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

**asagal@cornellcollege.edu/x4584 Office Hours: T/R, 12-12:45**

**M-F, 9:00 – 12:00 / Block 7 Meet in Armstrong 24**

# 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

Please bring your computer to class each day. We will complete many in-class writing and workshopping assignments and it will be important for you to have access to word processing software. 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.

I will also ask that you check your Cornell College e-mail at least twice daily; once in the morning before class, and sometime in the afternoon. I will communicate important information like changes in assignments, class meeting times, and due dates via e-mail. In some cases, this information will not be repeated in class so it is vital that you stay on top of your e-mail.

## Assignments

Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due at the beginning of class. Please turn in all assignments as directed (as a general rule, formal papers should be printed out, less formal work should be submitted via the appropriate folder on 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 printed 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. You must write 8 response papers out of the 11 options. These assignments will be graded on a complete/incomplete basis. You should upload each response paper to Moodle by the midnight the night before class. Please keep in mind that Moodle will cut off submissions after the deadline so late work will not be accepted.

## 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 Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 to 12:45. They will be held in my office in South Hall 208. 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%  
Group Presentations 10%

Course Calendar

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

## Day 1 (Monday 3/18):

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

## Day 2 (Tuesday 3/19):

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 3/20):

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

Day 4 (Thursday 3/21):Response Paper #3 DueSusan Wendell, “The Social Construction of Disability” (Moodle)  
Complete Research & Response Activity   
**\*REMINDER: We do not meet as a class today; you are responsible for completing the assignment on your own during our class time\***

## Day 5 (Friday 3/22):

Library Session (meet in Cole Library)  
Essay #1 Due (via Moodle)

## Day 6 (Monday 3/25):

Response Paper #4 Due  
Discussion of Wendell, “The Social Construction of Disability”  
*Hamlet,* Acts I & II  
*They Say, I Say* Chapter 2 (Moodle)

## Day 7 (Tuesday 3/26):

Response Paper #5 Due *Hamlet*, Act III  
Margaret Price, “Defining Mental Disability” (Moodle)  
*They Say, I Say*, Chapter 5 (Moodle)

## Day 8 (Wednesday 3/27):

*Hamlet*, Acts IV & V  
Essay #2 Peer Review Draft Workshop

## Day 9 (Thursday 3/28):

*Astonishing X-Men, Vol 1: Gifted*Response Paper #6 Due

## Day 10 (Friday 3/29):

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

## Day 11 (Monday 4/1):

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

## Day 12 (Tuesday 4/2):

Work on Group Presentations in class

## Day 13 (Wednesday 4/3):

Response Paper #9 Due  
Tauriq Moosa, “Your Body Isn’t Your World” (Moodle)

## Day 14 (Thursday 4/4):

Group Presentations

## Day 15 (Friday 4/5):

Essay #3 Peer Review Draft Workshop

## Day 16 (Monday 4/8):

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

## Day 17 (Tuesday 4/9):

Response Paper #11 Due  
*Binti*, Nnedi Okorafor

## Day 18 (Wednesday 4/10):

Essay #3 Due   
*Murderball* (film to be watched in class)

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