

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

(SOWK (2007) - SOCIAL DISABILITY STUDIES

COURSE OUTLINE

Semester 111– May to July, 2009

Lecturer: Maria D. Thomas (B. Ed., M.Ed. Special Education)

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RATIONALE

The United Nations states that persons with some type of disability make up at least 10% of the world's population. Yet in spite of being such a large number, this group continues to experience social exclusion in education, housing, employment and community activities. Generally they are poorer, less independent and less likely to reach their full potential than any other identifiable group.

During the twentieth century social science and interdisciplinary approaches for Disability Studies evolved. These differed from previous and existing educational models in health and social care. This perspective presented Disability Studies as a vehicle for empowering the collective voices of the diverse community of the person with disabilities through the creation of allies for informing others of the real world needs for disability policy. These studies reframe disability as a social phenomenon and social construct with a view of developing anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory social environments that are more inclusive of the person with disabilities.

The course is in keeping with the current social/cultural and political paradigms in education for Disability Studies.

COURSE DESCRIPTION SOWK (2007)

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to Disability Studies for students of the University of the West Indies who wish to examine disability using theoretical frames and to understand policy development in this area.

It identifies the ways in which differently able persons are marginalized and restricted and experience discrimination within an unadaptive society. Via descriptions of the current status of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean context, it examines the interaction of persons with disabilities within the existing political, social and cultural and legal systems. The historical struggles for rights and services by the Disabled are highlighted. Policy needs for the future development are outlined. In order to develop a greater understanding of the experiences and situation of persons with disabilities from their own perspective, this course is taught in partnership with persons with disabilities and is grounded in the epistemological belief that the creation of knowledge about disability should be **WITH/BY people with disabilities**.

In summary, this course in disability studies is an interesting and challenging journey, which begins with *awareness* and trudges along the paths of *acceptance*, *alignment* and unto its final destination, *advocacy*.

COURSE GOAL

Basically, this course is designed for students to gain new and deeper understanding of the prolonged oppression of the disability community and to empower them to consider creative ways to initiate social change.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

In order to fulfill the goal of the course, the student will:

- Explain and critically evaluate current definitions and methodologies drawn from other disciplines in the examination of pertinent issues and social problems impacting on persons with disabilities and their families.
- Identify how attitudes and beliefs about family systems, self –determination and other factors may impact the personal and social view of disability and develop critical sensitivities such as empathy and skepticism regarding attitudes, values, and behaviours of people.
- Examine the complex interplay of social, political, and economic forces on both the personal and family life of persons with disabilities and the impact of cultural values.
- Produce written, oral and visual presentations on the current situation of persons with disabilities

- Identify, critique and integrate policy for persons with disabilities within a Caribbean context.
- Assist in forming alliances with groups of persons with disabilities as they seek to control their lives through the development of an understanding of citizenship and empowerment.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Through a survey of recommended relevant literature, direct contact with persons with disabilities and institutions which serve that population, lectures, quizzing, individual research projects, **participation in course sessions and tutorials**, students will understand the importance and impact of attitudes and values as they pertain to disability.

We must be reminded, however, as we continue to explore this complex area, that learning begins with understandings and is not merely the memorization of information. This implies that much of what you learn should be used by you to improve your own understanding and use of research to improve your own learning. It is my recommendation that you be guided by the following underlying principles:

- Ultimately, only the students can learn through their own active participation in a course.
- Together, the lecturer/tutor and the students socially and cognitively construct the opportunities for learning during each course session.
- The verbal interchanges between lecturer/tutor and students and the students with each other are important tools to learning.
- All participants in a class should strive to relate new big concepts and ideas to each other as well as prior, familiar knowledge.

COURSE ASSESSMENT–MEASURING LEARNING OUTCOMES

No. of credits.....**Three (3)**

The course will be assessed on the basis of:

- A mid-term assignment weighted 20% of the final mark
 - An Individual assignment weighted 25% of the final mark
 - A final examination which will be weighted 50% of the final mark
 - Attendance and Participation 5%
- Total marks.....100%**

N.B. : More specific information on the research paper or project will be provided at the beginning of the course.

REQUIRED TEXT – NONE

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Charlton I. James (2000) Nothing About Us Without Us. University of California Press.
- Corker, Marian and French, Sally (2002) Disability Discourse. Open University Press.
- Santrock, John W. (2005) Life Span Development
- Shea, Thomas M. and Bauer, Anne Marie (2003). Learners with Disabilities, A Social Systems Perspective of Special Education. Wm. C. Brown Communications Inc.
- Swain, John; Cameron, Colin; and French, Sally. (2003) Controversial Issues In a Disabling Society. Mc Graw Hill
- Swain, John; Cameron, French, Sally; Barnes, Colin and Thomas, Carol. (2005) Disabling Barriers – Enabling Environments. Sage Publications.
- Woolfolk, Anita E. (2003) Educational Psychology. Allyn and Bacon.
- Open Doors – An Update – A Guide for Persons with Disabilities, their Families, and Interested Persons. (Prepared by the Disability Affairs Unit, Office of the Prime Minister, Social Services Delivery
- Disability Quarterly
- Disability & Society (International Journal)
- International Disability Rights Monitor (IDRM) Regional Report of the Americas
- National Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Ministry of Social Development
- DVDs based on the Think Tank held at the U. W. I. in May 2004.
- Working Paper “Tertiary Education: Fostering Inclusiveness For Persons With Disabilities – Dr. Innette Cambridge, Ms. Maria D. Thomas, Ms. Jacqueline Huggins

Students will be expected to do library and on-line research on different topics and relevant issues. Specific readings for each topic will be given in advance.

WEBSITES

Canadian Centre on Disability Studies-www.disabilitystudies.ca
Disability Studies, U. W. I. – <http://sta.uwi.edu/disabilitystudies>
Disability Studies Online Magazine;<http://www.disabilitystudies.com>
Disability Studies Quarterly;<http://www.dsqsds.org/>
Institute on Disabilities (Temple University)
= <http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/ds/facultyherald.htm>
Society for Disability Studies – www.uic.edu/home/disability.shtml
<http://www.disabilitystudies.net>

United Nations-www.un.org.

World Health Organisation - www.who.int/disabilities

TUTORIALS

Tutorials times will be decided on the first day of the class. The tutors are:

Ms. Jacqueline Huggins (M.Sc.Sociology)

Tel. No. 657-5622/792-7622, Email: Jacqueline.Huggins@sta.uwi.edu

Mrs. Teresina Sieunarine Tel. No. 669 0462, E-Mail: autismtt@excite.com

Lecturer in Charge – Dr. Innette Cambridge (**Room 211**)

Course Schedule/Topical Outline

SOWK 2007- Social Disability Studies

Year 2009

May 26th - General Overview of the course

- Objectives, Assignments, Evaluation
- What is Disability Studies?
- Historical Overview of development of disability studies
- Interdisciplinary approaches to Disability Studies

June 2nd -

- Who defines “Disability” and for what purpose?
- Distinguish between impairment, disability and handicap
- Professional Perspectives

- Current status of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean
- Understanding the diversity and demographic of the differently able

June 9th -

- Psychosocial aspects impacting on the lives of Persons with disabilities:
- Personal Issues – Sexuality
- Family Issues - Caregivers

June 16th -

- Political and Legal Issues on disabilities
- Regional/International Perspectives

June 23rd -

- Educational Issues for persons with disabilities
- Regional/International perspectives
- Economic Issues and disability
- Regional/International perspectives

June 30th -

- Policy Development for persons with disabilities:-
 - Disability Rights
 - Social Support
 - Technology Development
 - Media Portrayal

July 7th -

- What is empowerment in the context of disability?
- What is expected of society in the empowerment process?
- Challenges to the empowerment process
- Strategies and skills for the empowerment process

N.B.- An integral part of the course is the inclusion of presentations by persons with disabilities. A presentation takes about 40 minutes. This activity would spread through the first segment of the course. In the second segment group presentations would take place.

Maria D. Thomas

January 27, 2009.