

Disability, Technology, and Media

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“Deaficide,” by Robert F. Walker

“Disability underwrites the cultural studies of technology writ large,” argue disability theorists David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder. In this course, we will examine the significance of technology to the definition and experience of disability; the relationship between disability and the development of new media; the politics of representation; and current debates between the fields of disability studies and media studies. Specific topics will include: biomedical technology and the establishment of norms; the category of “assistive technology”; cyborgs and prostheses as fact and as metaphor; inclusive architecture and design; visual rhetorics of disability in film and photography; staring and other practices of looking; medical and counter-medical performance; media advocacy, tactical media, and direct action.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this course students will be able to:

- Define key concepts of disability studies and the social construction of disability
- Outline interrelationship of media and technology and disability
- Analyze key role of design in mediation of disability
- Synthesize concepts of rehabilitation, assistive technology, and biopolitics
- Analyze role of media activism in disability advocacy

Course Requirements:

Participation

15%

Short Essay: Disability and Technology <i>(5-6 pages, based on course readings)</i>	due October 18	25%
Margaret Mead Film Festival Attendance + Film Review <i>(Film analysis based on course concepts)</i>	due November 22	25%
Research Paper: Disability & New Media <i>(8-10 pages)</i>	due December 20	35%

*I will occasionally grant extensions if I am given advance notice and adequate reason. Otherwise, late work will be marked down.

Evaluation Rubric

A= Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B=Good

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C=Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D= Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F=Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79

C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D+ = 65-69
D = 60-64
F = 0-59

A Note on Participation:

Your participation grade is based on attendance, discussion, readiness (bringing readings/notes to class), and attentiveness. While laptops are allowed in seminar, they should not pose a distraction to me, you, or the other students.

Accessibility, Accommodations, Abilities:

I want this course to be accessible to all interested students. I am available to discuss course accessibility—from individual learning styles to “documented” accommodations—in person, on the phone, or via email. If you need specific accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. (And to make arrangements for these accommodations through NYU, contact the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.)

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you

- cheat on an exam,
- submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
- receive help on a takehome examination that calls for independent work, or
- plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:

- copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
- download documents from the Internet;
- purchase documents;
- report from other's oral work;
- paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
- copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people's ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources.

Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
- Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
- Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
- Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions

When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline.

Books to Purchase at the NYU Bookstore:

Beth Haller, *Representing Disability in an Ableist World: Essays on Mass Media*
Graham Pullin, *Design Meets Disability*
Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Staring: How We Look*
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*
David B., *Epileptic*

Course Schedule

September 13 Introduction: Terms and Intersections

Class Screening: *Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back*

Simi Linton, "Reassigning Meaning," in: *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (NYU Press, 1998).

Douglas Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," in: *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 33-57.

Eli Clare, "The Mountain" and "Freaks and Queers" in *Exile & Pride: Disability, Queerness, & Liberation*

Deborah Stone, "Disability as a Clinical Concept," *The Disabled State* (Temple UP, 1984).

September 20 Technology, Media and Injury

Sarah Jain, "Keyboard design: The Litigation Wave of the 1990s," *Injury: The Politics of Product Design and Safety Law in the United States* (Princeton UP, 2006).

John Durham Peters, "Broadcasting and Schizophrenia," *Media, Culture & Society* 32 (2010): 123-140.

Wolfgang Schivelbusch, "The Pathology of the Railroad Journey," *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (University of California Press, 1996).

Julie Livingston, *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Indiana UP, 2005), Excerpt.

September 27 Rehabilitation and the Technologies of Production

Class Screening: *Original Films of Frank B. Gilbreth*

Henri-Jacques Stiker, "The Birth of Rehabilitation," *A History of Disability* (University of Michigan Press, 2000).

Beth Linker, *War's Waste: Rehabilitation in World War I America* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), excerpt.

Henry Ford, "The Terror of the Machine," *My Life and Work* (Garden City Publishing, 1922), 103-115.

Frank B. Gilbreth and Lillian Gilbreth, "How to Put the Crippled Soldier on the Payroll," *Motion Study for the Handicapped* (George Routledge & Sons, 1920).

October 4 "Assistive" Technology

Class Screening: *Sound and Fury*

Stuart Blume, "The Making of the Cochlear Implant," in *The Artificial Ear: Cochlear Implants and the Culture of Deafness* (Rutgers UP, 2010).

Audre Lorde, "Breast Cancer: Power vs. Prosthesis," *The Cancer Journals* (Aunt Lute Books, 1980).

Simi Linton, "Rufus" in *My Body Politic*

Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), 149-181.

Donna Haraway, "Able Bodies and Companion Species," in *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), ch. 6.

October 11 University Holiday—No Classes

Karen-Sue Taussig, Rayna Rapp, Deborah Heath, "Flexible Eugenics: Technologies of the Self in the Age of Genetics," in: *Anthropologies of Modernity*.

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Selection.

October 18 Biopolitics: Disability and Technologies of Reproduction

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*

October 25 Disability and Design

Graham Pullin, *Design Meets Disability*

November 1 Rhetorics of Disability in Photography and Advertising

Guest Lecture: Eli Clare

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Seeing the Disabled: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography," in: *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul Longmore and Lauri Umansky (NYU Press, 2001).

Eli Clare, "Reading Across the Grain," in *Exile and Pride*

Beth Haller, *Representing Disability in an Ableist World*, Selection.

November 8 Disability and Narrative in Literature and Film

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor," in: *The Disability Studies Reader*

Short Story, TBD.

Davis Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, "Body Genres: An Anatomy of Disability in Film," in: *The Problem Body: Projecting Disability on Film* (Ohio State UP, 2010).

Beth Haller, *Representing Disability in an Ableist World*. Selection.

November 15 Disability, Comics, Comedy

Class Screening: *Annie Dearest: The Real Helen Keller Story*

David B., *Epileptic*

Beth Haller, *Representing Disability in an Ableist World*, selection.

November 22 Looking and Looking Back

Guest Lecture Via Skype: Beth Haller, Towson University

Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory*, Ch. 5.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Staring: How We Look* (Oxford UP, 2009), selected chapters.

November 29 Disability and Performance

Class Screening: *Outside In* (Dance Video, Choreographed by Victoria Marks)

Carrie Sandahl and Philip Auslander, eds. *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance*, selections.

Petra Kuppers, *The Scar of Visibility: Medical Performances and Contemporary Art*, selections.

December 6 Disability and/in New Media

Class Screening/Listening: Darrin Martin, *Monody in Harmony*, selected video shorts.
Alvin Lucier, "I am Sitting in a Room"

Beth Haller, *Representing Disability in an Ableist World*, Ch. 1.

Devva Kasnitz, "Review: *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human*," in: *Ethos: Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology* 38 (2010): 1-3.

Jack A. Nelson, "Virtual Reality: The Promise of a Brave New World for those with Disabilities," in: *The Disabled, the Media, and the Information Age* (Greenwood Press, 1994).

Gerard Goggin, "Cellular Disability," in: *Cell Phone Culture: Mobile Technology in Everyday Life* (Routledge, 2006).

December 13 Media Advocacy and Activism

Class Screenings: *The Kids Are All Right*
(Jerry's Orphans) <http://www.thekidsareallright.org/>
Behind The Shadow of Merrick (Hevey)
<http://www.le.ac.uk/ms/merrick1492.aspx>

Richard Sandell and Jocelyn Dodd, "Activist Practice," *Re-presenting Disability: Activism and Agency in the Museum*, ed. Richard Sandell, Jocelyn Dodd, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (Routledge, 2010).

David Hevey, "Behind the Shadow of Merrick," *Re-presenting Disability: Activism and Agency in the Museum*, ed. Richard Sandell, Jocelyn Dodd, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (Routledge, 2010).

Beth Haller, *Representing Disability in an Ableist World*, Selections.