



**Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani**  
Hyderabad Campus

**FIRST SEMESTER 2022-2023**

Course Handout Part II

Date: 29-08-2022

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:**

Disease, deformity and dysfunction populate our everyday lives in multiple ways, yet our interaction with people affected by these is at best, minimal or hidden. 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. On a daily basis, 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 *ablebodiedness*, those universally desired states, are constructed. 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 that is produced about disability. An important idea that this field focuses on is researching the ways in which 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. 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 theory of disability that take into consideration 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 the ways in which forced normalcy was challenged, critiqued and resisted.

Some questions that will guide the course are:

- How are normalcy and ablebodiedness constituted historically?
- What are the culturally different ways of knowing bodily differences?
- How is disability constituted by other categories of bio-social differences?

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.

NOTE: Suitable reference material in the form of short articles, stories and 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 in the field of disability studies; 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	Care, independence, interdependence, access intimacy	Additional readings will



	between disability, independence, care-giving and interdependence		be supplied
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 in relation to techno-science	Science, technology and disability: prosthetics, assistive technology, cochlear implants; Medical ethics: prenatal testing and abortion, assisted suicide 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
Assignment 1	TBA	20	TBA	Open Book
Mid-Semester Examination	90 minutes	25	05/11 3.30 - 5.00PM	Open Book
Assignment 2	TBA	10	TBA	
Comprehensive Examination	3 hours	45	31 December 2022 FN	Open Book

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

**Notices:** Notices concerning the course will be displayed on CMS or other online teaching platform as notified.

**Make-up Policy:** Make-up exams and make-up assignments will be granted due to medical reasons if students have prior clearance from institute authorities and if students 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 and no type of academic dishonesty is acceptable.



**Shilpaa Anand**  
**INSTRUCTOR-IN-CHARGE**

