Friedrich Nietzsche from *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 1891:
I want to speak to the despisers of the body. I would not have them learn and teach differently, but merely say farewell to their own bodies—and thus become silent.

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Course Description:
Disability Studies is a multidisciplinary field that has arisen to address the widespread individual, cultural, and institutional oppression faced by people with disabilities, as well as to create a positive community among disabled people and their allies. Historically, disability has been framed as, among other things, a punishment by God, a medical defect in need of a cure, a particular impairment that prevents one from work, a condition that requires institutionalization, and a reason to prevent birth either through sterilization or genetic testing. With the rise of the Disability Rights Movement, such negative frames have been challenged and subverted by disability activists and scholars who have fought for the right to self-define as well as for self-direction and social acceptance. One central goal of the course will be to study the various theoretical perspectives that have framed societal understanding of disability—both how those with perceived disabilities have been understood by the non-disabled as well as how those with disabilities have understood themselves. We will study a variety of genres dealing with disability: creative nonfiction, film, literature, politics, media, economics, and the legal system. The writing assignments for the course will allow you to explore your own understanding of disability as you strengthen your use of theory and analysis to determine what disability means in America today.

Course Objectives:
1. Differentiate among moral, medical, and social theoretical perspectives of disability.
2. Understand core concepts of disability studies and its emergence as a field.
3. Learn and respond to key definitions, categories, critiques, and controversies that comprise current research and scholarship in disability studies.
4. Become versed in the specifics of (dis)ability identity, from both cultural and individual perspectives, in part by theorizing “normalcy” and “ability.”
5. Strengthen critical and analytical ability to read and respond to theory—orally and in writing.
6. Reinforce information literacy skills through the collection, evaluation, and citation of primary and secondary research sources.

Department Goals for 400 level writing courses:
Students in a 400 level course will demonstrate:
1. Awareness of at least one theoretical perspective
2. Analysis of formal components of literature (awareness of author’s use of literary tools)
3. Mastery of the conventions of rhetorical exegesis
4. Effective integration and documentation of secondary sources

Required Texts:
*The Disability Studies Reader*, 2nd Ed, Ed. Lennard Davis
*Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity*, Simi Linton
*Autobiography of a Face*, Lucy Grealy
Blackboard & Library Reserve Readings
Course Requirements and Grade Break Down:

Formal Papers 1-3: 50%
The first three papers for the course will be @6 pages each and will allow you to write in a variety of genres: creative nonfiction, cultural analysis, and theoretical analysis. In these papers you will explore disability through the individual, social, and institutional lenses that have been demonstrated in the personal narratives, films, and theory we discuss this semester. Each paper provides an opportunity to strengthen your writing through a range of rhetorical techniques.

Participation: 20%
The two most important things that you bring to this class are 1) Time to read each text closely and thoroughly, and 2) A willingness to engage ideas critically and with an open mind. Come to class having completed the assigned readings. Be prepared to participate actively in rigorous discussions about the content and form of what you have read. It will help you to write down thoughts or questions you have in the margins of the text. I approach class meetings as dialogues in which we all learn from one another. Don’t look to me for “the answers.” Instead, I look forward to listening to your questions, insights, and interpretations of the texts—that is the nature of a seminar class. Please be aware that non-tolerance of other people’s opinions will not be tolerated! :) Disagreement makes for good discussions, but be respectful of other people’s differences and listen with courtesy. It is critical that those in the classroom maintain a safe and respectful space for open discussion; everyone in the class should feel comfortable voicing opinions and ideas.

Reading Questions: To help ensure good participation, each student must bring a set of 5 typed questions about each of the assigned readings to class every Wednesday. Bring 2 copies of your questions—one for you, one for me. You may ask some questions for clarification of the readings during class, of course, but these five written questions must be designed to provoke constructive discussion and debate about issues raised by the assigned texts. The quality of your questions will be measured by the quality of discussions they stimulate, and will be part of your participation grade for the semester. Your job is to pose the question while we discuss that reading and to have something constructive to say in response to each question you ask, while prompting discussion from your classmates.

Final Project: 30%
The final project for the course will be a 15-20 page paper on a topic of your choice that relates to disability. You may pursue the topic of one of your first three papers or move in a new direction. This will allow you to create a more personal or more formal paper, depending on your own situation. When reading through the semester’s required texts, I am hoping that some of you will find personal connections in them to your own lives and experiences. Maybe you, a friend, or family member has wrestled with issues of disability in ways similar to those of the authors we discuss in class, or maybe a reading has opened up a new way of thinking about your own life in connection to ability/disability. You might pursue this in your final paper. Or you may choose to do a more formal, research-type paper on a disability topic of your choice that interests you but is not necessarily personally relevant.
* As you read the texts, keep an eye out for material that you would like to pursue further. If you are interested in a particular area, come and talk to me about exploring it as your final paper; it’s never too soon to be thinking about a topic, and I can check your progress and give you some feedback and possible suggestions.

Attendance Policy:
Because so much of your total grade in this course depends upon in-class responses, activities and discussions, and participation in lecture and debate, your attendance is absolutely crucial. Your input and presence are what will make the classroom vital. You may miss only 2 classes before it adversely affects your grade. Repeatedly arriving late to class also counts as an absence.
You must reserve these absences for those times when you really need them. I will not make decisions about whose excuses sound legitimate and whose don’t, nor allow some people “freebies” and not others. The attendance policy is not negotiable. Please do not ask me to excuse you from class, regardless of the reason. If you know in advance that you will not be in class, it is your responsibility to get the assignments from me or from someone else in the class. You are responsible for making up work that you missed because of absences. Papers are due at the beginning of the class on the due date. If you are absent on a day an assignment is due, you must turn it in early or give it to a classmate to turn in for you. I will not accept late work. Contact me (or a classmate) to find out what you missed and stay on schedule. If you miss a third class, your grade will drop ten points. If you miss more than three, you will fail the class.

Ethics and Plagiarism:
You have to do your own work and appropriately identify work that is collaborative, borrowed, or copied from other sources. Obviously, when you use graphics, charts, words, quotations, paraphrases, or even ideas from other sources, including the Internet, you are under the legal and ethical obligation to identify these sources according to citation norms. Borrowed material must be properly documented in order to avoid accidental plagiarism. We will be covering proper citation norms this semester, but if you ever have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me. Using work that is not yours and not appropriately identifying it will usually result in an F for the course.

Students with Disabilities:
In compliance with St. John Fisher College policy and applicable laws, appropriate academic accommodations are available to you if you are a student with a disability. All requests for accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation/diagnosis and determined reasonable by St. John Fisher College. Students with documented disabilities (physical, learning, psychological) who may need academic accommodations are advised to make an appointment with the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Office of Academic Affairs, Kearney 202. Late notification will delay requested accommodations. If anyone has a documented disability that I should be aware of, please let me know as soon as possible.

General Resources
National Organization on Disability
http://www.nod.org/

Society for Disability Studies
http://www.disstudies.org/

The Center for an Accessible Society
http://www.accessiblesociety.org/casindex.shtml

Disability Studies: Information and Resources
http://thechp.syr.edu/disability_studies_2003_current.html

Ragged Edge Online (formerly The Disability Rag)
www.raggededgemagazine.com
Sports
Disabled Sport, USA
http://www.dsusa.org

Wheelchair Sports, USA
http://www.wsusa.org

Aimee Mullins, marathon runner and top fashion model
http://www.gamefaceonline.org/1_3_mullins.htm

United States Association for Blind Athletes
www.usaba.org

Performing Arts
Disability Dance groups and Disability Theater groups

http://www.mdausa.org/publications/Quest/q71talent.html (Muscular Dystrophy Assoc. article on disability theater)


http://www.ntwh.org/ (National Theater Workshop of the Handicapped)