Overview
This course aims to give an introduction to disability as a category of analysis in Gender Studies. At the same time, the objective is to analyse able-body privilege and understand the social forces behind ableism that prevent the full implementation of the human rights approach to disability.

Disability is a social experience of normalized exclusion and segregation that still many people consider only a “medical” and “personal” issue. However, the worldwide struggle initiated through the United Nations Decade for Disabled Persons (1983-1992) has created a growing consciousness of disabilities not as incurable illnesses or and individual “problem”, but as a relationship between the body and the symbolic value that each culture gives to the tasks that a person’s body is supposed to perform throughout life. This struggle promoted the adoption of the UN Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities on December 2006, which in turn helped build and international movement for full implementation of the Convention and the promotion of a culture of human rights.

Persons with disabilities represent one of the largest discriminated groups in the world, and the World Health Organization estimates that one in seven persons live with a disability, that is one billion persons. With the arrival of massive use of the Internet and other technologies, more and more persons with disabilities are gaining critical battles for social inclusion. This goal is pursued through advocating for the construction of inclusive environments, i.e., a wider scope of material and cultural conditions that enable persons with physical, sensorial, psychosocial or intellectual disabilities to take their own decisions, live in the community and fully exert their citizenship.

Since the beginning of the 1990’s, women with disabilities around the world have tried to raise consciousness in their able-bodied counterparts about multiple forms of discrimination experienced when women do not fit with the ideal of “functional” and “beautiful” body and mind imposed by different societies. This course proposes to explore how disability would deepen and add complexity to Gender Studies by including this category on the reflections on how gender and body functions intersect with other aspects of identity, interacting with various systems of privilege and oppression. The fresh approach of Disability Justice allows to better understand deeply rooted ableist practices, and the course will explore this perspective as a possibility for social action.
September 14
What is ableism and how it intersects with other systems of privilege and oppression?

Mandatory visioning:
Stella Young: “I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much” TedTalk: https://youtu.be/8K9Gg164Bsw

Recommended readings:


September 21st
The moral, the medical, the human rights and the disability justice approaches to disability – a historical view of the construction of normalcy and stigma


September 28
Feminist Disability Studies – Building bridges between movements

(Choose one of the following):


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GSFS 303 – Gender and Disability – Fall 2020
October 5
Disability or Crip Studies? – Questioning compulsory able-bodiedness and neurotypicality

Choose one of the following:


October 19
Gender roles, racism and disability


October 26
The hegemony of the visual in feminist studies: a critical Disability Studies Perspective.

Choose one of the following:


November 2
Feminist theory and audism

Choose one of the following:

November 9
Invisible disabilities and chronic illness from a gender studies perspective


November 16
Disability and Sexual and Reproductive Rights


November 23
Representation vs Counter-representation: ableism in cultural production

Mandatory reading:

Recommended audiovisual materials:


November 30
Disability and social movements: everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

(Choose one of the following)
Theory, Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press pp. 73-93
https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/985925192


December 3rd
Gender, disability and the struggle for independent living: institutionalization, the jail systems and segregated education

Choose one of the following:


December 7
Disability, Gender and Caregiving

Choose one of the following:

Course Requirements:

- Attendance and class participation: Students will be allowed to participate in the Zoom live sessions, or they may deliver a one-page reading report expressing your views on the class they missed to improve their grade.
- Students may choose at least one of the required readings listed in the syllabus on a weekly basis.
- Students who facilitate small groups discussions and prepare a report of the results of the debate will have extra points in their attendance and participation grade.
- Mid-term essay on a topic relevant to the course. Due date: October 19, 2020. You may send your paper via e-mail or in MyCourses (preferred).
- Final research paper on a topic relevant to the course. Due date: December 7, 2020. You may send your paper via e-mail or in MyCourses (preferred).
- Please consult the Guidelines for Distance Delivery Teaching for GSFS 303 available in the IGSF website.

Evaluation:

- Attendance and participation during the sessions: 20%
- Assignments and participation in the Discussion Board (MyCourses): 10%
- Mid-term paper: 30%
- Final paper: 40%

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

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