research

4. Practice professional skills of conference-paper-length delivery and article-length writing

Requirements and grading:

One presentation (about 20 min.) 30%

One final project (about 20 pp. if a paper) 50%

Effort grade 20%

Note:

While I expect respect to be shown to every member of any class (including the instructor), I want to make a special point about its particular urgency in a disability studies class. Unlike race and gender, which are supposedly visible, disability is often invisible – you cannot assume you know who is able and who is not, nor what an apparently able-bodied person’s history might contain – please do not assume anyone is speaking from any particular subject position in this course. (Indeed, the way disability’s fluidity, invisibility, and universality challenges our identity-politics assumptions is one of its most interesting traits.)

Presentation:

Everyone has to give one brief presentation. Aim to keep it no longer than 20 min., which means about 8 double-spaced typed pages. Please give me a copy of the presentation afterwards, and bring extra copies for anyone else in the class who might want it. Ask in advance in case someone needs accommodations, ie a large-format typed version or a version you can email. If two people are scheduled for presentations on the same day, you need to meet with each other to coordinate your talks.

In the presentation, you should analyze the critical article or theoretical reading for that day. *Do not summarize it.* Instead, briefly explain what the critic is arguing, isolate areas where you think the critic is wrong (or especially insightful), and suggest alternative ways of explicating the text. You must find one thing you admire about the article before you launch into your devastating critique.

Treat it as if it were a real conference paper. That means: no longer than 8 or 9 double-spaced pages; practice reading it aloud before you deliver it; structure it for listeners, with clear and frequent signposting. Make space for occasional side comments and spontaneous asides. Handouts help.

Final Project:

You may do the usual 20-pp research paper and/or a digital project, collating sources on a particular topic or perhaps creating an overview on the model of Karen Bourrier’s site, http://www.nineteenthcenturydisability.org/ (or even contributing to Bourrier’s if she permits). See note on p. 1 for ideas.

Blogging:

I’ve set up a blog on our website. Please post at least 10 comments over the course of the semester (you can post as much as you want, but I will only count 2 per week max towards this requirement). Since we meet on Wednesday mornings, I’d like to have everyone post by Tuesday at 8pm, though of course you may post them any time before that. (No need to make them long – a couple of lines is fine). You don’t have to have finished the reading in order to blog, and in fact your postings may be better if you are still working through the text. I want this to be a place where you object, argue, struggle, brainstorm, go off on tangents – a visual and interactive record of how you are working through the readings.

Here is your all-purpose blog prompt: “If I were going to write my final paper on this, what would I write about?” You need not answer that specifically, but it might get you thinking. The blog is your chance to talk to each other, try out presentation ideas, ask about confusing matters, and float crazy theories.

Accommodations

If you need accommodations, please make sure you alert me and tell your fellow students should you wish to have a copy of the presentation (for instance) in a particular format. You should be aware that the Graduate Center has adaptive devices you can use. Please contact disabilityservices@gc.cuny.edu), or look at Student Disability Services under http://www.gc.cuny.edu/Prospective-Current-Students/Student-Life/Resources.

The website says that “Some examples of covered disabilities are visual and hearing impairments, mobility impairments, impairment of hand function, and such “hidden” disabilities as AIDS/HIV, learning disabilities, ADD and ADHD, heart conditions, chronic fatigue syndrome, and being in recovery from substance abuse.”

The Graduate Center can offer “auxiliary aids and services for students with visual impairments (readers/library assistants and such technology as adaptive computer software and hardware, etc.); qualified sign-language interpreters; scribes; extended or divided time on examinations for students with learning disabilities or reduced physical stamina; adjustments in course load when appropriate; voice-recognition software; use of a computer for exams; and taping classes.”

**Research Guide**

Along with these recommended texts, please also see our Digital Disabilities page on the Commons, which will be augmented throughout the semester.

**General:**

Davis, Lennard, ed., *The Disability Studies Reader* 4th ed. (NY: Routledge, 2013)

---, *The End of Normal; Identity in a Biocultural Era* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2014)

Garland Thomson, Rosemarie, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (NY: Columbia UP, 1996)

---, *Staring: How We Look* (NY: Oxford UP, 2009)

Kafer, Alison, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2013)

Longmore, Paul K. *Telethons: Spectacle, Disability, and the Business of Charity* (NY: Oxford UP, 2016)

McRuer, Robert, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (NY: NYU Press, 2006)

Mitchell, David T. and Susan Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2008)

Reiss, Bennjamin and David Serlin, *Keywords for Disability Studies* (NY: NYU Press, 2015)

Scarry, Elaine, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Siebers, Tobin, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2009)

---, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2010)

Snyder, Sharon L. *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities* (NY: MLA 2002)

Solomon, Andrew, *Far From the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity* (NY: Scribner, 2013)

Tremain, Shelley, ed. *Foucault and the Government of Disability* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2005)

**Autism:**

Anderson, Jami L. and Simon Cushing, eds, *The Philosophy of Autism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012)

Bascom, Julia, ed, *Loud Hands: Autistic People, Speaking* (Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, 2012)

Donvan, John and Caren Zucker, *In a Different Key: The Story of Autism* (NY: Crown, 2016)

Grandin, Temple, *Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism,* expanded ed. (NY: Vintage, 2006)

Higashida, Naoki, *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism* trans. KA Yoshida, David Mitchell (NY: Random House, 2013)

Robison, John Elder, *Look Me In the Eye: My Life with Asperger’s* (Three Rivers Press, 2008)

---, *Switched On: A Memoir of Brain Change and Emotional Awakening* (Spiegel & Grau, 2016)

Silberman, Steve, *Neurotribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity* (NY: Penguin, 2015)

Silverman, Chloe, *Understanding Autism: Parents, Doctors, and the History of a Disorder* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2013)

Williams, Donna, *Nobody Nowhere: The Remarkable Autobiography of an Autistic Girl* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1992)

**Sensory:**

Bolt, David, *The Metanarrative of Blindness: A Re-reading of Twentieth-Century Anglophone Writing* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2013)

Esmail, Jennifer, *Reading Victorian Deafness: Signs and Sounds in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ohio University Press, 2013)

Davis, Lennard, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (NY: Verso 1995)

**Cognitive (other than autism):**

Quayson, Ato, *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2007)

Price, Margaret, *Mad at School: Rhetorics of Mental Disability and Academic Life* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2011)

**Ethics of care:**

Bowden, Peta, *Caring: Gender-Sensitive Ethics* (London: Routledge, 1997)

Groenhout, Ruth E., *Connected Lives; Human Nature and an Ethics of Care* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004)

Held, Virginia, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (NY: Oxford UP, 2006)

Hillyer, Barbara, *Feminism and Disability* (Norman: U of Oklahoma Press, 1993)

Kittay, Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependence* (NY: Routledge, 1999)

*The Subject of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Dependency*, ed. Eva Feder Kittay and Ellen K. Feder (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002)

Noddings, Nel, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: U California Press, 1984)

---, *Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy* (Berkeley: U California Press, 2002)

O’Brien,Ruth, *Bodies in Revolt: Gender, Disability, and a Workplace Ethic of Care* (NY: Routledge, 2005)

Sevenhuijsen, Selma, *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care: Feminist Considerations on Justice, Morality, and Politics*, trans. Liz Savage (NY: Routledge, 1998)

Tronto, Joan, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*  (NY: Routledge, 1993)

Wendell, Susan, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (NY: Routledge, 1996)

Special issue of *Hypatia* 5:1 (Spring 1990)

**Victorian disability:**

Bailin, Miriam, *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction: The Art of Being Ill* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007)

Bolt, David, Julia Miele Rodas, and Elizabeth J. Donaldson, eds, *The Madwoman and the Blindman: Jane Eyre, Discourse, Disability* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012)

Bourrier, Karen, *The Measure of Manliness: Disability and Masculinity in the Mid-Victorian Novel* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2015)

Byrne, Katherine, *Tuberculosis and the Victorian Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013)

Craton, Lillian. *The Victorian Freak Show: The Significance of Disability and Physical Differences in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambria Press, 2009)

Lowe, Brigid, *Victorian Fiction and the Insights of Sympathy: An Alternative to the Hermeneutics of Suspicion* ((London: Anthem Press, 2007)

O’Connor, Erin, *Raw Material: Producing Pathology in Victorian Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000)

Silver, Anna Krugovoy, *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002)

Stoddard Holmes, Martha, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan Press, 2009)

Tromp, Marlene ed. *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008)

Vrettos, Athena, *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995)

**Victorian fiction that’s good for disability studies work (which basically means, Victorian fiction):**

Mary Elizabeth Braddon – cognitively disabled ‘Softy’ in *Aurora Floyd*

Ann Brontë – *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is about alcoholism and abuse

Charlotte Brontë –*Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* and *Villette* all foreground psychological and physical disorders and varieties of nursing

Emily Brontë – Linton Heathcliff is consumptive; Catherine may have an eating disorder; it’s anyone’s guess how to analyze Heathcliff

Wilkie Collins – legless Miserimus Dexter in *The Law and the Lady*, blind Miss Finch in *Poor Miss Finch,* other characters ha

Dinah Mulock Craik – many novels feature lame or hunchbacked characters, especially *John Halifax, Gentleman; Olive; The Little Lame Prince, A Noble Life*

Charles Dickens – famous for what used to be called the ‘grotesques,’ appearing in virtually every novel, but see especially Blind Bertha in “The Chimes,” Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol*, Miss Mowcher in *David Copperfield,* Phil Squod in *Bleak House,* and of course Jenny Wren in *Our Mutual Friend*

George Eliot – *Romola* is second only to *Ruth* in its number of illnesses; *The Mill on the Floss* has a famously disabled love interest in Philip Wakem; “Janet’s Repentance” (*Scenes From Clerical Life*) is about alcoholism

Elizabeth Gaskell – *Ruth* is probably the 19th c. novel with the most illnesses, ever, and illness features in pretty much all the novels

Sarah Grand – *The Heavenly Twins* is centrally concerned with syphilis

Henry James – there are famous dying invalids in *Portrait of a Lady* and *The Wings of the Dove*

‘Lucas Malet’ (Mary St Leger Kingsley Harrison) –*The History of Sir Richard Calmady* is a novel about a man born without lower legs, and the psychological stress of coming to terms with his condition

Margaret Oliphant – a lot of attention to elderly characters

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* – locus classicus of prosthetic, artificial bodily parts, monstrosity and the normative

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* – like *Frankenstein,* metaphor for all sorts of disability-related issues

Anthony Trollope – *Doctor Thorne* has a case study of alcoholism; *Barchester Towers* has Signora Madeline Neroni, carried around on her sofa

Ellen Wood – *East Lynne* has severely facially disfigured heroine

Charlotte M. Yonge – virtually all her novels with nonmobile characters, both chronic conditions and traumatic events; attention to nursing, especially *The Clever Woman of the Family, The Daisy Chain, The Trial, The Magnum Bonum, Pillars of the House*