

Disability Studies (DBST)

DBST 2217 Neurodiversity 3 Credits

What is neurodiversity and how does it relate to disability, social justice, and human rights? In this course, we will learn about the full constellation of neurodivergent experiences, including discussion of autism, psychosocial disabilities, dementias, learning disabilities, trauma, and more. We will explore concepts like sanity, intelligence, competence, "normality," and wellness in relation to social, cultural, political, and economic values about how people's brains work and ought to work.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2218 Nazis and Disability 3 Credits

This course will examine both the philosophy and the practice of the Nazis against those who were disabled, whether German, Roma or Jewish. Emphasis will be placed in two areas: (1) the roots of the concept of "disability" in Nazi thinking and medical policy and (2) the application of this policy by medical and social service personnel throughout Nazi-occupied territory. A close look at the role of eugenics, social Darwinism and "race and blood" hygiene laws will also be included as contributing to the notion of "disability." Various figures in implementing these policies will also be studied, such as Hans Asperger, a pioneer researcher in Autism, whose own discoveries encouraged the elimination of disabled children at killing centers such as Spiegelgrund. Course also offered as JCIV 218.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2234 Feminist Disability Studies 3 Credits

Level: Undergraduate

Course attribute: Core:HALC - Hum, Art, Lit, Cul

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2249 Disability Law Activism 3 Credits

Dominant narratives of disability cast disabled people as objects of pity, charity, or horror, relegating disability to medicine or psychiatry. In contrast, disabled people have organized across many communities and movements to demand civil and human rights, social justice, and liberation from ableist oppression as a key component of capitalism, white supremacy, and settler colonialism. This course examines narratives of historical and contemporary disability activism and advocacy in and around the nation's capital, as well as differences in strategy and action. The course situates hypervisible forms of activism such as public protest, impact litigation, and national policymaking alongside the tensions and conflicts between movements that claim national recognition and those led by local community organizers in Washington DC. Students develop semester-long projects in solidarity and partnership with disabled-led organizations.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2250 Disability in Politics 3 Credits

Disability figures largely in U.S. politics and policy, from concerns about high-profile political leaders' mental and physical fitness for office to committees on "judicial disability." Issues of disability arise in matters ranging from disabilities caused in war, famine, and genocide; to issues of disability in death penalty cases, abortion, mass incarceration, and policy responses to mass shootings. This course addresses disability as a major force shaping political debate, public policy, and political thought. Along with race, class, and gender, this course examines the presence and impact of disability in society, law, and polity, informed by disabled advocates and political leaders.

Level: Undergraduate

Prerequisites: UNXD CALL

Course attribute:

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

Equivalent to DBST 2249

DBST 2251 Capitalism, Gender, Disability 3 Credits

Disability can sometimes resist and refuse capitalism and its definitions of work, independence, productivity, and progress. The principles of Disability Justice remind us that "our worth is not dependent on what and how much we can produce" and many people have struggled against capitalism to instead invest in mutualist and community-oriented economies where disabled people support and learn from one another. But capitalism also produces disability: the jobs people do are often disabling, and our feminist and anti-racist analysis confirms that people are not equally likely to be working in dangerous jobs. At the same time, disabled people are often locked out of the workforce and when hired, must fight for fair pay and good conditions. During our seminar, we will study texts by Marta Russell, who argues that disability--what it is and who constitutes the category--is defined by capitalism. Likewise, we will study scholarship, art, and activism emerging from feminist movements that remind us that care work is often feminized and privatized in the form of the family, which benefits capital. We will study racial capitalism, the Wages for Housework Campaign, movements for Universal Basic Income, the concept of "essential work," the proliferation of unpaid internships, and the directive to "do what you love." Following Kathi Weeks and other feminist theorists, we will interrogate the position of work as it sits at both the center of our lives and the top of our hierarchy of values.

Restrictions: N/A

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2268 Disability and the Arts 3 Credits

In this dynamic, hands-on course, we will explore the rich relationship between disability and the arts. Using case studies drawn from the visual and performing arts, we will employ interdisciplinary approaches to studying these masterworks. Rather than viewing disability as something art overcomes or therapizes, we will examine how artists deploy disability as a lens, an identity, an aesthetic, and a form of discourse to interrogate notions of power, representation, art, and ability. Invisible disabilities, competing/contested definitions of disability, access, and self-advocacy will be central to our conversations. However, we will not be reducing the art we study to its sociological function; the sheer brilliance of these works--and the relationship between this artistic accomplishment and 'disability'--will be central to our study. This class is part of a cluster of disability-related courses, allowing us to access an enormous array of disability/art-related events, guest artists, and speakers. Project-based learning, community engagement, and art-making will be central to our work together. We will also consider our own assumptions about ability and art, and work to transform the classroom community and beyond. To that end, issues of access will be central. No previous knowledge of any particular art form or disability is necessary. In this class, the creative, practical, and scholarly will dance a troika.

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2270 Intro to Disability Studies 3 Credits

The Body Perfect and Imperfect: Disability Studies through Stories, Law, and Social Policy This course explores disability from an interdisciplinary perspective: literature, first-person accounts, public policy advocacy, and the basic legal framework. Texts include short stories, personal narratives by individuals who have disabilities or by their family members, and articles by disability rights activists. We integrate film study with our readings to critically examine how pop culture represents, and misrepresents, disability and bodily difference. We will watch and discuss classic film productions of "The Christmas Carol" and "The Glass Menagerie," as well as clips from recent episodes of "Glee" and "House." We begin the course with a cluster of related topics: What is Disability? Why do definitions matter? How is disability socially constructed? We explore challenges for individuals with autism spectrum disorder, psychiatric disorders and PTSD, deafness and/or blindness. We also consider the intersection between disability and aging, focusing on Alzheimer's as an example. We examine the advocacy efforts by parents of children with disabilities as they seek to access resources to meet their children's needs. We consider the difficult policy choices that arise in health care allocation, educational opportunities, and social services in view of budget constraints.

Level: Undergraduate

Course attribute: Core:HALC - Hum, Art, Lit, Cul

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2702 Grief Grievance 3 Credits

In this class we will explore the politics and poetics of loss in 20th and 21st century American literature and culture. Grounded in disabled "technologies of grief" as well as psychoanalytic and socio-cultural understandings of mourning, we'll study artistic and political movements galvanized by loss on both small and grand scales, including: the ongoing multi-genre tradition of Black artistic responses to racist violence, the poetry and performance culture of HIV/AIDS, work on "racial melancholia" and the Asian American immigrant experience, the poetics of climate grief and eco-justice activism, and Disability Day of Mourning and Not Dead Yet movements. The course will cover elegiac poetry, fiction, visual art, theater, film, and digital media. We will also explore political funerals and direct action activism.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2703 Disability and Sports 3 Credits

This course critically examines the intersection of disability and sports within the framework of Disability Studies, emphasizing accessibility, inclusion, and representation. Students will analyze the historical and contemporary experiences of athletes with disabilities, the influence of ableism, and the role of sports as a platform for advocacy and social justice. Through scholarly readings, interviews, and discussions, the course cultivates a deeper understanding of how disability is constructed and contested in athletic contexts.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 2815 Disability Ethics EcoJustice 3 Credits

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3302 Addressing Health Status Inequity 2 Credits

Title: Addressing the Health Status and Health Inequities Among Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Across the Life Span Individuals with intellectual and developmental (I/DD) are often excluded in the medical school curriculum. They experience a cascade of disparities as an underserved minority who face stigma and discrimination, along with disadvantages associated with social determinants such as housing, employment, the trauma of institutionalization, and limited education access. This course will cover a comprehensive profile of the health needs of people with developmental disabilities. Students will begin with a review of the history of disability health, including evolving definitions of I/DD and will gain knowledge of the developmental profiles associated with certain health risks, including syndromic conditions. Optimal health management will be addressed within the context of providing inclusive health care by addressing effective communication, health inequalities and barriers to service delivery, reforming policy and legislation. Students will explore strategies and programs that promote a public health perspective resulting in healthier lifestyles, improved healthcare access, and the role that self-determination, self-efficacy and self-advocacy play in the maintenance of health among people with developmental disabilities. Students will be exposed to collaborative knowledge building around I/DD health policy issues and learn about the importance of communities of practice

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3303 Disability Studies: The Mad Turn 3 Credits

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3304 Introduction to Deaf Community 3 Credits

This course will introduce students into a broad understanding of Deaf Community. The history and value of its culture and language (American Sign Language) will be discussed. Students will examine through readings, films, short stories, and personal and educational experiences on how Deaf and Hard of Hearing people navigate through the society of hearing people.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3305 Crip/Mad/Queer Narratives 3 Credits

Disability, madness, illness, and neurodivergence are often situated as deviance, burden, and risk, just as queer and trans identity, experience, and embodiment are pathologized. This course explores literature written by, about, and/or foregrounding queer and trans chronically ill, disabled, sick, mad, and neurodivergent embodiments. Studying literature alongside disability theory enables tracing literary lineages and locating disability, madness, and queerness in narratives of deviance, resistance, and revolution. Situating texts like Audre Lorde's *Cancer Journals* and Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* alongside contemporary work by writers like Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Rivers Solomon, Travis Chi Wing Lau, and Kay Ulanday Barrett invites consideration of activist cultural work as science fiction, and disabled queer and trans literature as cultural and political commentary.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3350 Int'l Edu of Yng DisabledChild 3 Credits

Since Maria Montessori first developed her teaching methods for disadvantaged and disabled children in Italy in the early 20th Century, Italy has promoted inclusive participatory early childhood education. In this program, you will compare and contrast early education models across the globe, beginning with two popular Italian models, Montessori and Reggio Emilia. Other early childhood education models such as the Step-by-Step model, used throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and the Scandinavian models will be examined providing a comprehensive analysis. Through site visits, lecture, discussion, and participation in a UNESCO co-sponsored one-day symposium, students will develop a uniquely crafted, global understanding of the early education of disabled children.

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3360 Autistic Activ Neurodiversity 3 Credits

In 1993, pioneering autistic activist Jim Sinclair delivered a seminal keynote speech titled "Don't Mourn For Us" at a conference mostly for parents of autistic children. Widely considered radical for their time, Sinclair's work developed in concert with other early pioneers of the neurodiversity movement including autistic activists Mel Baggs, Cal Montgomery, and Laura Tisoncik. Organizations such as the Autism Network International, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, and Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network infused ideals from the disability rights movement and early disability studies scholarship into social justice and civil rights focused activism. The neurodiversity movement remains contested space, with definitions of neurodivergence often disputed or misunderstood, and its issues ranging from abuse in residential treatment to autonomy for trans disabled youth, police brutality against neurodivergent people of color, and access to augmentative and alternative communication. This course uses a mixture of primary source material and recent academic texts to trace the origins and development of the neurodiversity movement from its birth in the autistic community to its connections today to the mad pride, broader self-advocacy, and disability rights movements. Readings include early work by activists and cultural workers including Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay, Naoki Higashida, and Bev Harp; and literature and contemporary works by scholars and artists by Anand Prahlad, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, and Remi Yergeau situating neurodivergence, madness, and disability as sociocultural phenomena with profound political implications and possibilities for transforming ableist values and making new worlds.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3361 Disability Crit Race Theory 3 Credits

Critical disability theory and the Disability Justice movement are grounded in critical race theory and other intersectional, feminist, queer, and class analysis. This course examines the deep interrelationships and interconnectedness between Black, Latine, Indigenous, and Asian centric critical race theories. We will explore critical race theorists' critique of the disability studies field as well as the disability rights movement.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 3370 Accessibility on Campus 3 Credits

We will examine the campus in each section to discuss what accessibility needs to be improved on campus in groups up to 5. We will film, interview, and survey people on campus and gather all that information and possibly present it to the campus. We will be comparing different campuses in the DC area that have about the same amount of acreage as Georgetown.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4255 GenderCare in Mod. US Poetry 3 Credits

In this class, we'll explore modern and contemporary American poetry through the lenses of gender and disability theory, particularly as they center the question of care. We'll examine the way a range of poets with and without disabilities take up critical questions in their work, including: how do we care for one another from childhood through aging? How are our relationships of care charged with the power dynamics of race, class, immigration status, disability and gender? Does the work of care conflict with or engender creativity in poetry? And how might disability, in the ways it compels us to understand ourselves through our vulnerability and our dependency on others, reframe such core American values as independence and rational individualism as well as key poetic ideals like genius?

Since much of the work of care (both familial and non-familial, unpaid and inadequately paid) has been assigned to women and femme-identified people, they will make up the bulk, though not the entirety, of our syllabus. We'll examine the writing lives of selected 20th and 21st century poets who played significant roles in shaping the literary fields in which they worked, and we'll think about poetic community as a form of care. We'll move chronologically and thematically, exploring conceptions of motherhood, (de)institutionalization, queer kinship, and interdependency from Emily Dickinson into Modernism, the post-War era, the Second Wave and Black Feminist movements, HIV/AIDS and queer community, to our immediate moment.

Level: Undergraduate

Course attribute: Core:HALC - Hum, Art, Lit, Cul

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4424 Disability Studies Seminar 3 Credits

TBD

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4425 Disability Access in Nature 3 Credits

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4426 Deaf Culture and Literature 3 Credits

This course explores the rich and diverse world of Deaf culture through its literary traditions, artistic expressions, and intersections with Disability Studies. Students will engage with works by Deaf authors and creators, examining themes of identity, language, community, social justice, and advocacy. Emphasizing the role of American Sign Language (ASL) in shaping Deaf identity, the course will explore both historical and contemporary perspectives, focusing on how literature reflects and shapes Deaf experiences. Students will also examine how Deaf culture intersects with broader societal themes, such as disability, language, activism, and accessibility, and how Deaf literature challenges dominant narratives around disability, rights, and cultural representation. Through readings, discussions, and multimedia content, students will gain a deeper understanding of how Deaf culture and literature contribute to the ongoing dialogue within Disability Studies, highlighting the impact of language on identity and community.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4439 Topics in Phil of Disability 3 Credits

The field of Philosophy of Disability involves the philosophical study not just of disability, but also of a range of related issues such as normality, enhancement, accessibility, human rights, and eugenics. This course will serve as an overview to the field through a focus on selected debates. Topics may include disability politics & the problem of debility, disability and enhancement, "causing" disability, disability and racialization, the mere- vs. bad-difference debate, disability and passing, phenomenology of disability, disability and the history of philosophy, disability and immigration, etc.

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

Course registration restrictions:

Enrollment is limited to students with a program in Bioethics, Bioethics, Bioethics, Bioethics, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Philosophy, Philosophy, Philosophy or Philosophy.

DBST 4524 Dis Justice asCenter of Policy 3 Credits

Disability Justice as the Center of Policy: This course will provide an in-depth exploration of disability justice a movement that centers disabled Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), equity, and public policy. People with disabilities create the largest marginalized group in the United States making up about a quarter of the population. This makes studying disability relevant for multi-faceted careers in the areas of medicine, business, advocacy, communications, and policy. The course will begin with an overview of the multiple federal disability laws that protect this community; it will also review the basics of social equity and the process of creating public policy. There will be extensive discussions on Intersectionality, race, sexual orientation, equity activism, and multi-marginalization. This graduate-level course will provide a multifaceted understanding of the historical, social, cultural, socioeconomic, and political dimensions of disability. Students will be able to articulate the concept of disability as a social construction; engage in interdisciplinary inquiry about disability as diversity; demonstrate an understanding of disability justice, laws, and policies; prepare for creating public policy and community engagement.

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4717 Disability, Art, and Culture 3 Credits

In this dynamic practicum, we will explore the rich relationship between disability, art, and culture. Utilizing critical theory as well as case studies drawn from the literary, visual and performing arts, we will employ disability studies approaches to examining how disability challenges notions of culture. Rather than viewing disability as something art overcomes or therapizes, we will examine how cultural workers deploy disability as a lens, an identity, an aesthetic, and a form of discourse to interrogate notions of power, representation, art, ability, and more. We will also consider our own assumptions about ability and art, and work to transform the classroom community and beyond. Issues of access will be central. Art- and culture-making will be used as methods of criticism. Project-based learning and disability justice will form the core of our praxis, which we will collectively create.

Level: Graduate, Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4949 Disability Studies Tutorial 1-3 Credits

In this course, students will design their senior capstone experience, laying the groundwork for either a scholarly thesis or a community-based learning project. Students on the thesis track will work to identify a research problem, create an annotated bibliography, and complete a written prospectus. Students on the community-based learning track will identify a community partner, articulate project goals, set up a schedule, begin engaging with the community partner, about 3-4 hours/week. For both tracks, students should work with the Director and/or Associate Director of the Disability Studies Program program to identify and secure the mentorship of a Disability Studies faculty member or, for the CBL project, a subject matter expert outside of the University.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

DBST 4970 Senior Capstone Indep Study 1 Credit

In this course, students will design their senior capstone experience, laying the groundwork for either a scholarly thesis or a community-based learning project. Students on the thesis track will work to identify a research problem, create an annotated bibliography, and complete a written prospectus. Students on the community-based learning track will identify a community partner, articulate project goals, set up a schedule, begin engaging with the community partner, about 3-4 hours/week. For both tracks, students should work with the Director and/or Associate Director of the Disability Studies Program program to identify and secure the mentorship of a Disability Studies faculty member or, for the CBL project, a subject matter expert outside of the University.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

Course registration restrictions:

Enrollment limited to students in the Disability Studies department.

DBST 4971 Sr Capstone Thesis Project 3 Credits

In this 3-credit mentored independent study, students will research, plan, and complete an approximately 30-page scholarly thesis on a topic of their choosing. This course is a continuation of DBST 4949. Students will read widely and deeply and conduct other forms of research according to the plan they established in the fall semester. Meeting regularly with their Disability Studies faculty mentor, they will write an original, compelling and polished thesis which they will present along with other students in their cohort in a Senior Colloquium, the final event of the Spring Disability Studies event series.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

Course registration restrictions:

Enrollment is limited to students with a major in E, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies or Disability Studies.

DBST 4972 CommunityBsd Learning Capstone 3 Credits

In this 3-credit mentored independent study, students will continue to engage regularly with their community partner, typically 3-4 hours per week, writing weekly reflections and meeting regularly with their Disability Studies mentor and/or community subject matter expert. The semester will culminate in a presentation to the community partner as well as participation in the Disability Studies Senior Colloquium.

Level: Undergraduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)

Course registration restrictions:

Enrollment is limited to students with a program in Disability Studies, Disability Studies, Disability Studies or Disability Studies.

DBST 7949 Tutorial: Disability Studies 0-3 Credits

Level: Graduate

Grading: Main Campus (UGrad, Grad)