

Disability Spring 2010 CSEM 23102-19

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Course Description: This interdisciplinary course investigates the cultural meanings attached to extraordinary bodies and minds. Cultural and literary scholarship has extensively explored issues connected with identities derived from race, gender and sexuality. Only recently have concepts of bodily identity, impairment, stigma, monstrosity, marginalization, beauty, deviance, and difference begun to cohere around disability as a concept and have emerged into a discipline called ‘disability studies’. We will cover topics such as human rights, feminism, medical attitudes, social stigma, normalcy, life narratives, pedagogy, bodily representation, mental impairment, the politics of charity, community and collective culture, bible narrative, the built environment, and empowerment, in a range of disciplines including literary studies, film, theology, government policy, art, and drama. The course has a service-learning component: as part of the assessment, students will take part in a local placement with people with disabilities and work on a community project.

Required Texts

Hugo, Victor, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, transl. Alban Krailsheimer (1993) Oxford World’s Classics

Milton, John, *Samson Agonistes*, ed., by A. E. Barker (1991)

Jean-Dominique Bauby, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly: A Memoir*.

Maura Weis, *Miles from the Sideline: A Mother’s Journey with her Special Needs Daughter* (2008)

*** your choice of an autobiography of a person with a disability (order early)

Films (streamed by the Kaneb Center)

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (Dir. Julian Schnabel)

The Elephant Man (Dir. David Lynch).

Forrest Gump (Dir. Robert Zemeckis)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Disney)

Important Information: Please note that the “**readings**” which are not on the purchase list are available as an **electronic coursepack** via the library website and via Concourse. This must be read in advance of every seminar. These are your lectures and so it is vital that you do the reading. “**Research**” indicates that these are the questions I need you to prepare in advance by making notes and thinking about them extensively. **Bring your notes and your texts to the seminar.** It is important that you look carefully at the instructions for each seminar and leave yourselves enough time to complete the work.

Aims of the course: CSEM was set up in order to help you practice and develop **oral skills**, and it is a requirement of CSEM that 70% of the course is assessed orally. This

means it is vital that you take part in discussions, tackle problems with nerves and learn how to debate using evidence and arguments. The key objectives are:

- To be able to discuss and understand some central questions concerning disability
- To practice formulating critical opinions through analysis of information from a range of genres and disciplines
- To summarize the opinions of others and present them in a cogent manner
- To learn how to take part in academic discussion
- To practice working as part of a team

Course Format: This course will be conducted in a seminar format. Students are expected to have read the assigned reading each week, and to have written notes on suggested topics in preparation for the class. We will work on improving discussion skills, focussing on debate and conversational roles. The central aims of the course are as follows: (1) to produce a relaxed atmosphere in which students can work together to improve their discussion skills (2) to learn to process and develop knowledge from range of disciplines, and (3) to collect and discuss information in a variety of ways.

Attendance and participation Students are required to attend every class and to follow the honor code. If you are absent you should email the instructor with an explanation, preferably before the class takes place. Grades are based on oral participation and on written material. It is expected that all reading assignments will be completed before the class. Students should aim to work together in the class to provide thoughtful and informed debate, to offer constructive feedback to other students, and to participate actively in each session. Detailed reading assignments, preparation tasks and an agenda of seminar activities lists are below. The further reading section will provide assistance for research. If you are, at any point, concerned about your progress, please see me in office hours. If you are absent due to illness, please provide the necessary documentation. Since this is a discussion class, you are permitted one excused absence for reasons other than illness. After this, you will lose 2% per absence. Please inform my by email if you cannot attend class.

Required for credit:

- **Placement** with the Logan Center. Minimum of 5 hours for the whole semester.
- Class **Project:** Putting on a play with Logan Center clients
- Attendance at a minimum of **two visiting speaker sessions** on Disability Studies (program included below).

Grading: Your end of semester grade is determined by the following: 5% Response paper; 25% Reflection journal; 20% Mid-term exam (oral); 40% Final exam (oral); 10% Weekly contributions (oral). Late written work will be penalized by 5% per day. If you miss any of the oral exams, there will be a make-up paper.

Assessed Work

Response Paper A 3 page essay on one of the papers delivered by a visiting speaker at the Disability Studies Forum. The paper should be written in formal academic prose, give an account of the paper and include your own response. Due 5/6/10

Reflection Journal on the Logan Center Placement Write a minimum of 5 separate observations 4 on the placement and divide each observation into two sections: (1) reflections on the service experience as text (2) reflections on the relationships between what you have learned from course readings and how they relate to your service experiences. When you reflect on these experiences, do so using the critical tools you gain from the traditional side of the course. Integrating the experiences you have gained into the structured framework provided by the more traditional elements of the course will become easier as the course progresses. Due 5/7/10

An example of a journal entry

(1) *Reflections on the service experience as text: What happened? What was the critical incident?*

I drew a sketch of one of the clients of the Logan Center as part of an art activity. This became a key event because it made the client feel special and happy. The client, once he had spent a long time enjoying the drawing, gave it to his favorite staff member. His generosity was remarkable and enabled him to enjoy the experience of giving a special gift as well as receiving one. The staff member was overjoyed and kept it as a memento of a special client.

(2) *Reflections on the relationships between what you have learned from course readings and how they relate to your service experiences. Begin with a quotation from the course readings that relates to the critical incident or to what you learned about it. What did you learn? How did you feel about it? How is your experience different from what you expected? What different perspectives might you have on the experience?*

Rosemarie Garland Thomson notes in “Seeing the Disabled: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography,” that the “disabled figure in western culture is the to-be-looked-at rather than the to-be-embraced.” (340) Drawing a picture of a client as a surprise gift caused me to be cautious about my gaze, and to consider the problem of representing those with disabilities. Interpreting how we look at people, whether it be for the purposes of representation, or to in some sense know the person is politically complex. I was conscious that I was active as a gazer and that my subject was passive, and that I had taken a liberty, albeit with the intention of generosity, in choosing to look at the client for as long as I needed to complete a brief portrait. It occurred to me, furthermore, that what I was doing was legitimized staring. Thomson observes that the “dominant mode of looking at disability in this culture is staring.” (346) The client’s disability was not visible, enabling me to put aside the problem of what Thomson terms

the “visual rhetoric” of disabilities. Rather than thinking in terms of positive and negative connotations, as Thomson does in her paradigm, I drew the portrait without intending to convey “the wondrous, the sentimental, the exotic” or even “the realistic” (347). Instead, I aimed at conveying the sense of the client’s personality. That is not to say that what I was attempting was unproblematic. Nevertheless, in treating the client as I would treat any non-disabled person I was at least attempting to go beyond unnecessary distinctions.

Bibliography The following books and articles give guidance on how to learn from placements: Eyler, J., *A Practitioner’s Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning* (1996); --- --., *Service-Learning: The Essence of the Pedagogy* (2002); Hatcher, J., and Bringle, R., ‘[Reflection: Bridging the Gap Between Service and Learning](#)’, *College Teaching*, 45: 4 (1997), 32-7. Online [annotated bibliography](#) on service-learning prepared by the Campus Compact organization.

Mid-Term Examination

The mid-term exam will take the form of a group discussion on **Life Writing and Disability**

Things to do early Order a prose autobiography by someone with a mental or physical disability that you want to study for the Mid-term. If you don’t find one of these or you are interested in a particular condition or illness that would make writing an autobiography impossible, then please choose a biography written by a family member. There are millions of these books in print, and they are very easy to find. There will, however, be only a limited quantity of them in the library. Christie Brown’s *My Left Foot* (1954) is in the library, as is Helen Keller’s *The Story of My Life* (1903) and Anne Finger’s *Elegy for a Disease* (2006). Note that the book is your choice and so has not been ordered for you at the bookstore. Each one of you can choose a different book, but it doesn’t matter if some of you choose the same book. You can browse the Hammes bookstore first floor and find something quite easily and local bookstores such as Border’s and Barnes and Noble have plenty to choose from.

Weekly note taking: Taking notes before class, during class and looking over the notes after class are important study skills that will help you prepare for the mid-term. The topics that we are covering in all of the seminars will be in some way relevant to the mid-term. You are learning the *conceptual framework* with which to place the discussions of the text that we will be studying for the mid-term. The key issues for the mid-term will be: marginalization, sentiment, narrative form, empowerment, quality of life issues, diagnosis moments, the relationship between disability and “normalcy”, and the central message of the life. Focus your note-taking on these areas.

Developing your oral skills: I am looking at the form and content of your contributions to the discussion. You need to *practice* this in class every week. Don’t forget that 10% of the final grade comes from weekly contributions.

Revising for the Mid-Term Exam: Read your life narrative (auto/biography) and make notes on the key areas. Look for links to the reading that we have already done (both fictional, non-fictional and film). Review your notes on the key issues. You will be able to bring your notes and your texts to the exam. Mark up or type up your key quotations for the topics. Revise the main debates we have studied e.g. the role of gazes in power politics and identity politics. Knowledge of further reading is desirable for higher grades.

Exam format: 75 minute discussion Use the following questions to help you prepare for the exam. The aim with these questions is to kick off a discussion and not to go around the room in an unnatural fashion while everyone delivers their prepared answer. The aim is to sound like 16 faculty members who have read about a topic and are sharing their different perspectives on it. I will be looking at how frequently you volunteer an answer, the depth of the answer, the choice of words, and the links to previous literature, readings, and concepts. You will need to both answer questions and raise them in the exam.

Preparation Questions

1. What is the impairment and what is the disability?
2. How does the writer view himself or herself?
3. How is the writer viewed by others? Are there any examples of “gazes”?
4. Does the narrative relate to any of the models that are central to disability studies (e.g. the medical model)?
5. How does the narrative you have studied map onto Thomas Couser’s paradigms outlined in “Conflicting Paradigms: The Rhetorics of Disability Memoir”. See coursepack.
6. What is the style of the text? Does it mix different genres?
7. Are there any metaphors used to describe the illness, impairment or disability?
8. Are there significant moments of empowerment? What happens during those moments?
9. How does the text you have studied compare with others we have studied
10. Is Lennard Davis right when he writes: “by narrativizing an impairment, one tends to sentimentalize it and link it to the bourgeois sensibility of individualism and the drama of an individual story” (*Enforcing Normalcy*, 4)?

Assessment Criteria:

As questioners: I will be assessing the following skills:

- How well you articulate the question: Is it an open question (i.e. Will it bring a discursive answer and not a yes or no answer? “How” and “why” questions are open questions. Has the ground already been covered in a different way?
- How well you engage with the answer: does the answer need clarification? Can the answer be linked with something else? Has the answer fully dealt with the problem?
- Did you use the appropriate discourse?

As answerers: I will be looking at how well you perform the following roles:

- clarifying information and using precise language
- responding in the appropriate discourse (no unnecessary words like “like”)

- showing comprehension and adequate reflection
- staying focused on the question
- evaluating information
- understanding how to prioritize information
- comparing and contrasting information
- applying concepts and treating the material using complex approaches
- hypothesizing
- interpreting
- backing up your points with textual evidence from the readings or from the set texts, or your chosen text

Grade descriptions

These are on the concourse pages in the Assessment document, but, to remind you, to get an A you need to be this person:

Grade A: Your contributions demonstrate outstanding knowledge of the set material, some sophistication of thought and a sense of excitement. You often read beyond the set material and show evidence that you have an enquiring mind. You are able to sustain the interest of the seminar group, offer helpful and supportive comments, and ask questions of the other members. You show evidence of having thought deeply about the material, you bring notes to the seminar, and you play an important role in many of the discussions. You have a confident grasp of the issues, show leadership in discussion and are able to connect ideas across discussions and across disciplines. You choose your words carefully and effectively, and use academic discourse.

An example of how to prepare your notes on your life narrative

Anne Finger, *Elegy for a Disease: a Personal and Cultural History of Polio* (New York: St. Martin's, 2006)

General points

- Finger writes her personal memoirs in the context of the polio epidemic of the 1950s.
- Her approach is multi-faceted: it is a combination of novelistic retrospection, historical account, and medical explanation.
- Employing the post-modern strategy of rejecting of the teleology of narrative, Finger frequently shifts her gaze from the vastness of the idea of epidemic to the smallness of the biological organism, from looking at causes to reiterating randomness, from exploring history to examining the disparate memories of her personal experience of the disease.
- This resistance to structuring the narrative trajectory chronologically around the pivotal moment of disablement signals Finger's fight for an identity that is separate from the disease.

Features of the narrative

- **Metaphors for illness/disability:** unwelcome and intrusive guest (54); wizard of Oz: 'Polio rocketed Kriegel out of his familiar world, like the tornado that whirled Dorothy out of Kansas, first to an acute-care hospital and then to the New York State

- Reconstruction Home' (171). 'My crutches were stigmata' (212). 'No disease can be stripped of its metaphoric meanings' (148).
- **Moments of dis/empowerment:** 'Sometimes I appreciate the way my disability knocks down the ordinary barriers, but sometimes I get tired of strangers feeling free to ask me personal questions' (51). Positive and negative conclusions drawn from examples of famous people who suffered from the illness: Sir Walter Scott and F. D. Roosevelt. 'I hated *Heidi*' (126). Isolation: 'I lacked both a history and a community' (227); at a conference for people who had had polio: 'I felt like an adoptee meeting her birth family' (265).
 - **Rejection of medical authority:** 'Surgery seemed an instrument of humiliation, a strange and irrational ritual of degradation' (89); 'medically sanctioned torture' (179).
 - **Theme of finding a voice:** 'In the face of disability, language itself becomes crippled. It trips over itself, it stutters, it becomes awkward, ungainly, even paralyzed' (220).
 - **Determination not to oversimplify:** physical disability is important for Finger's self identity, but so is her father's descent into alcoholism and physical abuse, and her battle with depression. 'My psyche was as fragile as a raw egg. It had been so important to my family that I come through the ordeal of polio unwounded, capable, competent, independent, that everything within me that was wounded, that was frail, that was needy was walled off. Add to that psychological stew the after effects of my father's violence' (247).
 - She argues that her **experience is not emblematic**. Men experience the disease differently because of the cultural associations between masculinity and strength.

Conclusion

- This example of the genre of disabled life writing places resistance to narrative inevitability in the context of resistance to the predictable synonymies of disability.
- The last word of this life narrative is 'survival'. Finger has survived her own fragmentation through depression, and has accepted that her disability is 'the core of who I am' [127]

Weekly contributions to the discussion

It is vital that you contribute to the discussion in each seminar. Silence in any seminar will bring your grade down. If you have a disability that prevents your participation, please make an appointment to discuss accommodations.

The Final: Discussion topic: Accessible Theater

Final: The final will take the form of a group discussion in the last class of the semester. The subject will be the group project (putting on a play with the Logan Center).

Things to do to prepare Refresh your memory on the aims of the project. Go back over your weekly notes and look at materials which will help you with the questions below. Make yourselves a sheet of appropriate ideas and notes.

Exam format: 75 minute discussion The group will discuss the following topics:

- Individual roles within the project and what we learnt

- Accessible theater in theory and in practice
- What would you do differently, if you did the project again?

You will have the opportunity to engage each other in conversation on the above topics. I will be looking at the quality of your questions and your answers. It is your choice as to how often you engage in answering or questioning. If you engage in neither, you are unlikely to get a good grade. You need to demonstrate that you can work with others to combine ideas, methods, and findings to work towards an analysis of your project. I will not be involved in this part of the examination. As questioners: I will be assessing the following skills:

- How well you articulate the question: Is it an open question (i.e. Will it bring a discursive answer and not a yes or no answer? “How” and “why” questions are open questions. Has the ground already been covered in a different way?
- How well you engage with the answer: does the answer need clarification? Can the answer be linked with something else? Has the answer fully dealt with the problem?
- Did you use the appropriate discourse?

As answerers: I will be looking at how well you perform the following roles:

- clarifying information and using precise language
- responding in the appropriate discourse (no unnecessary words like “like”)
- showing comprehension and adequate reflection
- staying focused on the question
- evaluating information
- understanding how to prioritize information
- comparing and contrasting information
- applying concepts and treating the material using complex approaches
- hypothesizing
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- backing up your points with textual evidence from the readings or from the set texts, or your chosen text

Grade descriptions:

Grade A: Your contributions demonstrate outstanding knowledge of the set material, some sophistication of thought and a sense of excitement. You often read beyond the set material and show evidence that you have an enquiring mind. You are able to sustain the interest of the seminar group, offer helpful and supportive comments, and ask questions of the other members. You show evidence of having thought deeply about the material, you bring notes to the seminar, and you play an important role in many of the discussions. You have a confident grasp of the issues, show leadership in discussion and are able to connect ideas across discussions and across disciplines. You choose your words carefully and effectively, and use academic discourse. You contribute to all of the discussions.

Grade B: Your contributions demonstrate a sound and balanced understanding of the set material. You contribute to each seminar, bring your notes to the seminar, and your comments are helpful and worthwhile. You answer questions without being prompted to, and you show a sustained interest in the material and in the central ideas of the course. You have a sound grasp of the issues and are able to express yourself effectively, and in the appropriate academic discourse. You are often pro-active in the seminar, and show steady improvement throughout the semester. You contribute to most of the discussions.

Grade C: You have read and understood the set material. You contribute to most classes, but your comments are not sophisticated and do not go beyond the superficial. You show some interest in the course, but do not perform an important role in many of the discussions. You have grasped some elements of academic discourse, but are not confident in your expression. You bring notes to the class, but you do not demonstrate that you have gone deeply into the material. You rarely contribute to discussions.

Grade D: You have read the set material cursorily and have misunderstood much of it. You contribute occasionally to the seminar discussions, and you answer questions when prompted to. You have not demonstrated a keen interest, and you do not express yourself in academic discourse. You do not contribute to discussions.

Course Outline

1/12/10: Week 1: Class 1: Introduction to the course: Syllabus distribution/overview

1/14/10: Week 1: Class 2: Defining Disability Studies: The Myth of the Gaze

Readings: Anne Ruggles Gere, "Seeing is/not Believing: Visibility, Invisibility, and Disability Studies in Education," in *Disability Studies in Education: Readings in Theory and Method*, ed. Susan L. Gabel (2005), 53-63; Linda Kornasky, "Identity Politics and Invisible Disability in the Classroom." *Journal of Higher Education* 17 March 2009.

Research (1) What can gazes convey? (2) How might we build a pedagogical environment that resists the "teacher's gaze"? (Gere, 54) (3) Look at current newspapers and magazines. A wide range is available in the Hammes Bookstore and in the Current Periodicals room of the library. Bring to the class any images or photocopies of images of people with disabilities that you think enable the experience of a kind of gaze. Do these images allow us to "recognize the continuity between the impaired and the temporarily able bodied"? How easy is it to find these images? Note the context in which they appear. (4) What are the advantages and disadvantages of "coming out" as having a disability?

1/19/10: Week 2: Class 1: What is Disability Studies? Readings: David Johnstone, "Why Study Disability? Some explanatory Beginnings," *An Introduction to Disability Studies* (2001), pp 5-25. **Research** Choose one of the models of disability outlined in Johnstone's introduction (medical model, rehabilitation model, social model, affirmative model, rights-based model) and look at the pros and cons of its use. What are the problems concerning the language used to describe disability?

1/21/10: Week 2: Class 2: Introduction to the Placement and the Project: Visit from Charles Strauss, Logan Center Co-ordinator. Readings: Olivia Raynor and Katharine Haywood, "The Employment of People with Disabilities in the Entertainment Industry." Screen Actors Guild, May 2005; Kathleen Tolan, "We Are Not A Metaphor." *Theatre Communications Group* 21 December 2009. **Research:** Explore some of the sensitivities concerning the involvement of people with disabilities in the theater. **(1) Placements:** The theater troupe placement (5 placements available on Wednesdays 4-5.30 at Logan Center) and the other options tba **(2) The Project:** Putting on a play with the Theater Troupe at Logan Center (Julie Cagill, Co-ordinator at Logan; Director: Prof. Scot Purkeypile, Dept of Film, TV and Theater (ND). The project will involve all students in the production of the play. Those who take the theater placement will also need to be part of the project in another capacity. The text will be chosen by the director in consultation with the troupe.

1/26/10: Week 3: Class 1: The Principles of Service Learning : Reading Christine Cress et al, "Becoming Community: Moving from I to We;" "Academic Disciplines as Critical Inquiry," in *Learning Through Serving* (Sterling: Stylus, 2005), pp 33-42 and 116-121; Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles, "Identifying the Learning Outcomes of Service," in *Where's the Learning in Service Learning*, pp 1-22; Petra Kupperts, "Chapter One" *Community Performance: An Introduction* (2007): 1-14. **Research:** 1. What does Marge Piercy's poem "The Low Road" (1980) identify as powerful about community engagement? How does learning beyond the classroom (service learning/experiential learning) differ from traditional learning? 2. How do you define "community"? Have you experienced yourself to be a member of a community in any way? In what ways have you experienced belonging in a community? Are there communities to which you could belong, but choose not to? If so why? 3. What is the difference, do you think, between getting involved in a placement and getting involved in a project? What kinds of experiences are possible on a placement? What knowledge and skills would you like to expand in the service-learning project? 4. How might you use and apply the knowledge you have gained from your academic discipline in a community setting? What majors do we have in each group? 5. What important lessons can we learn from the examples outlined in "Academic Disciplines as Critical Inquiry"? What do you think are the important things to be aware of when interacting with community partners?

1/28/10: Week 3: Class 2: Critiquing Charity and Defining Disability Readings: Robert F. Drake, "A Critique of the Role of the Traditional Charities," in *Disability and Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*, Longman Sociology Series (1996), pp 147-166 **Research:** Make a full examination of a website associated with a charity for people with disabilities, or, if there is no website, the literature that they have produced. What does this charity symbolize? What does the charity do? What are the pros and cons of charitable support? How might these ideas about charity affect your understanding of your service placement? What values should a charity have? How do different organizations define disability? Choose one institution to focus on and use the Internet to find out more about their policies and word choices (e.g. a medical insurance company, a university, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health [on behalf of the World Health Organization see: <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/>]).

Is there anything problematic or surprising about their choices? Make a note of the sources of your information. See also: Dana Lee Baker and Leal Keiser, "The Role of Non-Profits in Shaping Civil Rights: Understanding of Disability in Families of Children with Autism," *Review of Disability Studies*, 4:3 (2008), 53-63.

2/2/10: Week 4: Class 1: Disability, Language, Representation and the Body:

Readings: "The Performing Body", in *Performance Analysis*, ed., Colin Counsell and Laura Wolf (2001), pp 125-133; Phil Smith, "Split-----ting the ROCK of {speci[ES]al} e.ducat.ion: FLOWers of lang[ue]age in >DIS<ability studies", in *Vital Questions Facing Disability Studies in Education*, ed. Scot Danforth and Susan L. Gabel (2006), pp 33-61.

[Note: this is the correct title of this chapter] **Research:** (1) Based on the first reading: Choose two institutional situations, one in which the operation of power is overt (e.g. a lesson in a classroom) and one in which it is not (e.g. a hospital visit, a trip to the movies, or a church service). Record the "rules" governing individual bodily behavior in both situations (posture, demeanour, dress, kinds of movement, restrictions) and the larger arrangements in which they are located (positioning of bodies in space, differences in elevation, organization of lines of sight etc). Consider how these situations express power. Who is powerful (present or absent) and what types of knowledge does he or she use? Name the modes of knowledge as precisely as you can. e.g. "rules of politeness". Who is agreeing to abide by the discipline of the situation? (2) Based on the second reading: How are the rules governing academic discourse treated here, and why are they treated this way? What do we learn about the power of words from Smith's chapter? What do we learn about the body? Look at some of the ways in which form and content interact to provide meaning in the chapter.

2/3/10 Visiting Speaker Opportunity: Wednesday 3 February, 3pm, Gold Room, La Fortune: Professor Edward Wheatley. Paper title: "Commodifications of the Flesh: Disabling Miracles of Chastisement and Penitential Practice in Medieval France."

2/4/10: Week 4: Class 2: Using/Abusing the Medical Model: The Clinical Gaze and

The Elephant Man Readings: Johanna Shapiro, "(Re)Examining the clinical gaze through the prism of literature", *Families, Systems and Health*, 20:2 (2002), 161- 170. **Film:** *The Elephant Man* (Dir. David Lynch, 1980). **Research:** (1) How do we define the "clinical gaze"? (2) Does disability ever represent anything other than a negative image in this film? What kinds of disability stereotypes does this film perpetuate? (3) Explore one of the following in relation to the film: voyeurism, the exotic, the freak, the medical curiosity, the victim, isolation and celebrity (4) How is the idea of the mirror used in this film? Note that you must view the film before the class.

2/9/10: Week 5 Class 1: Continuing to Gaze at The Elephant Man Research: Read Paul Anthony Darke, "The Elephant Man (David Lynch, EMI Films, 1980): An Analysis from a Disabled Perspective." *Disability & Society* 9 (1994): 327-341. (1) The film dwells on the faces of the characters. Why might this be the case? How does Lynch get us to feel empathy for an expressive face? (2) Is the film's concentration on Merrick's aspiration to be normal a problem politically? Does he "enact a traumatic pursuit of bourgeois acceptance"? (3) What is our role as spectator of this film? Are we made aware

of our own consumption of the film as a freak show, or our own fears? (4) How might we view the disabled rescue scene? (5) Why pick *Romeo and Juliet*? (6) What is the use of diegetic sound (sound that the characters can hear) and non-diegetic sound (the sound track that the characters cannot hear)? Why are particular types of music chosen? (7) How are women viewed in the film? (8) In what ways is our confidence in the medical profession supported or undermined in the film? (9) Which scene stuck with you the longest? (10) How might we read the ending of the film? Is it better to be dead than disabled?

2/10/10 Visiting Speaker Opportunity: 4 pm, DeBartolo 136: Professor Leon Dash, Swanlund Professor of Journalism and Director and Professor of the Center for Advanced Study, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Paper title: “My Destiny and Yours.”

2/11/10: Week 5: Class 2: Life Writing and Disability Readings: G. Thomas Couser, “Signifying Bodies: Life Writing and Disability Studies,” in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities* ed. Sharon Snyder et al (2002), pp 109-117; Anne Finger, *Elegy for a Disease: A Personal and Cultural History of Polio* (2006), pp 7-8; Julie Coakley, “I Couldn’t Say the Word Blind”, *The Guardian*, 28 July 2008 (handout); **Research:** Come prepared for a group discussion on disabled life narratives. Pick a one page example from the text you wish to use in the mid-term and explore it in relation to the paradigms outlined by Couser. Prepare the following questions: (1) what are some of the challenges faced by people with disabilities who want to write an autobiography? (2) What do the following rhetorics entail: triumph; horror; spiritual compensation; and nostalgia (3) How might we contest these rhetorics?

2/16/10: Week 6: Class 1: The Patient Gazes Back: Subjected Bodies and the Medical Carceral in *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* Readings: G. Thomas Couser, “Conflicting Paradigms: The Rhetorics of Disability Memoir”, in *Embodied Rhetorics: Disability in Language and Culture* ed. James C. Wilson and Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson (2001), 78-91. **Film:** *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (Dir. Julian Schnabel) **Research:** (1) How does the film give the impression that it is representing the patient’s perspective? Look at camera angles, length of shots, repetition (2) What is the task of this film? (3) Why hold on to the most dramatic moment of the film until the end? (4) What are the symbols of the film and what do they represent? (5) What does the film say about Catholicism? (6) Schnabel was a painter before he was a film director. He worked on the layering of images. In what ways does the film use layers? (7) In what ways are institutions seen to act upon the body? In what ways is the hospital carceral? **Further Reading:** Arthur Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition* (Basic Books, 1988); David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, “Disability Studies and the Double Bind of Representation” in *The Body and Physical Difference: Discourses of Disability* eds. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 1–31.

2/18/10: Week 6: Class 2: Voicing Bodily Experience: Disability Life Narrative Readings: Jean-Dominique Bauby, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly: A Memoir*. **Research** (1) Compare the idea of disability as loss, seen in Bauby’s narrative, with the

extract from Finger's autobiography. (2) "The difference between what I imagined disability to be like and what it actually was like was enormous" (quoted in Couser, 109). In what ways does Bauby write from inside the experience of disability? (3) Does narrativizing an impairment sentimentalize it? (4) What kind of narrative is Bauby's? Is it told in a chronological sequence? Is it episodic? What kinds of narrative developments are there? (5) What does his experience reveal about the medical perspective on disability? (6) What do we learn about the author's identity? **Further Reading:** G. Thomas Couser, *Recovering Bodies: Illness, Disability, and Life Writing* (1997); Anne Finger, *A Personal and Cultural History of Polio* (2006).

2/23/10: Week 7: Class 1: Class 1: Disability and Parents' Narratives

Readings: Maura Weis, *Miles from the Sideline: A Mother's Journey with her Special Needs Daughter* (2008); Arthur Frank, "Reclaiming an Orphan Genre: The First-Person Narrative of Illness," *Literature and Medicine*, 13 (1994), 1-21 **Research:** While researching the following questions examine how Maura presents herself, and alternative ways in which we can interpret what she presents. (1) Examine the roles that diagnosis, misdiagnosis, non-diagnosis and other forms of assessment of ability play in Maura's encounter with disability, and examine her opinions of medical authority (2) Compare this story with the one you have chosen (3) Describe the ways in which Maura perceives the parenting of Charlie Jr to be different from the parenting of Hannah. (4) In what ways does Maura attempt to de-stigmatize disability? (5) What do Maura's comments on Hannah's spiritual role imply about her (Maura's) theological beliefs? (6) Examine Maura's narrative in terms of Frank's paradigm; to what extent is this text a "quest narrative"?

2/25/10: Week 7: Class 2: Meeting with Charles Strauss about Logan Center placements/project

3/2/10: Week 8: Class 1: Pain and Disability **Readings:** Simon J. Williams and Gillian Bendelow, "Pain and the 'dys-appearing' body in Simon J. Williams and Gillian Bendelow (eds.), *The Lived Body: Sociological Themes, Embodied Issues* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 155–170 Prepare for a discussion of the following questions: (1) What are the factors that lead to a greater awareness of bodily experience? (2) What is the difference between grief and a burn? (3) In what ways does the medical profession encourage the mind-body split? (4) What do we think are some of the positive things that come out of the experience of pain? (5) Why do we need to make a distinction between "public" and "private" pain? (6) What are the implications of these theories for people with intellectual disabilities who cannot put their pain into words? (7) People with disabilities don't always suffer more pain than anyone else. What can we take away from this understanding of pain that we can use in our study of disability?

3/3/10: Visiting Speaker Opportunity: 3pm 119 O'Shaughnessy: Profs David T. Mitchell and Sharon Snyder. Paper Title: "Permutations of the Species: Towards An Anthropology of Independent Disability Film Festivals."

3/4/10: Week 8: Class 2: Mid-Term exam

Mid-Term Break

3/16/10: Week 9: Class 1: Life Narrative and Film: *Forrest Gump* Readings: Karen Boyle, “New Man, Old Brutalisms: Reconstructing a Violent History in *Forrest Gump*”, *Scope*, 10 (2001). **Film:** *Forrest Gump* (dir. Robert Zemeckis) (1)

Is it more convincing to see this film as a conservative or a liberal interpretation of history? (2) Is Forrest everyman? (3) How should we interpret the film’s opening sequence? (4) What is the significance of the people listening to Forrest’s narrative? (5) How can we compare the representation of physical and cognitive disabilities in this film?

3/18/10: Week 9: Class 2: Disability through Photography: Diane Arbus

Readings: David Hevey, ‘The Enfreakment of Photography’, in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis (2006), pp 367-378; **Viewings:** Diane Arbus’s photographs: “[Mexican Dwarf in his Hotel Room](#)” (1970), “[The Jewish Giant](#)” (1970), “[Untitled](#)” (1970-71), “[Untitled \[2\]](#)”, “[Untitled \[3\]](#)”. **Research:** Examine the photographs carefully using the following questions: (1) What is the content? What is in the foreground? What is in the background? (2) What is the central focus? What is clearest? (3) Which areas of the photograph are lightest? Are there any shadows? What do these tell you about the time of day? Is the light natural or artificial? Harsh or soft? Reflected or direct? (4) Are there any geometric (angular) or organic (natural) shapes? (5) Do any objects repeat? Is there a pattern to the repetition? (6) Is there any depth or is the space confined? (7) What do the textures in the photograph tell you? (8) Does the subject acknowledge the presence of the camera? (9) What is inside the frame? What is cut off by the frame? What is implied outside of the frame? (10) Is the subject close to the camera or distant? (11) What is the picture’s message? What might be the politics behind it? Are there any clues to the time in history? What are the cultural, historical and aesthetic references? Is there any text or title accompanying the picture? (12) Photographs are not unproblematic truth tellers. What evidence is there that there is manipulation or perspective going on? (13) Are Diane Arbus’s photographs oppressive or inclusive?

3/19/10: Visiting Speaker Opportunity: 12pm, 339 O’Shaughnessy: Professor Encarnación Juárez-Almendros Paper Title: “Syphilis and Prostitution in Early Modern Spanish Literature.”

3/23/10: Week 10: Class 1: Disability and History Reading: Baynton, Douglas C. “Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History.” In Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky, eds., *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*. (New York University Press, 2001): 33-57. **Research:** (1) On page 33, Baynton argues that, “not only has it been considered justifiable to treat disabled people unequally, but the *concept* of disability has been used to justify discrimination against other groups by attributing disability to them.” Use course material and Baynton’s article to explore the meanings and implications of this assertion. How, specifically, have the non-disabled masses (and the state) justified the oppression of disabled people? How has the concept of disability been used to justify other forms of oppression? Try to think like a

historian—how have these things changed over time? (2) Baynton makes a distinction between *being* disabled (“disabled people”) and *being labeled or perceived* as being disabled (“the *concept* of disability”). Do you think this a fruitful distinction? (one way to think about this might be to ask---at what point does someone “become” disabled, and why?)

3/25/10: Week 10: Class 2: Disability and Michael Jackson: **Class starts at 6pm with a reception in the Eck Center, and the discussion is at 7pm).** The class will join the Erskine Peters Symposium on Reconstructing the Image of Michael Jackson: Explorations of Body, Spirit, and Society. **Research** The reading is: David Yuan, 'The Celebrity Freak: Michael Jackson's "Grotesque Glory"', in Rosemarie Garland Thomson (ed.) *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, New York and London: New York University Press, 1996, 368-384.

3/30/10: Week 11: Class 1: Milton's *Samson Agonistes* lines 1-870 **Readings:** Choose one of the following aspects of the text on which to focus your research: (1) Metaphors of blindness (2) Disability as loss and gain (3) Dignity. Note down key quotations and formulate a list of points you wish to make. Read, also, Joan S. Bennett, “Reading *Samson Agonistes*.” *Cambridge Companion to Milton*. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1989: 219–235.

4/1/10: Week 11: Class 2: Milton's *Samson Agonistes* lines 870-end. Choose one of the following aspects of the original text on which to focus your research in preparation for a discussion of the second part of the play: (1) Concepts of heroism (2) Spiritual revelation (3) The role of the chorus (4) Samson's death (5) The gaze. Read Brendan Quigley, “The Distant Hero of *Samson Agonistes*.” *English Literary History* 72 (2005): 529–551.

4/6/10: Week 12: Class 1: Visit of Professor Jeremy Schipper: Blindness and Biblical Culture **Readings:** Judges 13-16; Numbers 6. Research the following topics and prepare for a discussion: **(1) Look closely at Judges 13-16** and answer the following questions, pay attention to references to eyes or seeing/appearances as you read: (i) Do 'eyes' or 'seeing' involve anything other than physically seeing? (ii) What does Manoah's inability to recognize the angel when he sees him tell us about what it means to see in the story of Samson? (iii) Is seeing and blindness used metaphorically in the story? What do they stand for? (iv) How, specifically, does the angel describe Samson's mission? What significance does his mother's infertility have in the story? (v) Find specific points where characters see things in the story. How might these points link with each other? When, if ever, do they recognize or "see clearly" what is going on? Does Samson ever recognize what is going on? (vi) In what ways might Samson be understood to be “liminal” in this passage? [“liminality” is the status of occupying a boundary or border between two things e.g. sick and well; inside a community and outside of it]. (vii) Compare the instructions for the Nazirite (Numbers 6:1-21) with the story of Samson. What three things is a Nazirite not allowed to do? What what points in the story does Samson do these things? Is Samson separated or isolated from others? Who, if anyone, does he trust? **(2) What links can you make between Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and the biblical sources?** For further Guidance see Simon Horne, ““Those who are blind see””: Some New

Testament Uses of Impairment, Inability, and Paradox', in *Human Disability and the Service of God: Reassessing Religious Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 88-101 and Henri-Jacques Stiker, "The Bible and Disability" in *A History of Disability on Concourse*.

4/7/10: Visiting Speaker Opportunity: Wednesday 7 April, 3pm, 119 'Shaughnessy: Professor Jeremy Schipper Paper Title: "How Scholars Healed the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53."

4/8/10: Week 12: Class 2: Discussion of Logan Center placement experiences and Reflection Journal

4/13/10: Week 13: Class 1: Class 2: *Notre-Dame de Paris* Readings: Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), **Books 1 and 2** **Research:** (1) What do you think are Hugo's central ideas? (2) Explore the ways in which people and architecture interact in books 1 and 2 of Hugo's novel. (e.g. the gurning contest, the crippled masses in the maze of streets etc). Note down where people are compared to buildings. (3) How is Quasimodo characterized? What are his impairments and how is he treated?

4/15/10: Week 13: Class 2: *Notre-Dame de Paris* Readings: Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), **Books 3, 4, and 5. Research:** Explore the depiction of Quasimodo as a mutilated building. What are the links between bodies and buildings in this section of the novel? Write a set of discussion questions on a handout to be distributed to the group. The aim is to inspire the class to discuss provocative issues. Find a way of getting the group involved in your topic. List your objectives.

4/20/10: Week 14: Class 1: *Notre Dame de Paris* Books 6, 7, and 8 **Research:** explore the ways in which physical and mental disabilities are portrayed in this section of the novel. Does Dom Claude's obsession amount to a disability?

4/22/10: Week 14: Class 2: Week 15: Class 1: *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Books 9, 10 and 11 Explore the depiction of mental illness and physical disability in the last section of the novel.

27/4/10: Week 15: Class 1: The Final

5/5/10: Visiting Speaker Opportunity: 3pm, 119 O'Shaughnessy, Professor Tobin Siebers Paper Title: "**The Aesthetics of Human Disqualification.**" Professor Siebers is the V. L. Parrington Collegiate Professor, Professor of English Language and Literature, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

5/6/10 (midnight): Reflection journal due

5/7/10 (midnight): Response paper due