

Dr. Craig Rustici (engcmr@hofstra.edu)

Office Hours: Mon 4:15-5:00 (in Mason 310), Weds 11:15-12:30 (in Mason 310) and by appointment

Office: Mason 310, ext: 3-5829

Texts: Required readings will be available in electronic format on Blackboard (BB), either in Electronic Reserves, Course Documents, or Links to Readings. Hard copies of several longer texts are available to purchase for students who prefer hard copies.

Goals: This course examines the representation of disability in Western literature and culture. The overriding concerns of the course will be with how the body's shape and capacities have been assumed to determine character and fate, how physical and mental impairments have been used in literature to signify moral and psychological states, and how representation may challenge conventional conceptions of "normality" and "disability."

The English Department has assigned the following learning objectives to this course:

- Students will analyze work(s) of literature in one or more interpretive contexts or frameworks.
- Students will analyze and interpret literature.
- Students will write critically about literature, using textual evidence with proper citation.

This course is designed to advance the first five learning goals and objectives that the Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has assigned to general education courses such as this: [Liberal Arts & Sciences: Goals & Objectives | Hofstra University](#)

INHO Requirements:

Students pursuing honors credit will also complete the following, additional readings on neurodiversity and meet with the instructor to discuss them:

- Nick Walker, "Throw Away the Master's Tools: Liberating Ourselves from the Pathology Paradigm" <https://neuroqueer.com/throw-away-the-masters-tools/> —**Week 1**
- Simon Baron-Cohen, "The Cognitive Neuroscience of Autism," *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*, 945-50;. [editorial] & Anna Sterling, "Understanding Empathy through a Study of Autistic Life Writing," *Neurodiversity Studies*. [17 pages]--**Week 3**
- Joseph Strauss, "Autism as Culture," *The Disability Studies Reader* (2013), 460-84--**Week 5**
- Donna Williams, *Nobody Nowhere* [autobiography], selections to be announced--**Week 7**
- Ralph Savarese, "From a World as Fluid as the Sea," *See It Feelingly*, 23-56--**Week 10**
- Students pursuing honors credit will write an additional 3-5-page paper using essays from Week 1, 3, or 5 to discuss a passage or episode from a literary text concerning neurodiversity ("Bartleby the Scrivener," *Curious Incident*, or *Nobody Nowhere*).

Blackboard.com: I will be maintaining a site with resources for this course on Blackboard.com (<http://hofstra.blackboard.com>).

* This site will include the information on this syllabus; consequently, you can consult Blackboard, if you misplace your syllabus. This site may also repeat announcements that I have made in class and may include copies of handouts that I have distributed. Consequently, you should consult this site, if you miss a class session. Please let me know if you experience or anticipate difficulty accessing this resource.

* Blackboard will enable me to send email messages to your Hofstra account. Please activate that account and, if you like, have your Hofstra messages forwarded to another email account of your choosing. For instructions on how to do so, see <https://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/sfs/sfs-forward-hofstra-gmail.pdf>.

Access to Student Writing: I may use students' writing that I receive in this course as examples to benefit other instructors or students in this or other courses. If you strongly object to having your writing used in this way, please inform me of your feelings in writing.

Learning Challenges: If you face special challenges in a learning environment (physical limitations or learning disabilities, for example), please inform me at the beginning of the semester, so that we can work together to address those challenges. If you believe you need accommodations for a disability, please also contact Student Access Services (SAS) at 107 Mack Student Center, 516-463-7075, or sas@hofstra.edu.

Distribution Requirements: Hofstra University guidelines require that students in a distribution course such as this complete substantial reading and writing assignments, with at least 3500 words of written work. You will satisfy this writing requirement through papers and exams.

Exams: You will complete a midterm and a final examination. The Hofstra University Bulletin does not publish a scale for converting percentages to letter grades. Consequently, on Blackboard under Course Documents I have posted the scale that I will use.

Papers: You will write two papers for this course: the first will be 3-5 pages, 750-1250 words, due 3/8; the second will be 6-8 pages, 1500-2000 words, due for peer-editing on 4/26).

* Since most writing in life involves many drafts, you are strongly encouraged to revise your first paper. The grade of the revision(s) will be averaged with the original grade. The optional revision of your first paper will be due (submitted electronically) on 4/5.

* You will submit an introductory paragraph with thesis statement for each paper (due 2/22 and 4/10).

* I will accept late papers without a penalty only if students 1) have a serious illness 2) make arrangements with me before the absence occurs, or 3) encounter a genuine emergency (death in the immediate family, auto crash, accident). In any case, the student must remain in touch with me and arrange to make up the missed work in a timely fashion.

* If none of the three circumstances enumerated above apply, I will mark late papers down two grades (from an A to a B+, for example, or from a B+ to a B-). If your paper is more than one week late (and the circumstances enumerated above do not apply), do not automatically assume that I will accept it. Instead, speak with me.

* Unless I am convinced that a student deserves a grade of "Incomplete," I will not accept papers after the last day of classes.

* These papers should be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and titled. If submitted in hard copy, they should be printed with dark, well-inked ribbons for maximum readability.

* These papers should be original; I will use Turnitin.com to assess the originality of student papers. On Blackboard under Course Documents, I have posted the specific forms of plagiarism listed in Hofstra's "[Procedure for Handling Violations of the Honor Code.](#)" Be aware of these.

* For information on citing sources, consult Hofstra Library's guide to [Bibliographic Citations – MLA Format \(hofstra.edu\)](#).

* The penalty for academic dishonesty may be failure for the assignment or for the course.

* Play it safe. Always keep a back-up copy of the papers that you submit. If for some reason your paper is lost, I will expect you to provide this back-up copy.

ChatBPT: Unless indicated otherwise in the instructions for a specific assignment, the use of ChatGPT or similar artificial intelligence tools for work submitted in this course constitutes the receiving of "unauthorized assistance for academic work", and is a violation of the Hofstra University Honor Code.

Electronic Submission and Comments: I will ask you to save your papers as Word or RTF (Rich Text Format) documents using some version of MS Word and to submit them electronically using the "Assignments" feature of Blackboard. I plan to grade (with marginal and final comments) using the comment feature in Blackboard. Because many people have multiple Google accounts, submitting papers through Google Docs often does not go as smoothly as one would expect.

Class Participation: Through in-class discussion we will explore literary and theoretical texts and model literary analysis. Consequently, attendance is mandatory.

- * Constructive participation in discussions will enhance your grade.
- * If you miss more than six classes you should seriously consider withdrawing from the course.
- * To participate constructively you must complete reading assignments before class discussions, and you must bring your text to class.
- * Examinations in this class may include questions that ask you to identify passages from texts and to explain their significance. In class we will work to develop the skills needed to answer such questions. Nonetheless, you should read carefully to prepare for exams.
- * Constructive participation includes posing well thought-out questions. If you have a question, others in the class may have the same questions.

Grading: I will calculate your final grade based on the following formula: first paper 15%, second paper 30%, midterm exam 15%, final exam 30%, class participation 10%. I will use an excel spreadsheet rather than any automated grade calculator on Blackboard.

- * Students sometimes need guidance interpreting grades. According to the Hofstra University Bulletin, an A indicates performance at the "honors level," a B performance "distinctly above that required by the course," a C performance that "achieved the objectives of the course," and a D performance that "was less than required by the course but was still sufficient to permit the student to receive full credit."
- * I will not consider assigning an Incomplete to a student who has completed less than 2 (two) of the above 4 (four) principal written components of this course (two papers and two exams) by the last day of classes.

Weekly Quizzes: If necessary, I may distribute weekly reading quizzes to encourage students to keep up with the reading.

Content Warnings: The treatment and representation of disability has sometimes been harmful. On the schedule of readings a "CW" and brief explanation notifies students of potentially disturbing content.

Information about Academic Dishonesty; Disability Accommodations; Resources for Students who are Pregnant; Temporary Adjustments/Academic Leave of Absence; Deadlines and Grading Policies; Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct; Absences for Religious Observance and specific policies relating to COVID-19 guidelines including mask wearing, campus closures/snow days, class attendance, and class seating is available on the Provost's webpage at the link below.

<https://www.hofstra.edu/about/administration/provost/provost-information-for-students.html>

Reading Assignments: Assigned readings should be completed before the class meeting for which they are assigned.

Calendar (Please Note: The Schedule of Readings is Subject to Change)

Models and Metaphors

Week 1

M 1/30

Introductions

W 2/1

Reading Assignment:

G. Thomas Couser, "What Disability Studies Has to Offer Medical Education" (BB: Ereserve)

Writing Assignment:

By noon on Tuesday 1/31, email me a representation (written or visual) of disability.

Week 2

M 2/6

Reading Assignment:

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark" (BB: Links to Readings; CW: medical injury)
The Hebrew Bible: Genesis 32; Leviticus 19, 21-22 (Revised Standard Version in BB: Links to Readings)

New Testament / Greek Scripture: Mark 1-2, 5, 8; John 9; Acts 9 (Revised Standard Version in BB: Links to Readings)

Writing Assignment:

By noon on Tuesday 2/8 contribute to Discussion Board on metaphorical expressions using "blind" (details on Blackboard).

Physical Disabilities

W 2/8

Viewing Assignment:

Asynchronous Session

Oedipus the King (2:03; BB Online Videos; CW: murder, incest, suicide, self-injury)

Week 3

M 2/13

Reading Assignment:

Oedipus pp. 81-88 [Oedipus's reappearance after blinding himself; CW: murder, Riddle of the Sphinx in Apollodorus (BB: Links to Readings)

Tiresias in Apollodorus (BB: Links to Readings)

"Tiresias," in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book III (BB: Links to Readings)

W 2/15

Reading Assignment:

H. G. Wells, "The Country of the Blind" 1939 version (BB: Ereserve; CW: violence, natural disaster):

"The Country of the Blind" conclusion of 1904 version pp. 260-62 (BB: Ereserve; *The Country of the Blind and Other Stories*)

Week 4

M 2/20

President's Day Break—NO CLASS

W 2/22

Reading Assignment:

Brian Friel, *Molly Sweeney* (BB: Links to Readings; CW medical injury)

Writing Assignment:

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH AND THESIS STATEMENT for First Paper Due: (BB: Assignments)

Villainy and Disability

Week 5

M 2/27

Reading Assignment:

Introducing Richard III: Richard III in *Henry VI, Part 3*

Print and read two scenes (3.2 & 5.6) from *Henry VI, Part 3* (BB: Links to Readings; CW: murder)

Francis Bacon, "Of Deformity" (BB: Links to Readings)

Viewing Assignment:

Before class, view 3.2 and 5.6 in *Henry VI, Part 3* (BB: Online Videos)

W 3/1

Reading Assignment:

Richard III Act I (BB: Links to Readings)

Sigmund Freud, "The Exceptions" (BB: Links to Readings)

Week 6

M 3/6

Reading Assignment:

Paul K. Longmore, "Screening Stereotypes" (BB: Ereserve)
Ato Quayson, "A Typology of Disability Representation, *Aesthetic Nervousness*," (BB: Ereserves)

W 3/8

Reading Assignment:

Writing Assignment:

Sami Schalk, "Reevaluating the Supercrip" (BB: Ereserves)
FIRST PAPER DUE (BB: Assignments)
Review for Midterm

Week 7

W 3/13

Midterm

Gender and Disability

W 3/15

Reading Assignment:

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," "Women Do Not Want it" (BB: Links to Readings; CW: postpartum depression, medical abuse)
Rebecca Coombes, "Ashley X: A Difficult Moral Choice" (BB: Links to Readings)

Week 8

M 3/20 and W 3/22

Spring Recess—NO CLASS

Neurodiversity

Week 9

M 3/27

Reading Assignment:

DSM-5 "Autism Spectrum Disorder" (BB Links to Readings)
Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener" (BB: Links to Readings; CW: death in incarceration)

W 3/29

Reading Assignment:

Viewing Assignment:

Simon Stephens, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* [theatrical adaptation of the novel; BB Links to Readings; CW: domestic violence, self injury]
"Who is Christopher" (5:27) & "Judy and Christopher" (5:02) (Online Videos)
National Theatre *Curious Incident* Image Gallery (Links to Readings)

F 3/31

Writing Assignment:

On the discussion board post two questions for the guest speaker on 4/3 regarding the *Curious incident* script or the National Theatre Production.

Week 10

M 4/3

Writing Assignment:

Guest Speaker on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
Complete Blackboard poll to select film to screen later this semester: *A Beautiful Mind*, *Girl Interrupted*, *Forest Gump*, or *My Left Foot*.

Law and Disability

W 4/5

Reading Assignment:

Viewing Assignment:

Writing Assignment:

Asynchronous Session

To Kill a Mockingbird Chapters 1-3 (BB: Ereserves or Links to Readings)
To Kill a Mockingbird (BB: Online Videos; CW: rape, death in custody, murder)
REVISION OF FIRST PAPER DUE (BB: Assignments)

Week 11

M 4/10

Reading Assignment:

Buck v. Bell Supreme Court Decision (BB: Links to Reading; institutionalization and medical abuse)

Linda Villarosa, "The Long Shadow of Eugenics in America" (Ereserves; CW medical treatment without consent)

Writing Assignment:

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH AND THESIS STATEMENT for Second Paper Due (BB: Assignments)

W 4/12

Reading Assignment:

To Kill a Mockingbird Chapters 11, 18, 19, 29

Week 12

M 4/17

Reading Assignment:

David T. Mitchell, "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor," *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities* (pp. 13-30; BB: Ereserve)

Viewing Assignment:

View paintings *Christina Olson, Christina's World*, (BB: Course Documents)

Class, Race and Disability

W 4/19

Reading Assignment:

Life in the Iron Mills (BB: Links to Readings; CW: suicide)

Week 13

M 4/24

Reading Assignment:

Toni Morrison, "Recitatif" in *Leaving Home* (pp. 201-227; BB: Ereserve; CW: institutionalization, violence, racial prejudice)

W 4/26

Writing Assignments:

SECOND PAPER DUE; please print out two copies of your paper and bring them to class. Anyone who wants to revise her or his paper in light of the peer-editing may submit the third paper electronically through the "Assignment" feature on Blackboard (without late penalty) on Monday 5/8. For anyone who does not participate in the peer-editing or does not wish to revise in light of peer-editing, the essay is due on 4/26 and should be submitted electronically before midnight on 4/26.

Screening Disability

Week 14

M 5/1- W 5/3

Screening Disability in Film

Week 15

M 5/8

Wrap-Up and Review

SECOND PAPER DUE for those who participated in peer-editing.

Sect. 2: M 5/15 1:30-3:30

FINAL EXAM