



Tuesdays, 4:10 PM – 6:40 PM

Spring 2013

Instructors:

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Office Hours: Appointments Available Upon Request

Course Description:

This course is designed to be a critical analysis of past and contemporary media constructions of persons with disabilities. We will use research and theories from media and communication studies, sociology, education, and women's studies to explore how perceptions and stereotypes of persons with disability are formed. The course will focus on exploring and analyzing changes in media images over time and how these images have unconsciously shaped public institutionalization of images of "the disabled."

We will critique historical and contemporary depictions of persons with disabilities and explore how these fictions have shaped public perception and understandings of disability, people with disabilities, and their daily lives. We will analyze how various media images combine to promote and maintain a fictionalized "reality" of disability.

Finally, we will consider how contemporary media genres promote the illusion of changing images and attitudes while maintaining and depicting static oppressive images.

Course Texts:

Haller, B. A. (2010). *Representing disability in an ableist world: Essays on mass media*.
Louisville, KY: The Avocado Press.

All Other Readings Posted on Niikha.

Course Goals:

Students will explore, expose and study:

- 1) Multiple and conflicting theoretical perspectives on disability, past and present.
- 2) Media functions—reality creation or reality representation.
- 3) Representations and images of (dis)ability: historical and contemporary visions, progress or putdowns.
- 4) Moral passage and designations of deviance and (dis)ability.
- 5) Media variations in genre: Television and film; advertising in multiple media; Internet and electronic images.
- 6) Sub themes: the micro and macro images and influences on (dis)ability
- 7) Alternative Images: positive variations in media images.

Assignments:

Complete a Weekly Journal Exercise: 10%

The journal reflections should be typewritten and approximately 1-2 pages (no longer than 2 pages). In this journal, students should reflect on the course materials (lectures, discussions, media, and readings). Students should not describe or summarize the course materials but rather discuss their reactions to it and critically analyze how the media represents (or misrepresents) disability, how the media culturally produces power and knowledge, and how the media produces or resists ableism in society.

Present a Critique and Lead a Discussion on a Film or Television Series: 25%

Students will present a brief overview of a film, critically examine the film in terms of cultural and sociological contexts and examine whether this work reinforces or resists ableist behavior. Specifics and dates are posted on Niiikha.

Present a Critique and Lead a Discussion on a Novel or Other Written Account: 25%

Students will present a brief overview and critically examine a work of fiction or non-fiction in terms of cultural and sociological contexts and examine whether this work reinforces or resists ableist behavior. Specifics and dates are posted on Niiikha.

Attendance and Classroom Participation: 10%

Given that this is a discussion-based course, attendance and participation is very important. Students are expected to attend class regularly. Given that this course only meets once per week, students will only have two excused absences. After two excused absences, each additional absence will result in a grade deduction.

Attendance will be tracked via index cards. Students should bring 3 x 5 index cards to each class. Before leaving class, fill out the index card. On one side of the card, students should write:

- Name and Date
- Something I learned is...

On the other side of the card, students should write:

- A question I still have is...

The index cards must be submitted at the end of each class. In addition to being used to track attendance, the instructors can review the cards to see where the class is as a group. The instructors can also see if there is anything that needs further explanation or clarification or if there are compelling questions that need answering.

End of Year Project: 30%

Students will prepare a project, which includes a critique and analysis of media impact on images of disability. We encourage students to choose a multi-genre format, with

between 8 and 12 pieces, each of a different genre. Prose or poetry, newspaper pieces (such as features, advice columns, cartoons or any sub-genre that appears in such publications) blog or diary entries, collage, original music or playlists of relevant songs, original artwork and many other formats (three-dimensional, electronic, written, etc.), at least some of which challenge and alter traditional/stereotyped images of persons with disabilities and the social and built world they live in. A one-page cover letter should serve as an author's note that explains the vision or attempted effect of the collection of genres. Pieces might be loosely collected—for instance, in a folder or box, or may be collected in a format that is itself a genre, such as an altered book, scrapbook, time capsule, portfolio, etc. Creators will briefly present their work during final classes.

*All written work should be written in 12-point font, double spaced, and use APA (American Psychological Association) Style Guidelines. Be sure to cite any work or resources you use. An excellent free online resource for APA style is available at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Absences:

Students who will be absent from class (due to illness, family emergency, etc.) need to e-mail the instructors in advance (or as soon as possible) for the absence to be excused. Students who follow procedure and e-mail the instructors in advance will still be allowed to submit their weekly journal entries via e-mail or at the following class session. If students do not follow procedure and notify the instructors of their absences, they will not be permitted to submit the corresponding weekly journal entry. (See the Attendance and Participation section under Assignments for more information.)

Electronics Policy:

Please do not use any portable electronics during class time. Please silence and put away cell phones. Unless deemed appropriate by the instructors, students should not use laptops during class discussion. If you are using an electronic device to access readings, please ensure that is the only reason you are using that device - it is inappropriate to also be accessing email, Facebook, etc. during class time.

University Statement Asserting Respect for Human Diversity:

Miami University is a community dedicated to intellectual engagement. Our campuses consist of students, faculty, and staff from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. By living, working, studying, and teaching, we bring our unique viewpoints and life experiences together for the benefit of all. This inclusive learning environment, based upon an atmosphere of mutual respect and positive engagement, invites all campus citizens to explore how they think about knowledge, about themselves, and about how they see themselves in relation to others. Our intellectual and social development and daily education interactions, whether co-curricular or classroom related, are greatly enriched by our acceptance of one another as members of the Miami University community. Through valuing our own diversity and the diversity of others, we seek to learn from one another, foster a sense of shared experience, and commit to making the university the intellectual home of us all.

We recognize that we must uphold and abide by university policies and procedures protecting individual rights and guiding democratic engagement. Any actions disregarding these policies and procedures, particularly those resulting in discrimination, harassment, or bigoted acts, will be challenged swiftly and collectively. All who work, live, study, and teach in the Miami community must be committed to these principles of mutual respect and positive engagement, which are integral parts of Miami's focus, goals, and mission.

Students with Disabilities:

Creating an inclusive environment where all students have the opportunity to learn is very important to us. Students with disabilities need not disclose, but know that accommodations will be made as needed. Please contact the Office of Disability Services in

the Campus Avenue Building or contact Mr. Andy Zeisler (529-1541 – TTY accessible) or speak with either one of us.

05.201.C. The Office of Disability Resources (ODR) coordinates accommodations through various campus and state agencies to provide services such as taped textbooks, route training, campus transportation, sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, modified housing, testing accommodations, and priority scheduling, to name a few. In addition, ODR ensures access to telecommunications with a TTY network.

05.201.D. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Miami University's Office of Disability Resources provides access for students with physical disabilities to University-sponsored events and programs. Because each student who registers with the Office of Disability Resources has a different set of abilities and limitations, accommodations will depend on the individual needs of the student. Also, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, a student with a disability must self-identify his or her needs to the Director of the Office of Disability Resources in order to receive accommodations. Therefore, students must put all accommodation requests in writing, accompanied by a physician's letter that documents the necessity of all requests. Information pertaining to an individual's disability will remain confidential and only be used to provide the individual with reasonable accommodations.

05.201.E. For more information, contact the Office of Disability Resources, 19 Campus Avenue Building, 529-1541 (TTY accessible), or visit <http://www.muohio.edu/odr/>

Miami University Policy on Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to adhere to the university policy on academic honesty as stated in the student handbook section 01.501A and 01.501B. It is especially important in your writing to be sure that you distinguish the ideas of other authors from your own. If you are unclear about how to do this, please see us or contact the Howe Center for Writing Excellence (located in King Library).

You are expected to be familiar with Miami's policy on academic misconduct, available at http://www.miami.muohio.edu/documents_and_policies/handbook/academic_regulations/cadregspv.cfm

Course Schedule: (Work in Progress)

Date	Themes	Readings for Today	Assignments Due
Week One Jan 15	Course Overview	N/A	N/A
Week Two Jan 22	What is Disability? The Models of Disability Introduction to Media Studies	World Report on Disability Summary *Read Pages 7-23 (World Health Organization) "Models of Disability" - Excerpt from <i>Disability, Society, and the Individual</i> (Julie Smart) Reassigning Meaning (Simi Linton) The Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time (J. Francis Davis)	Journal #1
Week Three Jan 29	Ableism and Disability Oppression	Disability, Stigma, and Deviance (Susman) Ableism: Introduction (Readings for Diversity and Social Justice) Struggle for Freedom: Disability Rights Movement (Readings for Diversity and Social Justice) The Social Construction of Difference (Readings for Diversity and Social Justice) Go to the Margins of the Class: Disability Hate Crimes (Readings for Diversity and Social Justice) Recognizing Ableist Beliefs and Practices and Taking Actions as an Ally (Readings for Diversity and Social Justice)	Journal #2
Week Four	Media Content Analysis	Heroes of Assimilation: Or How the Media	Journal #3

Feb 5	and Disability Studies	Transform Disability (Charles A. Riley II)	
		How Content Analysis Provides a Method for Assessment (Haller, Chapter 2)	
Week Five Feb 12	Representations of Disability in Film and Television Case Study: Million Dollar Baby	View the film <i>Million Dollar Baby</i> (Available on Niikha) Responding to Million Dollar Baby (Disability Studies Quarterly Forum) Why Million Dollar Baby Infuriates the Disabled (Chicago Tribune)	Journal #4
Week Six Feb 19	Representations of Disability in Film and Television	Discrimination: Disabled People and the Media (Hunt - Historical Piece) Media Advocacy and Films: "The Million Dollar Baby Effect" (Haller, Chapter 9)	Journal #5 Film or Television Series Critique Due
Week Seven Feb 26	Representations of Disability in Film and Television	Screening Stereotypes - Images of Disabled People in Television and Motion Pictures (Longmore) The New Phase of Disability Humor on TV (Haller, Chapter 8)	Journal #6 Film or Television Series Critique Due
Week Eight Mar 5	Telethons & Memoirs/Disability Life Writing	Pity as Oppression in the Jerry Lewis Telethon (Haller, Chapter 7) Disability Life Writing and the Politics of Knowing (Beth Ferri)	Journal #7 Film or Television Series Critique Due
Week Nine Mar 12	Have a Fun, Safe, and Restful Spring Break!		
Week Ten Mar 19	Disability and the "News"	Changing Disability Terminology in the News (Haller, Chapter 3) The Changing Landscape of Disability "News" - Blogging and	Journal #8

		Social Media Lead to More Diverse Sources of Information (Haller, Chapter 1)	
		Case Study: Fox Pushes Disability Benefits Myths <i>Watch Video First, then Read Written Response</i> (Media Matters)	
Week Eleven Mar 26	Disability and the "News"	Not Worth Keeping Alive? - <i>New York Times</i> Narratives About Assisted Suicide (Haller, Chapter 4)	Journal #9
		Autism and Inclusive Education in the News Media - Hartmann v. Loudoun County Board of Education (Haller, Chapter 5)	Book or Written Account Critique Due
Week Twelve Apr 2	Disability and Advertising	Brands R Us: How Advertising Works	Journal #10
		Advertising Boldly Moves Disability Forward (Haller, Chapter 10)	Book or Written Account Critique Due
		And Here's the Pitch: How Advertising Uses Disability (Charles A. Riley II)	
Week Thirteen Apr 9	Disability in Photography, Theatre, and Art	The Politics of Staring: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography (Rosemarie Garland-Thomson)	Journal #11
			Book or Written Account Critique Due
Week Fourteen Apr 16	Disability in Photography, Theatre, and Art	Staring Back - Self-Representations of Disabled Performance Artists (Rosemarie Garland-Thomson)	Journal #12
Week Fifteen Apr 23	The Disability Media	Disability Media Tell Their Own Stories (Haller, Chapter 6)	Journal #13
		WE: The Short and Happy Life of an Independent Magazine (Charles A. Riley II)	
Week Sixteen Apr 30	Presentations of Final Projects	-	Journal #14

Finals Week May 7	Presentations of Final Projects (During Final Exam Time)	-	
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