**Dr. Katie Sagal Office: South Hall 208**

**asagal@cornellcollege.edu/x4584 Office Hours: By Appt.**

**M-F, 12:00 -3:00 / Block 2 Meet in South Hall 100**

# Bodily Narratives: Disability, Illness, and Literature

****In this first-year writing seminar, we will explore multiple historic and contemporary dimensions of bodily narratives. Focusing specifically on ideas of disability and illness as expressed through literature both fictive and autobiographical, this course will present multiple perspectives on bodily difference. We will think through the ways in which the disabled or sick body is put to various cultural uses across history – the subject of pity or valorization, a political tool, a social outcast – and how disability manifests itself in various vectors, not always visible. We will also talk about contemporary disability politics, using the discussion to generate multiple pieces of writing that will ultimately be part of a final portfolio.  
Texts covered in the course will range from personal narratives of illness, injury, and bodily difference to Africanfuturism and the X-Men and others in between.

## Required Texts (available at the bookstore)\*

*Binti*, Nnedi Okorafor (ISBN: 0765385252)  
*Astonishing X-Men, Vol 1: Gifted*, Joss Whedon & John Cassaday (ISBN: 0785115315)  
*Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag (ISBN: 0312420137)  
*Hamlet*, William Shakespeare (any edition)

\*Supplemental essays will be provided on Moodle

## Learning Outcomes & Skills Developed in This Course

* Critical reading
* Writing as a continuous process
* Writing appropriately for a given audience
* Developing a thesis and sustaining an argument with evidence
* Evaluating, citing, and documenting sources appropriately
* Incorporating feedback and revision

## Educational Priorities

* **Knowledge:** integrate and apply knowledge from a focused area of study as well as a broad general education which includes disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences.
* **Inquiry:** respond to the complexities of contemporary and enduring problems using information literacy tools, research skills, creative thinking, and analysis.
* **Communication:** speak and write clearly, listen and read actively, and engage with others in productive dialogue.
* **Intercultural Literary:** connect with diverse ideas and with people whose experiences differ from their own and that may be separated from them by time, space, or culture.

*This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, communication, and intercultural literacy.*

# Course Policies

## Preparation & Attendance

Come to class prepared to fully participate in all discussions and activities. Please bring all assigned readings to class on the day we will be discussing them so that you can refer to them while we talk. You will be graded not only on how often your contribute but also on the quality of those contributions. I understand that not everyone is comfortable speaking frequently in class, but in such a small classroom environment it is to everyone’s benefit if we all contribute at least once in a while. More than four absences from class meetings, individual meetings, or workshops may result in failure of the course. Being more than 5 minutes late to class will count as a tardy; four tardies will count as one absence.

## Computers & Technology

You may choose to take notes via computer or by hand, depending upon your individual preference. However, do not use your computer during class time for anything unrelated to class work or research. Turn your cellphone on vibrate and do not text or take calls except in case of emergency. I will dock your participation points for extraneous technology use.

## Assignments

Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due at the beginning of class. Please print all assignments and turn in hard copies unless I have specifically asked you to turn them in via Moodle; I do not want you to e-mail me assignments unless we have discussed this as a case-specific alternative. Staple or paper-clip all assignments of more than one page; I may be mercurial and not accept a random stack of pages. Put your name on the front page of each assignment and a page number in the upper right hand corner of every subsequent page.

## Response Papers

For each reading we do as a group, you will be required to write a thoughtful response paper. The response should be no less than 300 words (about 1 page, double-spaced), and must be written in clear, professional prose. You should reflect upon the reading by asking questions, making connections with knowledge you already possess, and drawing connections between course readings and class discussions. On days where we are reading more than one text, you may choose to focus on one or both. You must write 8 response papers out of the 11 options. These assignments will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis.

## Academic Honesty

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading “Academic Honesty.” (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student_affairs/compass/academicpolicies.shtml>).

## Accommodations

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>

## Extensions & Due Dates

I expect that you will turn in every assignment on the indicated due date on the course calendar, at the beginning of the class meeting. If you are unable to attend class for an excused reason (religious observation, sporting event, etc.), you should plan to turn the assignment in early. I am, however, also willing to be flexible and talk with you about your unique circumstances, so please, *talk to me first* if you feel you will be unable to make a certain deadline – turning in a paper or other assignment late without talking to me first will result in a deduction in your grade. For every day late on a major assignment, I will deduct one full letter grade from the grade it would have earned. For example, if you write a B+ paper, but turn that paper in one day late, I will give you a grade of C+.

## Contact Me

My office hours are by appointment only, any day of the week in the morning (before 12 noon). You can also speak with me after class. I encourage you to get in touch with me early in the block if you’re having any concerns, difficulties, or questions, or if you just want to chat. I can be reached at my college e-mail ([asagal@cornellcollege.com](mailto:asagal@cornellcollege.com)) until about 8 pm at night, and after about 8 am in the morning. I do not regularly check my e-mail between 8 pm – 8 am.

## Grading

Your final grade in this class will be determined by a number of assignments, completed sequentially throughout the block.

EPO: Each of these assignments emphasizes the educational priorities of knowledge, communication, inquiry, and intercultural literacy.

The break-down of your final grade is as follows:

Class participation & readings 10%  
Response Papers 15%  
Essay 1 20%  
Essay 2 20%  
Essay 3 25%  
Creative Project 10%

Course Calendar

**\*Please note that all readings are due on the date they are listed\***

## Day 1 (Monday 9/24):

Discussion of syllabus, class expectations, etc.  
Read in class Lennard J. Davis, “Introduction” to *Beginning with Disability* (Moodle)

## Day 2 (Tuesday 9/25):

Frances Burney, excerpt from *Journals and Letters* (Moodle)  
Michael Bérubé, “Disability and Narrative” (Moodle)  
Response Paper #1 Due  
Essay #1 Thesis Workshop

## Day 3 (Wednesday 9/26):

Response Paper #2 Due *Illness as Metaphor*  
Essay #1 Peer Review Draft Workshop

Day 4 (Thursday 9/27):Response Paper #3 Due *Hamlet*, Acts I-III

## Day 5 (Friday 9/28):

Essay #1 Due  
*Hamlet*, Acts IV & V

## Day 6 (Monday 10/1):

Response Paper #4 Due  
Susan Wendell, “The Social Construction of Disability” (Moodle)  
*They Say, I Say* Chapters 2 & 3 (Moodle)

## Day 7 (Tuesday 10/2):

Response Paper #5 Due *Astonishing X-Men, Vol 1: Gifted*  
*They Say, I Say*, Chapters 5 & 7 (Moodle)

## Day 8 (Wednesday 10/3):

Response Paper #6 Due  
Margaret Price, “Defining Mental Disability” (Moodle)  
Essay #2 Peer Review Draft Workshop

## Day 9 (Thursday 10/4):

Research & Citation Workshop

## Day 10 (Friday 10/5):

Essay #2 Due  
Response Paper #7 Due  
Robert McRuer, “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence” (Moodle)

## Day 11 (Monday 10/8):

Response Paper #8 Due  
David T. Mitchell & Sharon L. Snyder, “Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor” (Moodle)

## Day 12 (Tuesday 10/9):

Work on Individual Projects in class

## Day 13 (Wednesday 10/10):

Response Paper #9 Due  
Tauriq Moosa, “Your Body Isn’t Your World” (Moodle)  
Essay #3 Peer Review Draft Workshop

## Day 14 (Thursday 10/11):

Individual Project Presentations

## Day 15 (Friday 10/12):

Individual meetings with Jennifer Farrell

## Day 16 (Monday 10/15):

Essay #3 Due   
Response Paper #10 Due  
Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” (Moodle)

## Day 17 (Tuesday 10/16):

Response Paper #11 Due  
*Binti*, Nnedi Okorafor

## Day 18 (Wednesday 10/17):

*Murderball* (film to be watched in class)

**\*This syllabus is subject to revision at my discretion.**