



## COMM315-01: Disability Media Studies

Film and television depictions of people with disabilities are proliferating, even as medical science and political forces are changing what it means to be disabled and/or able-bodied in our society. This course will work with a range of theories and methodologies from media studies and disability studies in order to help us make sense of the intersections between media and disability. We will explore not just how disability is represented in a range of media forms but also how questions of access, normalization, audience reception, media production, and media policy help us better understand the role of disability in media and vice-versa.

### Contact Information

Instructor:	Bill Kirkpatrick
Office:	327 Higley, 587-8512
Email:	kirkpatrickb@denison.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00; Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30; or by appointment
Virtual Office Hours:	From time to time, I will be available through video chat on Notebowl

## Learning Goals

By the end of this class, you should:

- have a solid understanding of a range of influential theoretical approaches to the role of disability in the media and vice-versa.
- be able to think critically about disability in terms of media texts, their social contexts, media industries, and audiences.
- improve your ability to read, comprehend, and apply challenging theoretical texts.
- be able to research, analyze, and evaluate with sophistication an issue relevant to the themes and concerns discussed in class.

## Required Materials

1. Ellcessor and Kirkpatrick, *Disability Media Studies* (available in the bookstore)
2. In addition, you should budget approximately \$50-\$100 for viewing expenses and printing costs

## Assignments

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. Late assignments will be penalized ½-grade per day (e.g. B+ to B).

Viewing Journal	30%	Class Engagement	10%
Midterm Exam (due 10/21)	25%	Community Engagement	05%
Final paper	30%		

## Policies and Expectations

Attendance: Attendance is highly encouraged and will greatly enhance your own and others' class experience. However, there are no penalties for non-attendance; if you must be absent, you may employ other strategies to demonstrate class engagement (see below).

Lateness: Please be in your seat and ready to begin class at the scheduled start time. I am much stricter about lateness than absenteeism and would rather you not come at all than interrupt your classmates by showing up late.

Engagement: The main responsibilities of creating a productive and enjoyable class rest with you, and that is why class contribution is part of your final course grade (10%). Your active engagement affects not only what you get out of the course but also what your classmates get out of the course. Merely attending class and taking notes is not enough for your success in this class. You can also demonstrate class engagement in ways other than speaking in class (e.g. sending me your thoughts via email; coming to office hours to talk about ideas, not just exam prep; forwarding or posting to Notebowl relevant links and items of interest).

Preparation: Always bring the day's readings to class with you. The syllabus will always state clearly what you should read prior to each class, which assignments you should hand in, and what else you must do or bring for a given day. Late assignments will be penalized by a half-grade for each 24 hours of lateness (e.g. from B+ to B). If you know that you will have difficulty completing an assignment on time, let me know before the deadline and I will try to work with you if possible.

Grades: All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade. The calculation of your grade will be based on a 1,000-point scale, and the weight of each assignment is listed above. If you are concerned about your grade, come talk to me as early as possible.

Electronics: You may not use computers, iPads, phones, or similar devices in class without express prior permission. Your cell phone must be turned off and put away during class. If you absolutely need to have your phone on during class for some reason, talk to me at the beginning of the semester or the particular class session and we'll work something out.

Email Policy: I will regularly use email to send out announcements, changes in the syllabus, reminders about tests or due dates, etc. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly to keep up-to-date with these announcements. Except in rare cases of personal or family emergency, I promise to answer all email from students within 24 hours (36 hours on weekends) and will hold you responsible for any announcements made via email within 24 hours of the announced change (36 hours on weekends). Please keep in mind that more involved questions should be asked in office hours, not over email.

Accessibility and Special Accommodations: In keeping with the nature of the course and my own ethical commitments, I am striving to make the class and my teaching materials as accessible as possible. Access needs will be addressed preemptively through the following strategies:

- Captions for in-class videos, and transcripts of audio material, will be provided whenever possible
- Class discussions will be recorded and posted for subsequent and repeat listening
- The midterm is a take-home, open-book exam with at least a one-week completion window
- The viewing journal can be completed on your own schedule (check-in dates on the syllabus merely monitor progress and ensure you know your grade as the semester progresses)
- Flexible deadlines are possible with advance notice
- Participation will be evaluated through a variety of modalities: in-class discussion, contributing to Notebowl, coming to office hours, etc.

It is important that the course be accessible to all students. If you need any alternative accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order for you to be able to participate fully in the course, or if there are any external issues that may affect your work in this course, please contact me privately as soon as possible to discuss your specific needs.

Academic Honesty: You may not turn in substantially similar work to two classes without the express consent of both instructors. All sources in your written work must be properly cited; if you have any doubts about correct citation, contact the Writing Center or any of the many paper and online guides to academic citation. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated, and students found to have committed plagiarism, regardless of whether or not the plagiarism was committed intentionally and knowingly, will face grade penalties and will also be reported to the university to face further academic discipline. You are encouraged to use the resources available in the library system and the Writing Center to guide your research. In addition, I call your attention to Denison's statement on academic integrity:

"Proposed and developed by Denison students, passed unanimously by DCGA and Denison's faculty, the Code of Academic Integrity requires that instructors notify the Associate Provost of cases of academic dishonesty, and it requires that cases be heard by the Academic Integrity Board. Further, the code makes students responsible for promoting a culture of integrity on campus and acting in instances in which integrity is violated.

"Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity. Academic dishonesty is intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work ranging from daily homework assignments to major exams. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted—not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations. Students should ask their instructors for assistance in determining what sorts of materials and assistance are appropriate for assignments and for guidance in citing such materials clearly.

"For further information about the Code of Academic Integrity see <http://www.denison.edu/about/integrity.html>."

Evaluations: At the end of the semester, you will be asked to evaluate this course and the instructor. These evaluations are an important tool for helping Denison faculty achieve and maintain excellence in the classroom; it will also help you reflect on your learning, participation, and effort in the course. A key purpose of course evaluations, then, is to constantly improve the level of teaching and learning at Denison by instructors and students. Your ratings and comments will also be included as one element of the instructor's overall teaching portfolio. Together with peer observations and other means of assessing teaching effectiveness, this portfolio will be considered by the instructor's colleagues and college administrators in making recommendations for contract renewal, tenure, promotion, and salary decisions.

### Gateway Criteria for Written Work

The following criteria are the bare minimum requirements for all written work you turn in, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the assignment prompt. If any of these criteria are not met, I will stop reading and give you a zero on the assignment. Depending on the assignment, you *might* be able to revise your work to meet the gateway criteria and hand it back in, at which point a grade penalty will be assessed; if that option is available to you, it will be spelled out in the assignment prompt.

1. The work must be typed in twelve-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides, and double-spaced.
2. Your name and the date of completion must be given at the top unless otherwise specified.
3. If the work is printed out and more than one page, it must be stapled.
4. All citations must be in Chicago full-footnote/bibliography style unless otherwise specified or you make other arrangements with me.
5. The version that you turn in must have been properly spell-checked.
6. If an electronic file, the file name and type must conform to the guidelines for the assignment.
7. The work must adhere to any word counts or page counts given in the prompt unless otherwise authorized.
8. All titles of media works must be formatted correctly according to the following guidelines:  
italicize titles of books, plays, films, albums, magazines, journals, newspapers, and TV programs;  
use quotation marks around titles of individual articles, songs, poems, chapter titles, short stories, and TV series episodes.

### Journals

The course material is not just intellectually challenging; it should also be personally challenging. After all, as you read through the material, your own identity, norms, and ideas about media and disability should be called into question: this class is about you too.

To help you reflect on how course material intersects with your personal experiences, beliefs, and understanding, I'm asking you to write six "journals" this semester based on your viewing of media texts relevant to disability (each worth 5% of your final grade). Three (3) of these should respond to screenings for class; two (2) should be texts of your choosing from outside of class, and the final one should be an overall reflection.

Journals will be collected twice during the semester, and due on the last day of class:

- Oct. 2: Total of two entries complete
- Nov. 15: Total of five entries complete
- Dec. 13: Total of six entries complete, including final reflection

Each of the first five entries should demonstrate your familiarity with the text you chose, draw connections to course concepts, and demonstrate reflection on your own thoughts, experiences, and attitudes. Journals may be typed or handwritten and may incorporate images or other material as desired. Each entry should be approximately 300 words or one page.

The sixth entry should reflect on the class as a whole, offering your thoughts on key insights and take-aways, connections to your own life, and ideas about how you might use these ideas in the future.

These assignments are exempt from the gateway criteria above; however, all multipage documents must be stapled.

### Community Engagement

Over the course of the semester, I will alert you to speakers and events that are relevant to the class. You may also suggest opportunities as you learn of them. You must attend two such events; for each, please summarize the event and connect it to class theory and concepts (maximum 250 words). Gateway criteria apply. Your summary is due on NoteBowl at the latest one week after the event. Each summary is worth 2% of your grade (20 points out of 1000). In addition, you are required to provide two substantive (minimum 50 word) comments on your classmates' event summaries (also on NoteBowl), each worth 0.5% of your grade (5 points out of 1000).

### Daily Schedule

Readings should be completed by that day's class, and you should come prepared to discuss them.

All readings from Ellcessor and Kirkpatrick will be marked "DMS"; all others will be linked on NoteBowl.

Screenings that are on reserve in the library will be marked as "lib." Other screenings may require purchase from iTunes, Amazon, etc. (see "Required Materials" above).

#### UNIT 1: THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Aug. 30	Disability Studies, Media Studies		
Sep. 4	Introduction to Media Studies	<u>Read:</u>	Becker, "Ideology" Beltrán, "Representation" (97-103) Smith, "Role Models and Stereotypes" (103-109)
		<u>Media:</u>	Watch <i>Glee</i> , "Wheels" (S1E9); <i>Glee</i> , "Dream On" (S1E19) (lib.)
Sep. 6	Introduction to Disability Studies I	<u>Read:</u>	Davis, "Constructing Normalcy" Garland-Thomson, "Disability and Representation"
Sep. 11	Introduction to Disability Studies II	<u>Read:</u>	Shakespeare, "The Social Model of Disability" Tremain, "Foucault, Governmentality, and Critical Disability Theory" (1-12)
Sep. 13	Introduction to Disability Media Studies	<u>Read:</u>	Ellcessor, Hagood, and Kirkpatrick, "Introduction" (DMS)

#### UNIT 2: INDUSTRIAL CONTEXTS

Sep. 18	Disability in the Text	<u>Media:</u>	Watch Royal Shakespeare Company, <i>Richard III</i> , Act I, Scene I (YouTube; link on NB)
		<u>Read:</u>	Anderson, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier" Mitchell and Snyder, "Narrative Prosthesis"
Sep. 20	Disability Texts as Industrial Objects <b>NOTE: Class will be in Fellows 209</b>	<u>Media:</u>	Watch <i>ABC's After School Special</i> , "The Ice Skating Rink" (lib.)
		<u>Read:</u>	Elman, "After School Special Education" (DMS)
Sep. 25	New Models, New Producers	<u>Read:</u>	Christian, "Fandom as Industrial Practice" Carpentier, <i>Media and Participation</i> , pp. 64-71
Sep. 27	Disability and Industrial Access	<u>Media:</u>	Watch <i>The Guild</i> , "Anarchy!"; <i>My Gimp Life</i> , "Accessible" (S1E1), "Inspirational" (S1E3), "Viral Superstar" (S1E9) (YouTube; all links on NB)
		<u>Read:</u>	Ellcessor, "Kickstarting Community"
Oct. 2	Governmentality	<u>Read:</u>	Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde, "Governmentality"
Oct. 4	Policy as Industrial Context	<u>Read:</u>	Kirkpatrick, "A Blessed Boon" (DMS)
		<u>Turn In:</u>	Journal (two entries)
		<u>NOTE:</u>	Take-home midterm exam handed out, due 10/16

#### UNIT 3: SOCIAL CONTEXTS AND AUDIENCES

Oct. 9	The Politics of Prosthetics I	<u>Read:</u>	Serlin, "The Other Arms Race"
Oct. 11	The Disabled Veteran After 9/11	<u>Media:</u>	Watch <i>Iron Man 3</i> (lib.)
		<u>Read:</u>	Samuels, "Prosthetic Heroes" (DMS)
Oct. 16	<b>NO CLASS: MIDTERM DUE</b>	<u>Turn In:</u>	<b>Midterm by 10:00 p.m. to assignments@billkirkpatrick.net</b>
Oct. 18	<b>NO CLASS: FALL BREAK</b>		
Oct. 23	Debility and Depression	<u>Media:</u>	Read Brosch, <i>Hyperbole and a Half</i> , "Adventures in Depression Parts 1 & 2"
		<u>Read:</u>	Cvetkovich, "Writing Depression"

Oct. 25	Temporality and Disability I <b>Guest: Shoshana Magnet</b>	<u>Media:</u> <u>Read:</u>	Read Engelberg, <i>Cancer Made Me a Shallower Person</i> Magnet & Watson, "How to Get Through the Day" ( <i>DMS</i> )
Oct. 30	Temporality and Queerness	<u>Read:</u> <u>Turn In:</u>	Duggan, "Homonormativity" Paper proposal
Nov. 1	Temporality and Disability II	<u>Media:</u> <u>Read:</u>	Watch <i>Any Day Now</i> (Kanopy) McRuer, "Any Day Now" ( <i>DMS</i> )
Nov. 6	The Politics of Staring	<u>Read:</u>	Garland-Thomson, <i>Staring</i> , pp. 3-15 and 185-196
Nov. 8	<b>NO CLASS</b> (Bill out of town)	<u>Media:</u>	Watch <i>Freaks</i> (lib.)
Nov. 13	Staring in the Media Ages	<u>Media:</u> <u>Read:</u>	Watch <i>AMC's Freakshow</i> , "'Two-Headed Bearded Dragon Birthday" (S1E1) (Amazon Video) Kido Lopez, "How to Stare at Your Television" ( <i>DMS</i> )
Nov. 15	Fan Communities	<u>Read:</u> <u>Turn In:</u>	Cleary, "One of Us" ( <i>DMS</i> ) Journal (five entries complete)

### **THANKSGIVING BREAK, NOV. 17 - NOV. 25**

#### **UNIT 4: TECHNOLOGIES**

Nov. 27	Technological "Fixes"	<u>Read:</u>	McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness"
Nov. 29	The Politics of Prosthetics II	<u>Read:</u>	Ellis & Goggin, "Disability, Global Popular Media, and Injustice" ( <i>DMS</i> )
Dec. 4	Medical Media I	<u>Watch:</u> <u>Read:</u>	"HPV Boredom 2" (YouTube; link on NB) Serlin, "Toward a Visual Culture of Public Health"
Dec. 6	Medical Media II <b>Guest: Mack Hagood</b>	<u>Read:</u>	Hagood, "Disability and Biomediation" ( <i>DMS</i> )
Dec. 11	Media Waste	<u>Read:</u> <u>Turn In:</u>	Miller, "The Price of the Popular Media" ( <i>DMS</i> ) Journal (all six entries complete)
Dec. 13	Summary/Conclusion	<u>Read:</u>	Ellcessor and Kirkpatrick, "Studying Disability"

**FINAL PAPER DUE TO ASSIGNMENTS@BILLKIRKPATRICK.NET NO LATER THAN MIDNIGHT ON DEC. 17**

