

SYLLABUS SOCL 4703-101 Disability and Society

Fall 2026

Contact Information

PROFESSOR: Dr. Beverly L. Stiles

OFFICE: O'Donohoe, Rm 124

OFFICE HOURS:

- Mon. 10:00-12:00
- Tues. 9:00-9:30
- Wed. 10:00-12:00
- Thurs. 9:00-9:30
- Friday: By appointment

While I hold regular office hours, I am available to you outside of these times. However, it is best if you make an appointment to see me so that I am free when you stop by. If you do not have an appointment and I am free, I am more than willing to make some time to see you. However, if you just stop by, there will be times when I am unavailable or may be with another student. Do not take this personally.

PHONE: 940-397-4019

EMAIL: Beverly.stiles@msutexas.edu

TEXT:

- Disability, Society, and the Individual (3rd edition), by Julie Smart.
- Readings that I will provide to you.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce the sociology of disability as a field of study
- To promote a heightened social awareness regarding the disabled as a special population, and an awareness of the student's ever-present potential to become a part of that special population.
- To provide an overview of the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of a variety of disabilities, including visual, hearing, and mobility impairments.
- To examine the many physical, psychological, and social barriers that are faced by people with disabilities both in everyday life, and in various specific institutional settings.
- To assess existing or possible strategies, programs, services, or policy solutions aimed at confronting the various problems that are experienced by people with disabilities as they try to make it into the mainstream of American societal life.
- To critically evaluate depictions of the disability experience in the media and the arts
- To increase one's level of skill and comfort in social encounters involving individuals with and without biological differences.
- To help in understanding the lived experiences of those living with disabilities

- To convey ideas about the social experiences of disability in writing, through the application of course material.

COURSE CONTENT:

This is a survey course in the sociology of disability. This course is designed to give participants a better understanding of people with disabilities and an awareness of how society regards them. The class is appropriate for anyone interested in disability, whether for personal or professional reasons.

READING HINTS:

A good textbook does not ensure learning. Textbooks must be used properly. I have found over the years that many students simply do not know how to use a textbook, so I am providing, as a part of this syllabus, some suggestions for reading your text.

- The first rule is to begin reading immediately, don't postpone.
- Secondly, realize that reading a textbook is different than reading a newspaper, a magazine, a novel, or something on your electronic devices. Much of the latter is written to give you information quickly and at a glance and to entertain. A textbook is designed to instruct, to develop a position, and to support that position. It demands far more from its readers than all of the latter. While newspapers, magazines, novels, and the like are designed to be read only once, the author of a textbook expects that several readings may be required to fully understand the material. So, allow enough time to read the material several times. One strategy is to quickly read the material and grasp the general organization and major points, then carefully read a second time, making reading notes, and then reread quickly one more time immediately before an exam. The third time you should be able to quickly read some passages while concentrating on the more difficult ones. This strategy will also give you a good feeling for how the author writes and organizes material.
- Keep reading, even if you reach a passage or even pages that you find difficult and that you do not understand. At least read the words. You will find that while you may not understand one point, the next point may be considerably easier and you may understand it quite well.
- Make a schedule for reading and don't deviate from it. Set a date to complete your first reading, second, and third. Schedule yourself for only a few pages at any one session.
- Underline and circle words. Mark and write in the margins. The beauty of a loose-leaf textbook is that if you can put your text in a notebook, you can three hole punch and add additional pages with your study notes and even notes from class. All in one tidy package.

ATTENDANCE:

You'll find a high correlation between attendance and class grade. In addition, in-class exercises or pop quizzes is a good part of your grade and will also provide for some bonus points. Therefore, good attendance is a necessity. You will be dropped if you have more than 3 (three) unexcused absences. I may drop a student for excessive excused absences as well, at my discretion. If your combined excused and unexcused absences add up to more than 3 (three) absences, I will deduct 5 points from your final grade for each additional absence.

Excused Absences:

An absence is considered officially excused only if a student:

- Presents a written excuse from a physician, or MSU infirmary.
- Presents written evidence of attending a mandatory university function (band, choir, sports, etc.).
- Presents a written excuse from a physician for dependent child's illness.
- Has a death in his or her immediate family (need proof).

EXAMS AND GRADING:

There will be four (4) exams, including the final. If you miss an exam, you may have to take an ***all-essay make-up exam, or combination of multiple choice and essay on the last Thursday of classes, Dec. 3rd at 2:00*** in our same classroom. Make up exams are permitted when you provide proof of an excused absence. I will lower your grade one letter grade from what you actually score on the exam (I deduct 10 points). If you miss the make-up, you receive an automatic zero for the exam and an F for the semester. Having to work is not an excuse for missing class. If you miss more than one exam on the day it is scheduled, I will automatically drop you from class. Please do not miss any exams.

Grades

EXAMS	GRADING
Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	100 points
Exam 4	100 points
Paper	50 points
Pop quizzes	150 points

To average your grade, add up all points and divide by 6 (600 points).

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Office of Disability Accommodation. The telephone number is 397-4140.

FINAL SUGGESTIONS:

Although it is not required, I encourage you to get acquainted with one another. Exchange phone numbers. Form study groups. Engage in collaborative learning. However, this does not include helping each other with your papers. There should be no overlapping papers turned in to me. You are not permitted to use AI. Any use of AI will result in a zero and a report to the university.

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student](#)

[Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

COURSE OUTLINE/TOPICS AND EXAMS

DATE	TOPIC	TEXT AND CHAPTERS
8/27	Defining Disability, pgs. 9-46.	1
9/1	Experiencing Illness and Disability	I'll print this to hand out to you.
9/3	Models of Disability: The Medical Model, the Environmental Model, and the Functional Model, pgs. 49-94	2
9/8	Reassigning Meaning," by Simi Linton	D2L reading
9/10	*1st exam*	-
9/15	VIDEO: Miss You Can Do it	-
9/17 and 9/22	Prejudice Against People with Disabilities, Part 1, pgs. 99-141 and Pg.s 143-177	3 and 4.
9/24	1. Just because you can get a wheelchair in the building doesn't necessarily mean that you can still participate: barriers to the career advancement of disabled professionals. *Crip camp video*	D2L reading
9/29	From Charity To Independent Living (Chap. 2 From No Pity by Joseph Shapiro). *Crip camp video*	D2L reading
10/1	Experiencing Prejudice and Discrimination(Handicapism). Pgs. 181-225. *Crip camp video*	5
10/6	<i>Meaning of Disability: The Lived Experience of Paralysis</i> by Albert B. Robillard, pgs. 64-109	D2L reading
10/8	*2nd exam*	-
10/13	The Individual's Response to Disability pgs. 229-267	6
10/15	1.The Onset and Diagnosis of the Disability, pgs. 269-308	7
10/20	*VIDEO*: Sound and Fury	-
10/22	Type of Onset and the Individual's Response, pgs. 309-341	8

DATE	TOPIC	TEXT AND CHAPTERS
10/27	*3rd exam*	-
11/3	More on the Individual's Response to Disability	9
11/5	The Deaf Celebration of Separate Culture (Chap. 3 from No Pity by Joseph Shapiro)	D2L reading
11/10	Men, Disability, and Sexuality: 1. The Dilemma of Disabled Masculinity By Shuttleworth, Wedgwood, & Wilson 2012 in Journal of Men and Masculinities 2. Physical Disability and Sexual Esteem By Taleporos, McCabe, and Faps, 2001 in Sexuality and Disability	D2L readings (cont'd on next page)
11/12	<u>Gender and Sexuality Continued:</u> 1. The Politics of Sexual Citizenship: Commercial Sex and Disability. By Teela Sanders. In Disability & Society. 2007. Stiles, 2. When Identities Collide: Masculinity, Disability and Race by R. Noam Ostrander. 2008 In Disability & Society.	D2L readings
11/17	Film: Murder Ball or other film	-
11/19	1. "More Mentally Ill Persons are in Jails and Prisons than Hospitals: A Survey of States" by Treatment Advocacy Center and National Sheriff's Association. 2010. *You will not be reading all of this. Only a small amount.* 2. Part One: from Crazy in America: The Hidden Tragedy of Our Criminalized Mentally Ill by Mary Beth Pfeiffer. Pg. ix-37.	D2L article/chapters

DATE	TOPIC	TEXT AND CHAPTERS
11/24	1. Part Two: from Crazy in America: The Hidden Tragedy of Our Criminalized Mentally Ill by Mary Beth Pfeiffer. Pg. 53-86 2. Part Three: from Crazy in America: The Hidden Tragedy of Our Criminalized Mentally Ill by Mary Beth Pfeiffer. Pg. 101-151	D2L chapters on Crazy in America continued
12/1	*Exam 4*	-

Notice: there is no class on Thurs., Oct. 29th

Choose ONE of the paper options below. Due by 3:00 PM on December 8th (instead of a final exam)

BOOK ANALYSIS

First-Person Narratives of People with Disabilities (pg. 267). Read one of these books. Summarize the book in only one to two paragraphs (because this is NOT a book report). Tell me how it relates to the class material you have read. This is an analysis paper. You are to use concepts from the class reading material to analyze. You must provide page numbers from class material in your analysis or your will receive a zero). Your grade will be based on both the written paper and your coming to class to discuss the book. This is worth 50 points (45 points written and 5 points for discussing it in class). Your paper should be Times New Roman, 12 pt. font., with 1 inch margins. Your book analysis should be at least 10 pages. You need to reference the class material by source and page numbers, so I know exactly what you are referencing in your analysis.

FILM ANALYSIS:

Watch a full-length feature film where a central character is demonstrably physically, or mentally different and write an analysis. Make use of required reading material, making certain that I know you have been reading---You need to thoroughly reference your text and any other relevant material from the class (using proper referencing). Please be sure that you tell me how the movie either supports the text material or does not support it (a mixture of the two). You are to use relevant concepts to analyze the film. This requires page numbers from class material! If you do not provide page numbers throughout (correctly so, you will be given a zero on this paper). This analysis should be at least 10 pages (Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, double spaced), and maybe longer if necessary to be thorough. Suggestions for films include Riding the Bus with my Sister, Mask, Elephant Man, Children of a Lesser God, Waterdance, The Sessions, My Left Foot, I am Sam, Rory O'Shea Was Here, The Mighty, The Untouchables, Miracle Run, The Quiet, Black, Music Within. Front of the Class, Door to Door.