

DIVISION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY  
OXFORD COLLEGE  
EMORY UNIVERSITY

**IDS 385W / ANTH\_OX 385RQ**  
***Disability, Resilience, and the Mortal Self***

**A CoLA Course**  
**Spring 2016**

**CREDIT HOURS:** 4 (Continuing Writing/Oxford INQ)

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**INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**INSTRUCTORS:**

1. Come prepared to every class with well thought-out presentation.
2. Design our class so you can accomplish the objectives listed in the syllabus.
3. Consider that it is not always your fault if you don't understand the material.
4. Create a mutually respectful classroom environment.
5. Recognize that sometimes we may grade incorrectly and not to get defensive when you politely question our grading.

**As students you have the following responsibilities:**

1. Come prepared to every class by doing all assignments, reviewing **the pre-class objectives** and previous notes. The pre-class objectives are intended to help prepare you for an active and interactive learning experience in class.
2. Complete all work on time with proper thought.
3. Consider that it is not always our fault if you don't understand the work.
4. Treat others with respect.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This CoLA course will engage the participants in an intricate, hands-on exploration of disability and resilience in the human life-course. The definition of disability is elusive and changing. It may depend significantly on cultural, political and historical circumstances. Yet, it is often seen as a temporary or permanent departure from a normal state. In this course, undergraduate, graduate, and faculty participants will challenge the common understanding of disability, examining the way that we develop, experience, deal with, and construct narratives about normality and mortality through the lens of disability, across the arc of our lives.

This CoLA course will focus primarily on physical disabilities that present neuromuscular impairments. However, participants will explore how dealing with neuromuscular impairments shapes and relates to contexts for dealing with other forms of disability. From this perspective, undergraduate and graduate students and faculty from across the University will engage one another in an important endeavor: to work on relating to all kinds and degrees of disability, as it shapes human capacity, diversity in life, dying, and death. How we experience our embodied life histories depends on how we relate to others' life histories. In turn, how we relate to each other can socially define self and other, normality and abnormality, able and disabled.

It is not an easy challenge to investigate and shed light on the complex, emotional interplay between episodes of disability and healing, on the one hand, and our always-socially-salient, life-long experiences of illness and resilience, on the other. This course takes up that task by collaboratively studying scientific and clinical approaches (emphasizing hands-on cases from physical therapy, biological anthropology, and medical anthropology), working on reflective writing, and creating art dealing with disability, healing, resilience, and mortality. The undergraduate participants will collaborate with a Physical Therapy graduate assistant instructors to create a course capstone reflective essay and artwork that will be presented as digital media and submitted for publication in a special issue of the newly launched open-access peer-review *Journal of Humanities in Rehabilitation*. By the end of the CoLA course, graduate and undergraduate participants alike will have gained—and shared with the wider community—substantially new experiences and understandings about how our diverse life histories shape and connect us.

*This CoLA course is facilitated by Emory University's Division of Physical Therapy, Oxford College's Department of Anthropology, with further support from graduate teaching assistants from Emory College's Department of English.*

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- The student will demonstrate narrative writing skills for effectively communicating their own *metacognitive* reflection.
  - This objective means that, by the end of the course, students will better understand, share, and shape their own:
    - Motivations
    - Ability to being present and engaged
    - Curiosity
    - Appreciation of how contexts shape what they observe and understand ...
    - ... And how those contexts can change—and cause change—in our bodies, social lives, wider environments, identities, and experiences
- The student will gain the successful experience of small-group collaboration for creating effective and engaging text-based and multi-media content that is at once:
  - Scholarly and evidence-based
  - Creative
- The student will demonstrate the ability to explain how understanding disability can expand and change awareness and understanding of what is considered normal and abnormal in human life.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to explain how narrative and metaphor are fundamental ways that humans deal with disability, develop resilience, and handle mortality, in self and in other.

**Very important:** This is continuing writing course with an emphasis on using reflective narrative essays as a form for demonstrating student learning. What, then, will you be able to learn from the writing, evaluation, and revision process? According to Bloom's revised taxonomy of learning (Krathwohl, 2002), there are two vitally interconnected dimensions of learning. The first deals with the kinds of things you will better remember, understand, and use:

- Facts (e.g., a particular neuromuscular presentation of bodily disability and its etiology)
- Concepts (e.g., disability, normalcy, healing, coping, self, embodied cognition, narrative self)
- Procedures (e.g., listening to patient narratives, writing your own reflective narratives, diagnosis, physical therapy, other therapies, revising your reflective narratives)
- Meta-Cognitive Understanding (Self-knowledge and its relevance for strategic and theoretical knowledge about your place and possibilities for agency in the world)

The second deals with how you learn:

- Remembering (using concept terms accurately and consistently; using notes,

readings, experiences, and other sources of information about facts, concepts, and procedures)

- Understanding (reflecting over facts, concepts, and procedures and how they interrelate)
- Applying (using facts, concepts, and procedures to carry out an exercise, engage in an in-class discussion, write a reflective essay draft, or contribute to the collaborative final project)
- Analyzing (figuring out what the salient parts of a phenomenon—whether about disability or reflexively writing about disability—actually are ... and how they interconnect)
- Evaluating (taking stock of how well you've: remembered, understood, applied, and analyzed the phenomenon or topic under consideration ... for best results, check in that order)
- Creating (revising a draft, integrating a shorter piece of writing into a larger project, designing a multipart essay, narrative, proposal, article, or project, or policy)

In this course, we emphasize that all kinds of learning will be integrated. A key part of the meta-cognitive learning goal is to understand better how you can manage the ways that remembering, understanding and applying facts, concepts, and procedures can better help you analyze, evaluate and create. In the end, your learning will be evaluated on how you apply—through written reflective narrative essays and a collaborative multi-media digital project—your own

- mastery of facts
- understanding of facts, concepts, and procedures
- analysis of those facts, concepts, and procedures, along with the contexts they define and are defined by
- evaluation of what implications your analysis has, along with how your understanding has changed
- creation of larger projects from revision, expansion, and collaboration, along with reflective evaluation of what you learned from the creative process

## **COURSE PHILOSOPHY AND ORGANIZATION**

We embrace the philosophy that truths are influenced by context, and as such, beliefs and values change over time. This is particularly the case of how society and individuals construct the meaning of disability and how healthcare has evolved to embrace psychosocial issues of care. One example is how patient-driven care has been elevated by the Institute of Medicine as an essential approach to best practices, thus privileging the aims, goals and values of the individual in a therapeutic alliance. Based on this approach, it is the illness experience of those with acute and chronic diseases that—in and of itself—becomes an essential *ingredient* to care. Consistent with this approach is a focus on the phenomenology of illness, suffering, rehabilitation, and coping—the lived experiences of disability through different modes and degrees of awareness and engagement with the body and its surroundings. All of this shapes potentially very diverse subjective meanings of what constitutes a quality of life outcome.

Within this philosophic framework, we will explore conceptual understanding of normalcy,

disability, resiliency through various perspectives and lenses in sessions lead by experts and scholars from different disciplines. We embrace the notion that good learner is subversive – that is, we hope to challenge your preconceived ideas and make you uncomfortable as you such for new meaning and understanding. We believe that students have a responsibility for life-long learning, agreeing with noted educational philosopher John Dewey, who stated, “Ultimate truths are based on infinite inquiry”. Because this course embraces reflection and active learning, we provide readings and pre-class objectives for each student, in order to prepare for in-class objectives that involve on interactive learning experiences.

## **READINGS**

Reading for each class is listed in the syllabus and will be posted on Blackboard.

**Handouts: All handouts including power points and additional readings will be posted under the appropriate week in Blackboard.**

## **EVALUATION**

### **Attendance and Class participation**

Each student will participate in classroom interactions the following way:

Attendance will be kept for each class. The student will review the readings prior to class and identify his or her related thoughts, questions, issues and examples of concepts from previous experiences in healthcare or in life, in general. Student will participate freely and in an on-going manner in each class session by sharing thoughts, asking questions and otherwise supporting participation of other students. Each student must have obviously read any and all assigned readings prior to each class for a satisfactory class participation grade.

**Total points: 26 (1point for attendance & 1point for satisfactory participation for the 13 class meetings after Add-Drop)**

### **Narrative Writing Assignments**

A major purpose of this course is to provide the student an opportunity for writing reflective narratives. The noted educational psychologist, John Dewey wrote that reflective learning is essential for understanding the meaning of experiences. That is, ongoing reflection provides students the opportunity for learning that is transformative, because it challenges assumptions and fosters a different or new way to thinking about issues. This course fosters the development of metacognition and critical reflection as the student learns about and encounters issues related to course content that challenges his or her ideas and assumptions about normalcy (and normality), disability and resiliency. In the 1<sup>st</sup> class, each student will be given specific timelines and writing guidelines (including formatting) to address the narrative writing assignments.

**Total points: 36**

A breakdown of the assignments, timeline and points is provided below:

**I. Assignments and Due Dates for Reflective Narrative Essay Writing: (20 points)**

- In-Class Writing: 1 page handwritten narrative (Jan 12) (1 point)
- Revised/Expanded Version: 3-5 page double spaced typed narrative (Jan 26) (4 points)
- Group Version: revision of disability narratives and 1 to 2 page group thematic analysis double spaced typed pages each (Feb 16) (10 points)
- Final Reflection about your experience in this course: 1-2 pages (5 points)

**II. Short Reading Reflections: (16 points):**

- 8 x 1-2 page reading reflections: (2 points each)

**Final Collaborative Project**

Each student will be asked to collaborate in a final group project (3-4 students per group). The purpose of the final project is to provide students an opportunity to creatively explore issues that arise in the course and to do so through a process of shared meaning making. Ideas about a final project will emerge through your writings of narrative. Faculty and teaching assistants will work with each student to sharpen ideas through dialogue and narrative inquiry. You will be assigned to small groups with other students who share similar interests. At that point, the group will begin to develop the collaborative project based on the guidelines of the Journal of Humanities in Rehabilitation (<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/journalofhumanitiesinrehabilitation/submission-guidelines/>). Additional guidelines for the final project will be provided in class. The preliminary breakdown is below:

**Total points: 38**

- Final Collaborative Project Proposal: 1-2 pages (3 points)
- Final Collaborative Project Text Draft: 3-5 pages (10 points)
- “Editorial Cover Letter” outlining revisions: 1-2 pages (2 points)
- In-Class Presentation of Final Project: (3 points)
- Final Collaborative Project Final Version: 3-5 pages (20 points)

## GRADES

Final grades will be assigned on a plus-minus basis (A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.). The point cut-offs for final course letter grades are as follows:

|    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| A  | ≥ | 92.0 |
| A- | ≥ | 90.0 |
| B+ | ≥ | 88.0 |
| B  | ≥ | 82.0 |
| B- | ≥ | 80.0 |
| C+ | ≥ | 78.0 |
| C  | ≥ | 72.0 |
| C- | ≥ | 70.0 |
| D+ | ≥ | 68.0 |
| D  | ≥ | 62.0 |
| D- | ≥ | 60.0 |
| F  | < | 60.0 |

***\*\* The coordinators and instructors of this course reserve the right to make any changes in the curriculum during the course. Naturally, we will apprise you of these changes if and when they occur in adequate time for you to make the necessary adjustments to prepare for class.***

## COURSE AGENDA

### Disability, Resilience, and the Mortal Self Spring 2016

1. **JANUARY 12** - Introduction
2. **JANUARY 19** - Reflective writing: Strategies and Rubric
3. **JANUARY 26** - Ethics of Disability: Shifting Concepts
4. **FEBRUARY 2** Technological perspectives
5. **FEBRUARY 9** Visit labs—divide up into labs – *Oxford students to Druid Hills Campus*
6. **FEBRUARY 16** Religion, disability
7. **FEBRUARY 23** Social bodies in life and death
8. **MARCH 1** The Historical Development of Patient-Centered Care
9. **MARCH 15** Environmental and social adaptability
10. **MARCH 19** Oxford paleopathology session – *Emory College students to Oxford – NOTE: SATURDAY SESSION*
11. **MARCH 22** Project planning
12. **MARCH 29** Panel discussion – *Oxford students to Druid Hills Campus*
13. **APRIL 5** Hands-on - lab – *Oxford students to Druid Hills Campus (note this correction to the syllabus 22 Jan 2016)*
14. **APRIL 12** Presentation-Feedback
15. **APRIL 19** Final Presentation-Wrap-up – *Oxford students to Druid Hills Campus*