

MCAMC3046

**Debating Disability in the
Media**



Module Booklet

Welcome to **Debating Disability in the Media** this module introduces you to the key concepts of disability studies aligning them with wider issues in Media and Cultural Studies and identity politics. Through an analysis of range of media, you will develop a critical awareness of contemporary media representations of disability and the continuing development of debates within disability studies.

What has become known as Cultural Disability Studies is a vibrant and growing field of research and as such you are actively encouraged to participate in current theoretical debates by drawing upon cultural studies methodologies you are familiar with and theoretical perspectives you are studying on other modules to reconsider them in light of disability perspectives. The course is designed to be flexible so that we are free to pursue any aspect of the subject that you find particularly engaging. Indeed analysing current and varied representations of disability in the media has produced innovative responses from previous students and I look forward to working with you to learn how you engage with this topic.

Best wishes,

Irene

Irene Rose

Office:

Ext:

Email:

Office Hours:

Debating Disability in the Media – Module Details

Aims:

- To examine the development of Disability Studies over the last thirty years
- To trace the influence of feminism in the development of disabled identity politics
- To critically assess the advantages and limits of disabled identity politics
- To identify and interrogate cultural representations of disability in contemporary media products

Learning Outcomes: After completing the module you will be able to:

- Situate the rise of Disability Studies within New Social Movement theory
- Employ theoretical perspectives and critical tools in the analysis of representations of disability in contemporary media
- Draw critical connections across changing representations of disability and situate them within wider developments in cultural studies and identity politics

Learning Activities:

Lectures, seminars, debates, response papers and screenings

Outline Syllabus:

Representation, Identity Politics and New Social Movements

Modelling Disability

Disability in the Media – Case Studies

Feminism and Disability

Disability and Difference

Beyond Disability Politics?

Indicative References:

Albrecht, G. et. al. (eds.) (2001) Handbook of Disability Studies Thousand Oaks, Calif : Sage, London

Barnes, C. et. al. (eds.) (2002) Disability Studies Today Polity, Cambridge

Barnes, C. and Mercer, G. (2003) Disability Key Concepts Polity Press, Cambridge

Pointon, Ann et. al. (eds.) (1997) Framed: Interrogating Disability in the Media BFI Publishing, London

Debating Disability in the Media - Course Outline

Week 1 w/b 18/09

ENROLMENT - Collect Module Booklet and Key Readings

Week 2 w/b 25/09

Lecture: Disability Today – Disability, Language and Representation

Seminar: What do we mean by the disabled community? Thinking through identity.

Week 3 w/b 02/10

Lecture: Modelling Disability: New Social Movements – New Social Models

Seminar: Unpicking the social model

Week 4 w/b 09/10

Screening: This is My Family: Wanting a Deaf Baby BBC 2 14/09/2004

Seminar Debate: The Social Model of Disability and the Deaf Community - Disability or Linguistic Minority?

Submission of First Draft of the First Response Paper to Blackboard - Monday October 16th

Week 5 w/b 16/10

Lecture: Guest Lecturer – Representation and reading Images: South Park's Portrayal of Disability

Seminar: Peer review of Response Papers

Blackboard Discussion Forum: A discussion forum for this session will be set up on Blackboard to allow questions arising from the lecture to be debated over reading week.

Week 6 w/b 23/10 READING WEEK

Submission of Final Draft of First Response Paper to school Office for Marking – Monday 30th October

Week 7 w/b 30/10

Lecture: Enforcing Normalcy

Case Study: Alison Lapper and Venus Di Milo and the phantasmatic body

Seminar: The Productive Body and the Over-Active Imagination

Week 8 w/b 06/11

Lecture: Disability and Gender – Masculinity and embodiment – Gender norms and body norms

Case Study: Murderball (On short Loan from Irene)

Seminar: Masculinity, power sport and violence

Blackboard Discussion Forum: A discussion forum for this session will be set up on Blackboard to allow questions arising from the seminar to be discussed further

Week 9 w/b 13/11

Lecture: Feminism and Disability: New Perspectives on Old Dichotomies

Seminar: Gender theory from a disability perspective – the right to life debate.

Week 10 w/b 20/11

Review Lecture: What have we learned on the module so far. This week is open to screenings and/or suggestions for discussion. Opportunity for you to feedback opinions and ideas for the module.

Submission of Second Response Paper to School Office – Monday 27/11

Week 11 w/b 27/11

Lecture: Guest speaker – On being a music journalist and a wheelchair user

Seminar: Essay Plans – Q & A Session

Week 12 w/b 04/12

Lecture: Beyond Disability? The Limits of Labels and Identity Politics

Seminar: Debate – IS there a need for strategic essentialism?

Week 13 w/b 11/12

DIRECTED STUDY WEEK

15th December – Submission of 2,000 Essay

What is a response paper?

The response paper will be a new form of assessment method to many of you.

The response paper allows you a space to critically reflect upon personal ideas and experiences relevant to the course subject area.

Critical reflection is defined as writing that demonstrates **change**. Therefore your response paper should give a sense of comparing how your attitudes and understandings have changed as a result of engaging with the theory presented on the course.

The purpose of a response paper is to demonstrate critical engagement. The principle ways of doing so are through a response to:

- a personal experience
- theory discussed on the course
- contemporary examples of representations of disability (or as the social model would have it, disabling society).

It is also possible to use a combination of all of the above.

Once you have decided which examples you wish to use you are expected to analyze them using relevant disability and cultural theory.

The key to response papers is making sure that you are **critically engaging** with your examples - this means you are expected to **analyze** your examples **not describe** them.

You may outline your initial response to your examples but then you must go on to show how this reflects, confirms or challenges cultural theories of disability and representation.

The main task of the response paper is to use an example or personal experience to unpick, make sense of, apply or think through the theoretical framework you are engaging with.

The course offers two opportunities to write response papers and to go through this process.

The purpose of two response papers is to allow you to reflect upon different theories using different examples. This will allow you to contrast and compare responses to gain a greater understanding of the discipline and overview of the subject area before going on to write the final assessment essay.

As this is likely to be new form of assessment for you, to give you practice, the first response paper will be formatively assessed and given back to you re-draft your work in light of the feedback you have been given.

Assessment Criteria

In your response papers you will be expected to:

- Identify why you have selected the personal experience or representation you have chosen to discuss by situating it within its contemporary context.
- Demonstrate why your example and the theory used to discuss it are compatible by developing your understanding of each through consideration of the other.
- Identify the similarities and differences between key ideas under consideration and other ideas, theories and approaches you have encountered within this module and outside it

Peer Assessment and Self-Assessment

It is now recognised that the most effective way for students to engage in worthwhile learning is to engage them in the assessment process. Therefore, this course will ask you to anonymously assess fellow student's work in seminars. This way you can familiarise yourself with the marking criteria and gain an understanding of peer approaches to assessment tasks with a view to assessing your own performance.

Please note that in this instance this assessment **will not** be used for grading but is proposed as a learning and development tool.

I have decided to take this approach on the course as I appreciate that not only the best questions, but often the best answers, and solutions to problems come from fellow students.

Also, the world of work is looming ever closer and the more transferable skills you can acquire and enhance in 3rd year, the better your C.V. will look!

Third year is the place to hone your professional attributes so the sooner you start the more competent you will be.

Posting your response papers to Blackboard also gives you an opportunity to review your ideas in light of the responses and opinions of you peers. In the past it has proven a great way for students to contrast and compare ideas and to develop their understanding of theory.

Finally, having the marking criteria readily available to you will allow you to reference it when completing assignments and will also allow you to informally self-assess your own work. (It is usually recommend to self-assess only after a 'cool-down' period to allow emotional distance from the contribution in question).

Should you have any queries about marks you have been given or wish to know how to develop your work, using this self-assessment technique is a good place to start.

Marking Criteria

The marking criteria for the assignments will be given out in class in due course.

Sample Response Paper

Available in Learning Resources folder of Blackboard site

Blackboard

Blackboard is used as an integral learning tool on this course. It offers an invaluable forum for you discuss and debate ideas with your peers. To kick off this exchange, the first draft of the first response papers will be posted onto Blackboard so you can see how your peers are approaching the ideas presented on the course.

Also, a number of films, documentaries and adverts, etc. have been loaded onto the site for you to peruse. These examples can be used in your response papers and essays if you wish.

Debating Disability in the Media - Readings

Preparatory Readings

Hall, Stuart "Who needs identity?"

Bondi, Liz 'Locating Identity Politics'

Barker, Chris Issues of Subjectivity & Identity'

Week 2

Mitchell, D.T. and S.L. Snyder (2001) 'Representation and its Discontents: The Uneasy Home of Disability in Literature and Film' in Albrecht, G. L., Seelman, K. D. and Bury, M. (eds.) (2001) Handbook of Disability Studies, Thousand Oaks/London/Delhi, Sage, pp. 195 – 218.

Darke, P. A. (2004) 'The Changing Face of Representations of Disability in the Media' in Swain, J., S. French, C. Barnes and Thomas, C.(eds.) (2004) Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments, 2nd edition, London, Sage in association with the Open University Press, pp. 100 -105.

Shakespeare, Tom (1993) 'Disabled People's Self-Organisation: a new social movement?' Disability, Handicap and Society, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp.249-264

Week 3

Barnes, C (2006) 'Understanding the Social Model of Disability' available at www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/index.html

Thomas, C. (2002) 'Disability Theory: Key Ideas, Issues and Thinkers' in Barnes, C., M. Oliver and L. Barton (eds.) (2002) Disability Studies Today Cambridge, Polity, pp. 38 – 57.

Davis, Lennard J. (2001) 'Bodies of Difference: Politics, Disability, and Representation' in Albrecht, G. L., Seelman, K. D. and Bury, M. (eds.) (2001) Handbook of Disability Studies, Thousand Oaks/London/Delhi, Sage, pp. 100 – 106.

Week 4

Barnes, C. and G. Mercer (2003) 'Culture, Media and Representation' Chpt. 5 in Disability: Key Concepts Cambridge, Polity, pp. 88 – 109.

Week 5 Guest lecture by Rebecca Mallet

Garland- Thomson, R. (2002) 'The Politics of Staring: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography' in Snyder, S. L., Bruggemann, B.J. and Garland-Thomson, R. (eds.) (2002) Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities New York, MLA Press, pp. 56 – 75.

Harnett, Alison (2000) 'Escaping the 'Evil Avenger' and the 'Supercrip': Images of Disability in Popular Television' in Irish Communications Review, Vol. 8.

Reference for Modelling Disability

Shafi, Suyria (2003) 'Modelling Disability' presentation given at Liverpool John Moores University as part of MC3030 Debating Gender in the Media

Block 2

Preparatory Reading

Thomas, Carol (2004) 'Disability and Impairment' in J. Swain et. al (eds.) Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments 2nd Ed. Sage, London. pp. 21-27.

Hughes, Bill (2004) "Disability and the Body" in J. Swain et. al (2004) pp. 63-68.

Sheldon, Alison (2004) "Women and Disability" in J. Swain et. al (2004) pp.69-73.

Robertson, Steven (2004) "Men and Disability" in J. Swain et. al (2004) pp. 75-80.

Banton, Martin and Gurnam Singh (2004) "'Race', Disability and Oppression" in in J. Swain et. al (2004) pp. 111-117.

Week 7

Edwards, Claire and Rob Imrie (2003) "Disability and Bodies as Bearers of Value" *Sociology* Vol. 37(2): 239-256.

Davis, Lennard J. Davis (1997) "Nude Venuses, Medusa's Body, and Phantom Limbs >Disability and Visuality in Mitchell, David T. and Sharon L. Snyder (eds.) The Body and Physical Difference:Discourses of Disability (The Body, in Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism) Michigan University Press, Michigan

Week 8

Davis, Lennard J. (2002) "Bodies of Difference: Politics, Disability, and Representation" in Sharon L. Snyder et. al. Disability Studies Enabling the Humanities MLA Press

Valentine, Gill (1999) "What it Means to be a Man" in Butler, Ruth and Hester Parr (eds.) Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability Routledge, London.

Week 9

Bailey, Ruth (1996) "Prenatal Testing and the Prevention of Impairment: A Woman's Right to Choose?" in Jenny Morris (ed.) Encounters with Strangers: Feminism and Disability The Women's Press, London

Morris, Jenny (1997) "A Feminist Perspective" in Ann Pointon with Chris Davies (eds.) Framed: Interrogating Disability in the Media BFI Publishing, London

Week 10

Haller, Beth (2001) "Disability and Advertising" The Baltimore Sun p4C.

Haller, Beth and Sue Ralph (2006) "Are Disability Images in Advertising Becoming Bold and Daring? An Analysis of Prominent Themes in the US and UK Campaigns" in Disability Studies Quarterly Vol.21, No.2.

Week 12

Shakespeare, Tom (2002) "The Social Model of Disability: An Outdated Ideology?" in Research in Social Science and Disability Vol. 2, pp. 9-28.