



Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani
Hyderabad Campus

SECOND SEMESTER 2023-2024

Course Handout Part II

Date: 09-01-2024

In addition to Part-I (General Handout for all courses appended to the time table) this portion gives further specific details regarding the course.

Course No. : HSS F248
Course Title : Introduction to Disability Studies
Instructor-in-Charge : Shilpaa Anand

Scope and Objective of the Course:

Disability Studies, an interdisciplinary field of research, critically assesses the dangers of normalizing practices that are put in place when disability lived experience is excluded from knowledge produced about disability. An essential focus of this field is to study the idea of how structures and environments disable people. Disability is not an aspect of the individual alone but something that emerges at the level of interaction between an individual and society. Think about the hushed tones in which news of a relative's cancer is reported, the furtive glances that are shared in the presence of a stranger in a wheelchair or how rarely a blind person is addressed directly. Also, consider how neurodiverse individuals may hesitate to find a safe space to share about one's ADHD or depression. Daily, we experience medical diagnoses, social stigma and cultural labelling on account of corporeal and cognitive differences at the individual and social levels. And it is through these practices that *normalcy* and *able-bodiedness*, those universally desired states, are constructed. The course will undertake a critical examination of the so-called expert disciplines (Medicine, Psychiatry, Education, Law), and regulatory institutions (clinic, asylum, leprosarium, school, prison) and normalized socio-cultural practices (exclusion, discrimination and rejection) that have produced knowledge and practices of addressing disability and disabled people. Taking disability as an epistemic locale, we will study narratives and theories of disability that consider social, cultural and political experiences of being disabled in different ways, in different cultural contexts. The texts will include disability life writing, autism narratives, sign-language poetry, *crip* performances through historical, anthropological and literary texts and learn about how forced normalcy was challenged, critiqued and resisted.

Some questions that will guide the course are:

- How are normalcy and able-bodiedness constituted historically?
- What are the culturally different ways of knowing bodily differences?
- How do other categories of bio-social differences constitute disability?

It is hoped that a better understanding of these historical, socio-political and cultural circumstances that produce the 'abnormal/ 'disabled' *other* would enable us to create a world that is physically, cognitively, socially and affectively accessible to people who are diverse in diverse ways.

Textbook:



1. Ghai, Anita. *Disability in South Asia: Knowledge and Experience*. Sage, 2018.

Reference books:

1. Davis, Lennard. *Beginning with Disability: A Primer*. Routledge, 2018.
2. Addlakha, Renu. *Disability Studies in India: Global Discourses, Local Realities*. Routledge, 2013.
3. Adams, Rachel et al. *Keywords for Disability Studies*. New York UP, 2015.
4. Mills, Mara and Rebecca Sanchez. *Crip Authorship: Disability as Method*. New York UP, 2023.

NOTE: Suitable reference material such as short articles, stories, poetry, videos and films would be introduced to supplement classroom discussion based on the textbook and reference material listed above.

Course Plan:

Lecture No.	Learning objectives	Topics to be covered	Chapter in the Text Book
1	Comprehend course objectives	Course Overview	Course Handout
2-6	Comprehend key concepts; Distinguish definitions of disability and disablement	Ablebodiedness, normalcy, ableism, disablism, 'abnormal', disability, impairment, social model of disability, medicalization, medical model of disability, relational model of disability	TB: Ch.1, 2, 3 RB 1: Ch.1, 2, 3 RB 2: Entries corresponding to the key terms listed
7-10	Critically survey law and policy related to disability governance in different contexts with particular reference to accessibility and education	Disability movements across the world; United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD); American, British and Indian Disability Laws; disability politics and activism; the case of reasonable accommodation	TB: Ch. 22 Texts of the different laws
11- 14	Trace historical constitutions of disability in various contexts	Eugenics; freak shows; ugly laws; hospitals; leprosariums; asylums; schools; healing sites	TB: Ch. 19, 22 RB 1: Ch. 4, 7
15- 23	Critically examine how disability intersects with other experiences of being	Disability intersectionality: gender, caste, race, sexuality, region, class Key concepts: neurodiversity, crip, sexual surrogacy	TB: Ch.6, 7, 14 RB 1: Ch. 5, 13, 15, 39 RB 2: Entries corresponding to the key terms listed Class notes
24-26	Discuss and describe the complex relations between disability, independence,	Care, independence, interdependence, access, intimacy; Medical ethics and care relations: prenatal testing and termination of pregnancy, assisted dying	Additional readings will be supplied



	caregiving and interdependence		
27- 33	Explore and discuss expressions of disability in art, literature, cinema and popular culture	Disability culture and aesthetics: <i>crip</i> culture, Deaf culture, disability narratives, blind culture, <i>mad</i> culture	TB: Ch.13, 17 RB: Ch. 8, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 43 Excerpts from creative writing, life writing and performance
34-39	Critically examine disability with techno-science	Science, technology and disability: prosthetics, assistive technology, cochlear implants; Key concepts: access, assistive technology, designing for disability	RB 1: Ch. 40, 41, 42
40	Revise course content	Key concepts, debates and narratives	

Evaluation Scheme:

Component	Duration	Weightage (%)	Date & Time	Nature of Component
Assignments 1 and 2	TBA	25	TBA	Open Book
Class Participation	NA	5	Throughout the course	NA
Mid-Semester Examination	90 minutes	30	11/03 - 9.30 - 11.00AM	Closed Book
Comprehensive Examination	3 hours	40	06/05 FN	Closed Book

Chamber Consultation Hour: To be announced in class and on CMS

Notices: Notices concerning the course will be displayed on CMS.

Make-up Policy: Make-up exams and make-up assignments will be granted for medical reasons if students have prior clearance from institute authorities and have informed the instructor beforehand. If a student has an extraordinary situation that does not allow him/her to appear/ for the examination/submit an assignment, the student is responsible for intimating the matter to the instructor at the earliest.

Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy:

Academic honesty and integrity are to be maintained by all the students throughout the semester; no academic dishonesty is acceptable.

Shilpaa Anand
INSTRUCTOR-IN-CHARGE

