



**Course Information:**

GENWS/ENGL 374: Special Topics: Gender and Disability  
Topic: Gender, Disability and Sexuality

UW-Madison Fall 2021

Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-2:15pm, Sterling Hall 2301

3 Credit Hours with Optional Honors Component (45 hours of work per credit)

*Canvas Course URL:* <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/273326>

*Credit Hour Workload:* This class meets for 75 minutes per class session, twice a week. Additional learning will occur via reading, writing, and group work. For a 3 credit hour course, students should expect 135 hours of labor over the course of the semester, approximately 9 hours per week on average.

**Instructor Information:**

Dr. Sami Schalk

Associate Professor

[sdschalk@wisc.edu](mailto:sdschalk@wisc.edu)

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays 11-1pm on Zoom or by appointment. Schedule meetings at <https://drschalk.youcanbook.me/>

**Course Description**

This class will explore the gender identity and sexuality among disabled people using historical and theoretical articles to discuss and analyze films, memoirs, and poetry by people with disabilities. The course will provide a brief introduction to disability studies and intersectionality before delving into academic discussions and artistic representations of the intersections of disability, gender, and sexuality.

**Learning Outcomes**

- To increase knowledge of disability identity and disability studies
- To develop and hone critical thinking and communication skills
- To increase knowledge of intersectionality and intersectional approaches to reading and writing

**Required Materials**

- *A Quick & Easy Guide to Sex & Disability* by A. Andrews (Simon & Schuster 2020)
- Netflix access

**Course Policies**

*Universal Design and Disability Accommodations:* I believe everyone has a right to a quality education and that classrooms can adapt to students' needs. Everyone learns differently. If you have ideas on how you can best learn and express your learning in this class, if you have an undocumented disability, or if you have a change in disability status during the semester, I encourage you to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss a learning plan. If you have a documented disability, please provide me your accommodation information within the first two weeks of class. The University accommodation policy reads as follows:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty, will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Questions about documenting your disability can be directed to the McBurney Disability Resource Center ([mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu](mailto:mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu), 608/263-2741).

*Diversity and Inclusion:* This is a course invested in justice which moves beyond notions of diversity and inclusion to seek systemic change to end oppression and liberate all people. I acknowledge as an educator that the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a place that has long been—and continues to be—hostile to marginalized people, especially people of color, disabled people and queer and trans people. The University statement on diversity and inclusion reads as follows:

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

*Academic Integrity:* Students are expected to uphold University expectations for academic integrity by submitting only their own original works and ideas for all assignments in this course. Violations of academic integrity can result in a range of repercussions depending on the severity of the violation, from having to repeat the assignment to expulsion from the University. All academic integrity violations will be recorded and reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (OSCCS). For more on academic misconduct procedures at UW-Madison see: <https://students.wisc.edu/student-conduct/academic-integrity/>

*Rules, Rights, and Responsibilities for UW students:* During the global COVID-10 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a

university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community. For more see:

<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#rulesrightsandresponsibilitiestext> and the Badger Pledge (<https://smartrestart.wisc.edu/badgerpledge/>)

*COVID-19:* Official UW Statement reads: “Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.”

Further, I ask that we each be patient and understanding with each other and ourselves as we try to learn, teach, work and survive during a global pandemic. This will not be a “normal” semester for any of us and I want us all to do our best while recognizing that our best is going to vary from person to person based on our resources, support networks, personal obligations and health. I am prepared to move our class online if conditions require it. Please strive to take care of yourself and each other this semester.

*Late Policy:* All major assignments will lose 5% for each day late unless an extension is requested in advance or a disability accommodation plan is already in place. To request an extension, students should write Dr. Schalk prior to the assignment deadline. For the final, students should also provide evidence of progress on the assignment thus far in their e-mail.

### **Grading and Assignments**

This course is graded on the UW-Madison grading system: A (93-100%), AB (88-92%), B (83-87%), BC (78-82%), C (70-77%), D (60-69%), F (below 60%). The assignments are weighted as follows:

Participation & Attendance	20%
Keyword Group Presentation	15%
Midterm Paper	25%
Final Paper/Project Proposal	10%
Final Paper/Project	30%

*Participation:* Participation in this course is a subjective evaluation of student engagement with the course including: participating in class discussions, asking questions, reading aloud, writing on the board during group work, attending office hours to discuss readings, and volunteering for a student-led discussion. Participation is not about a particular quantity of comments or questions, rather about the quality of your engagement with lecture, the materials, and your peers. Low attendance will impact your participation grade, but there is otherwise no attendance policy. If you have an emergency, crisis, or illness that will significantly impact your attendance and participation, contact Dr. Schalk to set up an alternative learning plan. Participation is 20 percent of the final grade.

*Keyword Group Presentation:* Students will be put into groups to create captioned video presentations about a keyword or concept in disability studies. The captioned video should be 5-8 minutes in length. It should provide an overview of what the concept is, how it is used in disability studies, and a concrete example of the concept. The group should also create a PDF handout summarizing the video presentation with a list of sources for peers to reference. Videos will be shown in class and group members will be expected to take questions from their peers. Group members can contribute in different ways so not everyone has to speak or appear on the video presentation. Students will have the opportunity to grade their other group members to ensure equitable contributions. The group concept presentation is 15 percent of the final grade.

*Midterm Paper:* Throughout the semester students should be on the lookout in their lives for small/short cultural objects representing disability or ableism such as advertisements, news stories, social media posts, and even your experiences or conversations with family, friends, peers or co-workers. **No television shows or films, those are too much to cover in a short paper.** The cultural object paper should explain/describe the object and then discuss how the object is an example of a concept from class, connecting the object to at least one course reading. The paper should clearly demonstrate an understanding of the concept being discussed through analysis of the object. The midterm paper should be 3-4 pages double-spaced and is worth 25 percent of the final grade.

*Final Paper/Project Proposal:* All students will be required to submit a substantive 2-3 page (double-spaced, 12 pt font) proposal for their final paper or project (see Final Paper/Project assignment description for details on these two options). Proposals for final papers should include the name of the object of analysis, a thesis statement, an outline, and an annotated bibliography with two academic sources. The annotated bibliography should be a single paragraph per source summarizing the source and stating how you plan to use it in the paper to support your arguments. Proposals for the final projects should detail what the project will entail, the rationale behind it, and a timeline for completion. In the case of group final projects, the proposal should also justify why multiple people are needed for the project and explain who will do what work. The proposal is worth 10 percent of the final grade.

*Final Paper/Project:* For the final, students may decide between two options, a traditional paper or a creative project. The final paper/project is worth 30 percent of the final grade.

Option 1: Traditional academic paper. Write a 6-8 page paper (double-spaced, 12 point font). The paper should analyze the representation of disability and gender **or** disability and sexuality in a contemporary (within the last 5 years) media representation (film, television show, or book only). The paper should include a clear, concrete thesis on the topic of your choice and reference at least two academic secondary sources which may come from course readings or external research. It is typically best to focus on a single character, plot line, or theme to make your thesis specific and clear rather than trying to analyze the entire media representation. Students should create a convincing argument about how the object of analysis represents disability and use concrete details from the media object to support the argument.

Option 2: Creative project. This project can be done independently, in pairs, or in a group of up to four students. The project should be a creative engagement with some of the issues and themes we have addressed throughout the semester regarding disability and gender or sexuality. Examples include short films, zines, original songs, spoken word poetry, creative writing, and visual art. Length of the project depends on the medium, though generally aim for 5 minutes for performative projects and 5-10 pages for creative writing. All creative projects must also include a 3-4 page artist statement which explains

and analyzes the artistic choices made in the project in direct relationship to readings, discussions and ideas from this semester. The artist statement should cite at least two academic secondary sources which may come from course readings or elsewhere. The artist statement should include a formal works cited.

*Honors Students:* Students enrolled for honors credit will be held to higher participation standards. For the final, honors students will either write an 10-12 page paper with minimum 4 academic sources (at least one of which must come from outside of class) or write a 5-6 page artist statement for a creative project that will be held to higher quality expectations.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1:**

#### **Thursday September 9, 2021**

- Introduction to the course

### **Introduction to Disability Studies and Intersectionality**

### **Week 2:**

#### **Tuesday, September 14, 2021**

- Alice Hall "An Introduction to Disability Studies"
- Lennard Davis "Introduction: Normality, Power and Culture"

#### **Thursday, September 16, 2021**

- *Crip Camp* (Netflix)

### **Week 3:**

#### **Tuesday, September 21, 2021**

- Judith Lorber "The Social Construction of Gender"
- Susan Wendell "Social Construction of Disability"

#### **Thursday, September 23, 2021**

- "Intersectionality Primer"
- *Sins Invalid: An Unashamed Claim to Beauty* (Kanopy)

### **Week 4:**

#### **Tuesday, September 28, 2021**

- Bethany Stevens "Politicizing Sexual Pleasure, Oppression and Disability: Recognizing and Undoing the Impacts of Ableism on Sexual and Reproductive Health" Barbara Waxman Fiduccia *Papers On Women and Girls With Disabilities*. 2012.

#### **Thursday, September 30, 2021**

- *Invitation to Dance* (Canvas)

### **Week 5:**

#### **Tuesday, October 5, 2021**

- Keywords in Disability Studies Presentations Part 1

#### **Thursday, October 7, 2021**

- Keywords in Disability Studies Presentations Part 2

### Disability and Gender

#### Week 6:

**Tuesday, October 12, 2021**

- **No class: Brain break! Catch up on reading, rest, and do self-care.**

**Thursday, October 14, 2021**

- Rosemarie Garland-Thomson "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory" *NWSA Journal* 14 (3):1-32. 2002.
- *Little Women NY*, Season 1, Episodes 1-3 (YouTube)

#### Week 7:

**Tuesday, October 19, 2021**

- C.J. Pascoe "What Do We Mean by Masculinity?" from *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*
- Sarah Smith Rainey "Disidentification and Ingenuity in the Sex Lives of Disabled Men"
- *Murderball*

**Thursday, October 21, 2021**

- Optional: "Trans- Terminology"
- Alexandre Baril "transness as debility: rethinking intersections between trans and disabled embodiments." *Feminist Review* 111 (1):59-74. 2015.
- Eli Clare excerpts from *Brilliant Imperfection*: "Wanting a Flat Chest," "Gender Identity Disorder," and "Gender Transition"

#### Week 8:

**Tuesday, October 26, 2021**

- Sky Cubacub *A Queercrip Dress Reform Movement Manifesto* (watch the first 3 minutes of the longer video, then read the abridged manifesto. You are optionally welcome to watch the full video where Cubacub reads the full manifesto)
- Radical Visibility Collective 2018 Video
- Choose one additional video (over 10 min) from the ReBirth Garments Gallery to watch

**Thursday, October 28, 2021**

- **No class: Midterm papers due.**

### Sex & Disability

#### Week 9:

**Tuesday, November 2, 2021**

- **No class: Brain break! Catch up on reading, rest, and do self-care.**

**Thursday, November 4, 2021**

- *Quick and Easy Guide to Sex and Disability*

**Week 10:**

**Tuesday, November 9, 2021**

- Optional: "Just the Basics, Ace: An Asexuality Primer" from Scarleteen.com
- Eunjung Kim. "Asexuality in disability narratives." *Sexualities* 14.4 (2011): 479-493.
- Lydia Brown "Reconnecting Disability and Asexuality" from Disability Intersections blog

**Thursday, November 11, 2021**

- Rachael Groner "Sex as 'Spock': Autism, Sexuality, and Autobiographical Narrative," in *Sex and Disability*, ed. Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 265-281
- Rebecca Koller "Sexuality and Adolescents with Autism" *Sexuality and Disability* (2002) 18.2: 125-135.
- *Love on the Spectrum* Episodes 1 & 2

**Week 11:**

**Tuesday, November 16, 2021**

- *Monica & David*
- Rachel Adams "Privacy, Dependency, Discegenation: Toward a Sexual Culture for People with Intellectual Disabilities" *Disability Studies Quarterly* 35.1 (2015)

**Thursday, November 18, 2021**

- Alison Kafer "Desire & Disgust: My Ambivalent Adventures in Devoteeism," in *Sex and Disability*, ed. Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 331-353.
- Jillian Weiss "The Amputee's Guide to Sex," "The Old Questions," "The Devotee"

**Week 12:**

**Tuesday, November 23, 2021**

- **No class: Final Paper/Project Proposal due**

**Thursday, November 25, 2021**

- **No class: Fall holiday**

**Week 13:**

**Tuesday, November 30, 2021**

- *The Sessions* (Canvas)
- O'Brien, Mark "On Seeing a Sex Surrogate" *The Sun*. May 1990.
- Lawrence Shapiro "The Disabled Sexual Surrogate" *Reproductive Health Matters*. 25 (50): 134-137 (2017)

**Thursday, December 2, 2021**

- Mingus, Mia "Access Intimacy: The Missing Link" *Leaving Evidence Blog*. May 2011.
- Mingus, Mia "Access Intimacy, Interdependence and Disability Justice" *Leaving Evidence Blog*. April 2017. (Read the text or watch the video of the lecture)

**Week 14: Student-Led Discussion Week**

***Tuesday, December 7, 2021***

- TBD

***Thursday, December 9, 2021***

- TBD

***Week 15:***

***Tuesday, December 14, 2021***

- No class: Work on finals. Dr. Schalk will be available during class time via the Zoom office hours link to discuss final papers/projects.

***Week 16: Exam Week***

***Friday, December 17, 2021***

- Final Papers/Projects due by midnight