

## Women and Gender Studies 234: Feminist Disability Studies

Professor Brady James Forrest  
Email: bf459@georgetown.edu  
First main Session July 10-August 11  
Monday-Thursday, 3:30-5:25  
Reiss 262

### Course Description

This course aims to introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of Feminist Disability Studies through autobiographies, contemporary writings in the field, and short essays from a variety of Keyword books from NYU Press. The main objective of the course is to offer students the opportunity to learn and enhance critical approaches to the world around them while gaining a better understanding and proficiency in feminist studies, disability studies, critical race studies, and queer theory. In reading theoretical texts alongside a wide range of primary sources students will be able to better understand and engage with current debates within the field of Feminist Disability Studies as well as rethink current mainstream civil rights and public policy issues. The class aims to interrogate the way power and privilege are structurally created and reinforced as well as how they impact the lived experiences of minoritized people.

Primary sources include work by Georgina Kleege, Kay Redfield Jamison, Audre Lorde.

Secondary sources include work by Susan Wendell, Robert McRuer, Anna Mallow, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Mia Mingus, Eli Clare, S. Naomi Finkelstein, and Alyson Patsavas.

### Learning Goals

Students will:

1. Be able to identify the larger fields of women and gender studies, queer theory, critical race theory, and disability studies that inform and constitute feminist disability studies.
2. Improve critical reading skills across different genres and forms.
3. Improve writing skills by writing different types of papers ranging from responses to a medium length academic paper while giving and receiving peer feedback.
4. Learn about and better understand minoritized communities while engaging in critical discussions with peers.

### Office hours and Emails

My office hours are in ICC 456 on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_pm and by appointment. Office hours are a chance for you to get help on assignments or readings; go over materials covered in class; and ask any class related questions. Office hours are generally student directed. I *strongly* encourage you to take advantage of office hours.

I tend to not check emails after 8pm or over the weekend. Before emailing please be sure to **double check the syllabus**. I encourage you to ask simple questions over email. If a question requires more than a few sentences response then it is probably best to just come to office hours or use that email to schedule a time to meet with me.

### **Course Requirements**

**Course Completion:** Failing to complete any one of the course requirements will result in a failing or incomplete grade for the course, incompletes are only given for extenuating circumstances.

**Attendance:** You will not be penalized for your **first two** unexcused absences. Every unexcused absence beyond the second will result in a 1 percentage point drop in your final grade, i.e. from 91% to 90%. Six unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. An absence is considered excused only after you've spoken to me about the cause for your absence and I have excused it. You will never need to produce a doctor's note to excuse an absence. A general rule is that if you choose to be somewhere other than class then the absence is not excused, if you do not have a choice or larger outside powers are preventing you from attending then the absence is excused once you've talked with me.

**Active Participation:** This is a discussion based seminar style class so active participation is expected. In class we will cover and clarify the reading, introduce new material, and have discussions about the materials and assignments so your participation is crucial to your success. Everyone learns differently and has different approaches to a classroom setting and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that everyone can engage with the class not only in ways that are comfortable but in ways that push our comfort zone so we can grow as young scholars. If you must miss a class session, it's your responsibility to learn what happened in class and to obtain any of the materials distributed that day. Your presence, the frequency of your participation, the quality of your comments and questions, and any in class work all factor into your participation grade.

**In Class Presentation:** Once during the semester each student will give a brief five minute presentation on the material for that day that includes a summary of main concepts and guiding questions to help direct that day's discussion. You will create a handout to accompany it.

**Discussion Posts:** You are responsible for uploading 10 short reading/viewing responses to the Discussions tab on Canvas at least 24 hours before the start of class. Your response can be formatted as bullet points, full sentences, whatever, but must include two things: 1. One thing from the reading/viewing that you do not understand/find confusing (this can be framed as a question) and why or a "good question" based on the materials (see: Some Notes On How To Ask A Good Question About Theory That Will Provoke Conversation And Further Discussion

From Your Colleagues by Professor Kyla Wazana Tompkins in the files section of Canvas) and 2. A list of at least three words that seem to be central to the materials for the day which you define each term in your own words and offer a brief account of why you think each term is important for the reading. Each response is worth 1% of your grade and you must submit a total of 10 reading responses over the course of the semester for full credit, but when you do so is up to you. I strongly encourage you to check and see what your peers have posted before coming to class. I highly recommend getting into the habit of this early, so that you don't have to play catch up at the very end.

Response Paper: You will write a 3 page response paper due Friday each week that summarizes and attends to the content for the week. The response is your time to identify tensions within the materials to offer a reading of primary source material using the secondary source materials.

Grade Rubric: The following is a general rubric for how I evaluate **all graded** assignments.

- An A—Exquisite work that is nuanced and takes risks. Makes a clear, supported argument that goes beyond the obvious to make unexpected connections. Challenges the reader to see the topic differently. Obviously required great effort and thought on the part of the student. “A” grades are earned, not freely given.
- A B—Well-written and/or argued work that demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and thoughtful analysis. May struggle with one of the following: organization/structure, supporting evidence, and generalizations. Demonstrates potential for growth and significant effort.
- A C—Fulfills the basic requirements of a given assignment, but does not exceed them. Makes an argument, supported by evidence, but not a particularly nuanced one. Writing is adequate but not elegant. Bare minimum of effort.
- A D—Fails to meet the full requirements of the assignment (including page length). Makes an unconvincing and/or unsupported argument. Draws on generalizations and opinions.
- An F—Unacceptable, incoherent, or otherwise incomplete.

## Grading

Discussion Post	10%
In Class Presentation	15%
Response Paper	50%
Participation	25%

Final Grade Rubric

A+ 97-100%	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	F <59%
A 93-96%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	D 63-66%	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C-70-72%	D- 60-62%	

**Required Texts**

ISBN: 978-1879960732

Author: Audre Lorde

Title: The Cancer Journals

Publisher: Aunt Lute Books

ISBN: 978-0300076806

Author: Georgina Kleege

Title: Sight Unseen

Publisher: Yale University Press

ISBN: 978-0679763307

Author: Kay Redfield Jamison

Title: An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness

Publisher: Vintage

All other reading will be provided though some films may need to be rented or purchased.

**Course Schedule**

Note: This schedule is subject to change during the course of the semester.

**Week 1**

July 10

Syllabus Day

July 11

NYT: “Becoming Disabled,” Rosemarie Garland-Thomson

Introduction, Keywords Feminist Editorial Collective

July 12

*Crip Camp*, James Lebrecht, Nicole Newnham

Disability Keyword, Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss and David Serlin

Gender Keyword, Kim Q. Hall

Crip Keyword, Victoria Ann Lewis

July 13 is

“Towards a Feminist Theory of Disability,” Susan Wendell

Disability Keyword, Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss and David Serlin

Gender Keyword, Kim Q. Hall

Crip Keyword, Victoria Ann Lewis

## **Week 2**

July 17

“Feminist Disability Studies” Rosemarie Garland Thomson

July 18

*An Unquiet Mind*, Kay Redfield Jamison

July 19

“Introduction” from *Mad at School*, Margaret Price

Madness Keyword, Sander L. Gilman

July 20

*An Unquiet Mind*, Kay Redfield Jamison

## **Week 3**

July 24

“Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” Audre Lorde

July 25

*The Cancer Journal*, Audre Lorde

July 26

“Uses of the Erotic,” Audre Lorde

Race Keyword, Keywords Feminist Editorial Collective

July 27

*The Cancer Journal*, Audre Lorde

## **Week 4**

July 31

*The Way He Looks*, Daniel Ribeiro  
Blindness Keyword, D.A. Caeton  
Visuality Keyword, Georgina Kleege

August 1  
*Sight Unseen*, Georgina Kleege

August 2  
*The Way He Looks*, Daniel Ribeiro

August 3  
*Sight Unseen*, Georgina Kleege

### **Week 5**

August 7  
“The Only Thing You Have to Do Is Live,” S. Naomi Finkelstein

August 8  
“The Bodymind Problem and the Possibility of Pain,” Margaret Price

August 9  
“Recovering a Cripistemology of Pain: Leaky Bodies, Connective Tissue, and Feeling  
Discourse,” Alyson Patsavas  
Pain Keyword, Martha Stoddard Holmes

August 9  
Closing

### **Additional Course Information**

**Classroom Community:** The subjects covered in this class are diverse and may cause a wide range of reactions from your or your peers. As young scholars it is our responsibility to respect people’s emotional and intellectual reactions to material, create and maintain a space for rigorous proactive discussion on the material, and learn from one another. We should strive to be curious and generous.

**Academic Integrity:** Not crediting your sources properly is a serious matter. If you plagiarize, you will (at the very least) fail the course. See the Georgetown Honor System website for guidelines about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it:

<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>. Note that in all matters I expect you to observe the Georgetown honor pledge: *To be honest in every academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together.*

Access: Everyone learns best differently and our bodily needs are not all the same. You do not need permission to leave the class to ensure your bodily needs are met. If you have any access needs please let me know as soon as possible. I am not able to give trigger/content warnings given the wide breadth of potentially triggering content the class covers. If there is something I should know that would ensure you are able to engage with any given class or topic please let me know within the first two weeks of class. If anything changes during the semester that impacts your ability to engage and learn please let me know if you are comfortable doing so. Some of the texts presented in this course are explicit in their treatment of sex, of bodies, of violence. Students not inclined to work with explicit material are strongly encouraged to find a course that suits them better.

Accommodations: If you have a documented disability and need accommodations please let me know as soon as possible so you can receive adequate accommodations. If you have an undocumented disability that you think may impact your ability to fully engage with the course but are unaware of how to get documentation or are wary or opposed to documentation please also let me know. More information can be found at the Academic Resource Center (<https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability>) or (<http://guarc.georgetown.edu/disability/accommodations>).

Due Dates: All assignments and readings are due on the date listed in the syllabus. Normally an assignment's grade will be lowered by a third of a grade (C+ to C, A- to B+) for every calendar day it is late. Late Discussion posts or Instaquer posts are not accepted except under extraordinary circumstances.

Title IX: Please know that while I am a faculty member who is committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault, please keep in mind that **I am a mandated reporter** which means that university policy requires me to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct.

These resources include:

Jen Schweer, MA, LPC

Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention

(202) 687-0323  
jls242@georgetown.edu

Jennifer Wiggins, MA  
Sexual Assault Specialist, Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)  
(202) 687-8932  
jmw322@georgetown.edu

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at <http://sexualassault.georgetown.edu>.

Writing Center: Writing can be difficult but approaching it as a process rather than a single event will make it easier and more rewarding. I encourage you to visit the Writing Center (217 Lauinger) and talk with one of the Center's trained tutors. While you will always be solely responsible for class writing you submit in this class and while the Center's tutors won't do your work for you, tutors can talk you through any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming a thesis and organizing your thoughts to revising, editing and proofreading. To set up an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu>.

Written work: All written work should be 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and follow Chicago Style Citations. It must bear your name, course number, and date and have a title (no cover page needed).