

Susan Krieger, Stanford University  
Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies 260/360  
Human Biology 141  
American Studies 260

Spring 2015  
Weds. 2:15-5:05

## Syllabus

### DISABILITY, GENDER, AND IDENTITY

This course explores visible and invisible disabilities, focusing on issues of gender and identity. The course emphasizes psychological as well as physical health, cross-cultural variables, diversity of disability experiences, self-labeling, caretaking, stigma and passing, legal and political aspects, and the particular experiences of women. Disabilities covered include blindness, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, arthritis, emotional and learning disabilities, and conditions requiring wheelchairs and other forms of assistance. Course readings draw from the disability studies literature and emphasize personal narratives.

The course is designed both for students with disabilities and for those who do not feel disabled but who would like to learn about the subject. In addition to readings and class discussions, students interview disabled women during the quarter to learn about their experiences. This is a limited enrollment seminar. Permission of the instructor is required, with permission given after the first class session. Brief papers are due weekly. No exams. No late papers. 5 units. GER:DB-SocSci, GER:EC-Gender, WAY-ED, WAY-SI. The course may be used in Human Biology areas of concentration related to women's health.

There are six required books, from which we read significant portions, and a course reader containing selected articles. The books, available both in the Bookstore and on library reserve, are: Beth Finke, *Long Time, No See* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Eileen Garvin, *How to Be a Sister: A Love Story with a Twist of Autism* (N.Y.: The Experiment, 2010); Kay Redfield Jamison, *An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness* (N.Y.: Vintage, 1997); Susan Krieger, *Traveling Blind: Adventures in Vision with a Guide Dog by My Side* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2010); Heather Kuttai, *Maternity Rolls: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Disability* (Halifax and Winnipeg, Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2010); and Nancy Mairs, *Waist-High in the World: A Life among the Nondisabled* (Boston: Beacon, 1996). The course reader will be provided by Copy Source. Some of the required readings are available online, as indicated on the syllabus, including the new collection of disability

narratives edited by Caitlin Wood, *Criptions* (Portland, Ore.: May Day, 2014), <http://criptiques.com/ebook/>.

**PERSONAL NATURE OF THE COURSE:** I am a legally blind teacher and writer (see <http://susankrieger.stanford.edu/travelingblind/>). I have selected the course readings and designed the research projects so that students can gain a realistic sense of what disabled individuals experience. Certain writers discuss their experiences with exceptional honesty, and these are a large part of the reading list. Because of the emotionally sensitive nature of our subject matter, I would like to ask those taking the course to help me make the classroom environment as hospitable and safe-feeling as possible. Disabilities are often experienced as vulnerabilities. We will be speaking personally in papers and in the classroom so please be prepared for learning through self-reflection.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

#### **READINGS, RESEARCH, & PAPERS:**

Reading and research assignments are due weekly. Brief papers (approximately 2100-2400 words) are due at the start of each class session. There are two final papers: a final research process paper (2800 words, due May 27) and a course summary paper (2400 words, due June 3, the date of the last class).

Student leaders will be responsible for framing our reading discussions each week on a rotating, assigned basis. The work load is steady; it is important not to fall behind.

Central to each student's work is a series of "conversations with disabled women." Each student picks a topic and conducts a series of interviews or conversations with disabled women on that topic. The exposure to others is supplemented with self-reflection and is discussed in the student's weekly papers in addition to responses to the readings. Though brief, the weekly papers should be carefully written and well thought out.

Individual meetings: To supplement class sessions and to assist with work on individual research topics, students will meet with me individually 3 times during the quarter.

Research and reading assignments can be adjusted to the student's needs in consultation with the instructor. The reading list is varied, allowing for choice among the readings according to the student's interests.

## OTHER PROCEDURES:

My office hours are Wednesday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5-6 p.m., by appointment, in Serra House, 589 Capistrano Way. My email address is: [skrieger@stanford.edu](mailto:skrieger@stanford.edu). The Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program office phone is 725-1477. The program administrator is Monica Moore, email: [mpmoore@stanford.edu](mailto:mpmoore@stanford.edu).

In the case of an unavoidable absence from class, students should inform me by email or phone and make arrangements for completion of the required work. Students should obtain missed class notes from other students.

Attendance is required at all class sessions. No lateness; no exams; no late papers; no incompletes; course not offered pass/no credit. Grades will be based on class participation (33%), weekly papers (33%), and the final research and course summary papers (33%). All papers should be submitted as emailed attachments. They are due in my mailbox by the start of each class session. Word limits for the papers should be observed. Specific instructions for paper submissions will be given in class.

## TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1, April 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISABILITY, GENDER, AND IDENTITY; WOMEN'S AND MEN'S EXPERIENCES; PSYCHOLOGICAL AS WELL AS PHYSICAL HEALTH; AN INTIMATE APPROACH TO STUDYING DISABILITIES

No required reading; class discussion; student backgrounds

Week 2. April 8: DIVERSITY OF DISABILITY EXPERIENCES; WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES; HIDDEN DISABILITIES; WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES GENDER MAKE?

Nancy Mairs, *Waist-High in the World: A Life among the Nondisabled* (Boston: Beacon, 1996), chapters 1-2: 3-39 [37 pp]

Caitlin Wood, "Introduction—Criptiques: A Daring Space," in Caitlin Wood, ed., *Criptiques* (Portland, Ore.: May Day, 2014), <http://criptiques.com/ebook/>: 1-4 [4 pp]

Cara Liebowitz, "Palsy Skinny: A Mixed-up, Muddled Journey into Size and Disability," in Caitlin Wood, ed., *Criptiques* (Portland, Ore.: May Day, 2014): 59-66 [7 pp]

Sharon Wachslar, "Still Femme," and Eli Clare, "Flirting With You: Some Notes on Isolation and Connection," in Victoria A. Brownworth and Susan Raffo, eds., *Restricted Access: Lesbians on Disability* (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1999): 109-114 and

127-135 [14 pp]

Megan Jones, “Gee, You Don’t Look Handicapped . . .”: Why I Use a White Cane to Tell People that I’m Deaf;” and Amanda Hamilton, “Oh the Joys of Invisibility,” *Electric Edge*, July–August 1997 (Web Edition of *The Ragged Edge*) [6 pages] on the web at: <http://www.ragged-edge-mag.com/archive/look.nhtm>

Sucheng Chan, “You’re Short, Besides!” in Asian Women United of California, ed., *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings by and about Asian American Women* (Boston: Beacon, 1989): 265-273 [9 pp]

Sonia Sotomayor, *My Beloved World: A Memoir* (N.Y.: Knopf, 2012): Prologue, 4-12 [8 pp]

Terry Galloway, “I’m Listening as Hard as I Can,” in Marsha Saxton and Florence Howe, eds., *With Wings: An Anthology of Literature by and about Women with Disabilities* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1987): 5-9 [5 pp]

Jen Robinson, “Invisible Illnesses, Visible Stereotypes,” in “Sick Chicks and Twisted Sisters: Empowering Disabled Women on the Web,” Fall 2000; originally at: <http://sickchicks.homestead.com/invisibleillness.html> [5 pp]

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Feminist Disability Studies,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30:2 (2005): selection from the introduction [6 pp], online through SearchWorks at:

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.stanford.edu/stable/10.1086/423352>

Margaret A. Nosek et al, “The Meaning of Health for Women with Physical Disabilities: A Qualitative Analysis.” *Family & Community Health* 27:1 (2004): selections [6 pp]; online at:

[http://journals.lww.com/familyandcommunityhealth/Fulltext/2004/01000/The\\_Meaning\\_of\\_Health\\_for\\_Women\\_with\\_Physical.3.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/familyandcommunityhealth/Fulltext/2004/01000/The_Meaning_of_Health_for_Women_with_Physical.3.aspx)

Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2013): 1-6 [7 pp]

Natalie E. Illum, “Falling,” on Snap Judgment, NPR, 2/10/12 (5 minute audio): <https://soundcloud.com/snapjudgment/falling?in=snapjudgment/sets/sugar-and-spice> [5 minutes]

Paper due April 8: (2100 words) responding to the readings and discussing each student’s self-reflective research on background experiences; proposal of topic options due April 8 (300 words)

Sign up for an office hour appointment on Wednesday April 15 or 22 to discuss your research plans.

Week 3, April 15: DISABILITY AS DIFFERENCE; IDENTIFYING AS A DISABLED WOMAN OR MAN; ASSISTANCE & SELF-DEFINITION; SELF-LABELING AND SELF-CONCEPT

- Nancy Mairs, *Waist-High in the World: A Life among the Nondisabled* (Boston: Beacon, 1996), Chs. 3, 4, & 6 [65 pages]
- Joan Didion, "In Bed," *The White Album* (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1979):168-172 [5 pp]
- Ruth Bendor, "Arthritis and I," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 131: 2 (1999): 150-152 [3 pages]
- Heather Kuttai, *Maternity Rolls: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Disability* (Halifax and Winnipeg, Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2010): Prologue and Ch. 1, 10-36 [24 pp]
- Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (N.Y.: Routledge, 1996): selections from "Who Identifies as Disabled?" on pages 25-33 [5 pp]
- Emily Ladau, "What Should You Call Me? I Get to Decide: Why I'll Never Identify with Person-first Language," in Caitlin Wood, ed., *Criptiques* (Portland, Ore.: May Day: 2014): 47-56 [10 pp]
- Vicky D'aoust, "Complications: The Deaf Community, Disability and Being a Lesbian Mom--A Conversation with Myself," in Victoria A. Brownworth and Susan Raffo, eds., *Restricted Access: Lesbians on Disability* (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1999): 115-123 [9 pages]
- Brenda Jo Brueggemann, "Interpreting Women," in Bonnie G. Smith and Beth Hutchison, eds., *Gendering Disability* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004): 61-72 [12 pages]
- Susan Krieger, "Experiences in Teaching," *Social Science and the Self: Personal Essays on an Art Form* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991): 135-149 [15 pages]

Paper due April 15 (2100 words) responding to the readings and discussing research; brief proposal due (300 words) specifying a topic and a series of conversations with disabled women

Office hour appointments on Wednesday April 15 or 22 to discuss research plans

Week 4, April 22: INVISIBLE REALITIES; EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES; BLINDNESS & VISION

I: Emotional Disabilities:

Kay Redfield Jamison, *An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness* (N.Y.: Vintage, 1997): Parts 1 & 2, optional selections, & Epilogue [105 pp required; 20 pp optional]; this is our primary reading for Week 4

Nancy Mairs, "On Living Behind Bars," *Plaintext: Deciphering a Woman's Life* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1986): 125-154 [30 pp]

Martha Manning, "The Legacy," in Nell Casey, ed., *Unholy Ghosts: Writers on Depression* (N.Y.: Morrow 2001): 256-269; or 256-260 [5 pp]

II: Blindness & Vision (selections from):

Georgina Kleege, *Sight Unseen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999):  
Introduction and Ch. 1: 1-42 [43 pp]

Frances Lief Neer, "Traveling," *Dancing in the Dark* (San Francisco, CA: Wildstar  
Publishing, 1994): 77-86 [10 pp]

Sally Hobart Alexander, *Do You Remember the Color Blue? And Other  
Questions Kids Ask about Blindness* (N.Y.: Viking, 2000): 9-10, 36-42 [7 pp]

Laurie Rubin, *Do You Dream in Color?: Insights from a Girl without Sight* (New  
York: Seven Stories Press, 2012): selections [10 pp]

Melissa J. Frame, "What's Wrong With Her? The Stigmatizing Effects of an  
Invisible Stigma," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 20:3 (2000): 243-253; selection 243-248  
[6 pp]

Deborah Peifer, "Seeing is Be(liev)ing" in Victoria A. Brownworth and Susan  
Raffo, eds., *Restricted Access* (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1999): 31-34 [4 pp]

Paper due April 22 (2400 words) responding to readings and discussing  
research, includes a revised research plan

Office hour appointments on Wednesday April 22

Week 5, April 29: IDEAS OF BEAUTY AND OF FEMALE ACCEPTABILITY; PASSING  
& INVISIBLE WORK; CARETAKING & SELF-CARE

Lorna Moorhead, *Coffee in the Cereal: The First Year with Multiple Sclerosis*  
(Oxnard, Calif.: Pathfinder Publishing, 2003): chs. 1-7, pp. 10-63 [53 pp]

Heather Kuttai, *Maternity Rolls: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Disability* (Halifax and  
Winnipeg, Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2010): chs. 2-4, 37-82, [45 pp]

Eileen Garvin, *How to Be a Sister: A Love Story with a Twist of Autism* (N.Y.: The  
Experiment, 2010): chs. 1-3, 5, 8, & 11 [100-120 pp]

Temple Grandin, *The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism and Asperger's*  
(Arlington, Texas: Future Horizons, Inc., 2008): selections, optional [24 pp]

Susan Krieger, "The Passing Down of Sorrow," *The Family Silver: Essays on  
Relationships among Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press,  
1996): 82-106 [24 pp]

Paper due April 29 (2400 words) responding to readings and discussing  
individual research

Sign up for an office hour appointment on May 6 to discuss your revised research  
plans

Week 6, May 6: AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES; COMING TO TERMS WITH A DISABILITY; CHANGES AND CHALLENGES OVER TIME; CRIPTIQUES

I: Autoimmune Diseases and "Coming to Terms" with a Disability:

Christine Miserandino, "The Spoon Theory." 2003, online at:

<http://www.butyoudontlooksick.com/wp/press/xmedia-press/new-video-christine-miserandino-reads-the-spoon-theory/>

Patricia Nell Warren, "Autoimmune Disease: A Personal Perspective," in Victoria A. Brownworth and Susan Raffo, eds., *Restricted Access* (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1999): 81-89 [9 pages]

Nadine Goranson, "Silent Trespass" in Peggy Munson, ed. *Stricken: Voices from the Hidden Epidemic of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome* (N.Y.: The Haworth Press, 2000): 53-60 [8 pages]

Carolyn Gage, "Hidden Disability: A Coming Out Story," in Victoria A. Brownworth and Susan Raffo, eds., *Restricted Access* (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1999): 201-211 [11 pp]

Mary Felstiner, "Casing My Joints: A Private and Public Story of Arthritis," *Feminist Studies* 24:4 (2000): 273-285 [12 pp]

Susan Cahn, "Come Out, Come Out Whatever You've Got! or, Still Crazy after All These Years," *Feminist Studies* 29:1 (2003): 7-18 [12 pages]

Jen Robinson, "Homeless While Disabled with a Chronic Illness" (2000); originally at [www.womensstudies.homestead.com](http://www.womensstudies.homestead.com) [5 pp]

Lorna J. Moorhead, *Phone in the Fridge: Five Years with Multiple Sclerosis* (Tucson, Arizona, Pathfinder Publishing, 2006): selections [10-20 pp]

Daphne L. Hill, "and I will have sex again" in Shelley Tremain, ed., *Pushing the Limits: Disabled Dykes Produce Culture* (Ontario, Canada: Women's Press, 1996): 72-76 [5 pp]

Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals* (San Francisco: Spinsters Ink, 1980): 9-17 [9 pp]

II: Challenges and New Voices:

Caitlin Wood, ed., *Criptiques* (Portland, Ore.: May Day, 2014)

Paper due May 6 (2400 words) responding to the readings and discussing individual research

Reading contribution citations due May 6 (student favorites for last class session)

Office hour appointments on Wednesday May 6

Week 7: May 13: DISABILITY AS ADVENTURE; DILEMMAS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY; ALTERNATE WAYS OF SEEING; ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Susan Krieger, *Traveling Blind: Adventures in Vision with a Guide Dog by My Side* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2010) [217 pp]

Susan Krieger, *Traveling Blind* audiobook, narrated by Ann M. Richardson (Her Smooth Voice Studios, 2010)

*Traveling Blind* website: <http://susankrieger.stanford.edu/travelingblind>

Susan Krieger, "The Art of the Intimate Narrative," forthcoming in *Come, Let Me Guide You: A Life Shared with a Guide Dog* (West Lafayette, Indiana.: Purdue University Press. 2015) [18 pp]

Paper due May 13 (2500 words) responding to the reading, experimenting with alternate formats, and discussing individual research

Reading contributions due May 13 from each student

Sign up for an office hour appointment on Wednesday May 20 to discuss progress with your research topic

Week 8, May 20: INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS; COMPLEX EMOTIONALITY; PERSONAL ASSISTANCE & SELF-DETERMINATION

Beth Finke, *Long Time, No See* (Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2003): Prologue, chs. 1-2, 4-7, & Epilogue [149 pp]

Mary Frances Platt, "Passing through Shame" and "Personal Assistance" in Victoria A. Brownworth and Susan Raffo, eds., *Restricted Access* (Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1999): 180-191 [12 pages]

Heather Kuttai, *Maternity Rolls: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Disability* (Halifax and Winnipeg, Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2010): Ch. 5, 93-108 [16 pp]

Paper due May 20 (2500 words) responding to the readings and discussing individual research

Office hour appointments on Wednesday May 20

Week 9: May 27: BREAKING SILENCES, CLAIMING IDENTITY, & SEEKING COMMUNITY; EMOTIONAL JOURNEYS

Heather Kuttai, *Maternity Rolls: Pregnancy, Childbirth and Disability* (Halifax and Winnipeg, Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2010): Ch. 7 & Epilogue, 119-132 [14 pp]

Nomy Lamm, "Private Dancer: Evolution of a Freak," in Victoria A. Brownworth and Susan Raffo, eds., *Restricted Access: Lesbians on Disability* (Seattle, WA: Seal



Press, 1999): 152-161 [10 pages]

Joan Tollifson, "Imperfection is a Beautiful Thing: On Disability and Meditation," in Kenny Fries, ed., *Staring Back: The Disability Experience from the Inside Out* (New York: Plume/Penguin, 1997): 105-112 [8 pp]

Mary Felstiner, *Out of Joint: A Private and Public Story of Arthritis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005): "Rights, 1999": 169-173 [5 pp]

[Harilyn Rousso, \*Don't Call Me Inspirational: A Disabled Feminist Talks Back\* \(Philadelphia: temple University Press, 2013\): 3-12 \[10 pp\]](#)

Alice Walker, "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self," in *With Wings: An Anthology of Literature by and about Women with Disabilities*. Edited by Marsha Saxton and Florence Howe (N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1987): 152-158 [7 pp]

Simi Linton, *My Body Politic: A Memoir* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006): Chapter 3, "Coming Out in the West": 38-55 [18 pp]

Amanda Baggs, "Up in the Clouds and Down in the Valley: My Richness and Yours," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 30:1 (2010): [7 pp], on the web at: <http://www.dsquds.org/article/view/1052/1238>

Harriet McBryde Johnson, *Too Late to Die Young: Nearly True Tales from a Life* (N.Y.: Henry Holt, 2005): Preface & start of Ch. 1: 1-17 [18 pp]

Elyn R. Saks, *The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness* (N.Y.: Hyperion, 2007), pages 1-5, 11-13, and 328-336 [16 pp]

Judith Moses, "Connections," in Shelley Tremain, ed., *Pushing the Limits: Disabled Dykes Produce Culture* (Ontario, Canada: Women's Press, 1996): 204-5 [2 pp]

Bethany Stevens, "Krip Power through It: Disability Scholarship and Activism Helped Me Resign and Rebuild," in Caitlin Wood, ed., *Criptiques* (Portland, Ore.: May Day: 2014): 245-256 [12 pp]

Final Research Process paper due May 27 (2800 words; no late papers), includes a readings discussion. This paper is a culmination of the "Conversations with Disabled Women" research project conducted by each student. The paper emphasizes the student's development of insights as a result of her or his research.

## Week 10, June 3: DISABILITY, GENDER, AND IDENTITY: THEMES AND TRENDS

Laurie Rubin: "Do You Dream in Color: Insights from a Girl without Sight," *The Diane Rehm Show*, WAMU-FM, Washington, DC, October 22, 2012: audio online at: <http://thedianerehmshow.org/shows/2012-10-22/laurie-rubin-do-you-dream-color-insights-girl-without-sight>

Student Reading Contributions

Course Summary paper due in class on June 3 (2400 words; no late papers); this paper summarizes the experiences of the course, the readings, and the research; the emphasis is on themes identified by each student.

Class attendance on Wednesday June 3 is required; please make sure that no end-quarter commitments will conflict with your attending this last session.