Disability Issues: Obstacles and Solutions in Today’s World
SW 773-Section 001
Winter 2004, Wednesdays 2-5 PM

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Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way I teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to help us determine appropriate accommodations. I will treat any information you provide me as private and confidential.

1. Course Description

This course will examine the topic of disability from various perspectives, including the historical development of civil rights, the legal framework, the medical model, and how disability is viewed by various cultures. It will examine different types of disabilities, how people with disabilities are treated and denied equal access to programs and employment, and what political/legal recourse is available to address these inequities. The course will also review what progress has been made in the United States regarding the integration of people with disabilities by removing attitudinal, as well as architectural, barriers that individuals with disabilities face in daily life. The course will also address how to interact with individuals who have disabilities, the differences between visible and non-visible disabilities, and how disability can affect individuals depending on whether they are children, teenagers or adults.
2. Course Content

This course will examine various perspectives presented by and about people with disabilities. It will focus on the historical influences that have affected the development of a disability rights movement, the impact of medical and technological advances in creating expanded opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and the current state of political and legal power being utilized by the disability community. The course will also address how professionals who work with people who have disabilities can act to change social systems to improve opportunities and to empower individuals with disabilities.

3. Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the various social, political and legal forces affecting the lives of people with disabilities.
2. Articulate how various definitions and models of disability affect individuals who have disabilities.
3. Describe the progress that people with disabilities have made in gaining acceptance and greater opportunity for achievement in U.S. society.
4. Identify differences in treatment faced by individuals with disabilities depending on whether their conditions are visible or non-visible.
5. Assess how recent legislative and legal actions have helped or hindered people with disabilities.
6. Discuss ways of working with people who have disabilities in a variety of settings that employ social work skills.

4. Course Design

The instructor will require several readings from required and recommended materials, some of which will be the product of individuals with disabilities. A variety of pedagogical methods will be used, including short lecture, participatory discussions, videos/films, and written assignments. Guest speakers with disabilities will be invited to address specific topics. There will be extensive discussion, and the written assignments will be based on research and reflection.

5. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

- Multiculturalism and Diversity. Students will examine how disabilities are present without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, age, social class or other forms of social stratification, and how “disability” should be part of any consideration of “diversity”. Emphasis will be placed on issues of privilege and discrimination, including the forces that work to include and to exclude people with disabilities from the mainstream of society.
Social Justice and Social Change. Detailed information will be given on court cases and their effect on people with disabilities. The history of legal rights and social protest movements will be addressed, as well as how legal and social systems can promote or hinder change.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation. The course will give attention to ways in which current policies and practices address these topics, and will cover issues related to whether disability should be viewed from a “treatment” or “rehabilitation” perspective.

Behavioral and Social Science Research. Students will critically analyze how people who do not have disabilities relate to individuals with disabilities, and how people with disabilities view their treatment by society. Relevant research literature will be addressed.

6. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

This course will address the ethics of individuals, families, communities and social systems. Students will learn about issues related to privacy, confidentiality, and enabling individuals to confront the barriers that they encounter in society. This course will look at the social worker’s responsibility to ensure equal access to resources, prevent and eliminate discrimination, and advocate for changes in public policy and behavior that impede opportunities for people with disabilities.

Required Texts


Smart, Julie. (2001). Disability, society, and the individual. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

Recommended Books


**Course Assignments**

There are four written assignments required for this class. Attendance and participation in class are also required. If you have a topic for any of these written assignments that you think better meets your interests and/or needs, please discuss your idea with me.

**Assignment 1-- This paper is due Jan. 28 and is 20% of your grade.**

Students will write a 3-4 page paper on **one** of the following topics:

1) Critique the various models for defining disability by summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of each one. State which one you think is best and give the reasons for your choice. If you think there is a better model that should be used, describe that model and state your reasons for recommending it.
2) Discuss whether U.S. society has treated people with disabilities fairly. Provide examples to illustrate your conclusion. Have people with disabilities encountered more or less discrimination than other groups in our society? What evidence supports your answer?

**Assignment 2--This paper is due Feb. 18 and is 20% of your grade.**

Students will write a 3-4 page paper on one of the following topics:

1) Select a book written by a person with a disability and prepare a book review. Provide examples as you answer these questions. How well does this person articulate the issues that are important to her/himself and to other individuals with disabilities? Did this book give you a better understanding of what it is like to live with a disability in this country? What, according to this author, are the key issues faced by people with disabilities in our society?

2) Choose one disability with which you are not familiar and describe the ways in which this condition may affect an individual. Are there specific barriers that a person with this disability is likely to encounter? What resources are available to assist this person? If you are a professional and this individual is your client, are there ways you can help to remove barriers and improve resources?

**Assignment 3--This paper is due Mar. 17 and is 20% of your grade.**

Students will write a 3-4 page paper on one of the following:

1) Survey three or more buildings on central campus to assess what physical barriers exist for people with disabilities. Prepare a written summary that identifies the problems that exist and the potential solutions to these problems. Do building codes need to be strengthened to provide access for people with disabilities? Are there architectural design solutions that benefit all people, not just those who have physical disabilities?

2) Survey twenty or more people to assess what attitudinal barriers exist for people with disabilities. Prepare a written summary that describes what questions you asked and the characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race) of the individuals who answered them. Do these people view individuals with disabilities in a positive or negative way? Do their answers reveal certain stereotypes about individuals with disabilities? If so, suggest ways to educate the public about these stereotypes.

**Assignment 4--This paper is due Apr. 14 and is 40% of your grade.**

Students will write a 6-8 page paper on one of the following topics:

1) Select a policy/legal issue and analyze its impact on people with disabilities. What is the historical development of this policy or law? Is it beneficial or harmful to people with disabilities? Explain the reasons for your answer, and provide data and other sources to support your conclusion. Provide a policy recommendation regarding the issue you are analyzing.

2) Identify the three most significant barriers in U.S. society that prevent the full inclusion of people with disabilities. Justify your selection of these barriers by providing data and examples. What strategies would you employ to remove these barriers? Which organizations, if any, might assist in the implementation of your strategies? How would you measure your progress in eliminating these barriers?
Course Outline

Week 1: Jan 7  Introduction; Disability as Part of Diversity

Week 2: Jan 14  Defining Disability
Readings:
1) Smart, Chapters 1 & 2
2) Longmore and Umansky, “Introduction: Disability History: From the Margins to the Mainstream” (pp. 1-29)

Week 3: Jan 21  Discrimination and Inequality
Readings:
1) Smart, Chapters 3 & 4
2) Longmore and Umansky, “Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History” by Douglas C. Baynton (pp. 33-57)

Weeks 4 & 5: Jan 28 & Feb 4  Societal Attitudes Toward Disability
Readings:
1) Smart, Chapters 5 & 6

Week 6: Feb 11  Disability Culture, Identity, and The Disability Rights Movement
Readings:
1) Longmore and Umansky, “Helen Keller and the Politics of Civic Fitness” by Kim Nielsen (pp. 268-290)
2) Longmore and Umansky, “Blind and Enlightened: The Contested Origins of the Blinded Veterans Association” by David A. Gerber (pp. 313-334)

Week 7: Feb 18  Access to Health Care and Housing
Readings:
1) Longmore and Umansky, “A Pupil and a Patient: Hospital-Schools in Progressive America” by Brad Byrom (pp. 133-156)
2) Longmore and Umansky, “Martyred Mothers and Merciful Fathers: Exploring Disability and Motherhood in the Lives of Jerome Greenfield and Raymond Repouille” by Janice A. Brockley (pp. 293-312)
Semester Break: Feb 25

Week 8: Mar 3  Access to Education
Readings:

Weeks 9 & 10: Mar 10 & 17  Access to Employment
Readings:
1) Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC):
   “The ADA: Questions and Answers” (Employment)
   http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/adaqa1.html
   “The ADA: Your Responsibilities as an Employer”
   http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada17.html
   “The ADA: Your Employment Rights as an Individual with a Disability”
   http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/ada18.html
2) Longmore and Umansky, “Cold Charity: Manhood, Brotherhood, and the Transformation of Disability, 1870-1900” by John Williams-Searle (pp. 157-186)

Week 11: Mar 24  Legal and Policy Issues
Readings:
1) Longmore and Umansky, “Medicine, Bureaucracy, and Social Welfare: The Politics of Disability Compensation for American Veterans of World War I” by K. Walter Hickel (pp. 236-267)
2) Longmore and Umansky, “American Disability Policy in the Twentieth Century” by Richard K. Scotch (pp. 375-392)

Weeks 12 & 13: Mar 31 & Apr 7  Social Work and Disability
Readings: Smart, Chapters 7-9

Week 14: Apr 14  Final Class--Final Paper Due