“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  
\textit{(5-6 pages, based on course readings)}  
due October 18  
25%

Margaret Mead Film Festival  
Attendance + Film Review  
\textit{(Film analysis based on course concepts)}  
due November 22  
25%

Research Paper: Disability & New Media  
due December 20  
(8-10 pages)  
35%

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

\textbf{Evaluation Rubric}

\textbf{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.

\textbf{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.

\textbf{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.

\textbf{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.

\textbf{F= Failed}  
This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

\begin{align*}  
A & = 94-100 
A- & = 90-93 
B+ & = 87-89 
B & = 84-86 
B- & = 80-83 
C+ & = 77-79 
C & = 74-76 
C- & = 70-73
\end{align*}
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](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*


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


**September 20**

Technology, Media and Injury


**September 27**

Rehabilitation and the Technologies of Production
Class Screening:  

Original Films of Frank B. Gilbreth


October 4  

“Assistive” Technology

Class Screening:  

Sound and Fury


Simi Linton, “Rufus” in *My Body Politic*


October 11  

University Holiday—No Classes


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

**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.  

**November 15**  
Disability, Comics, Comedy  
Class Screening: *Annie Dearest: The Real Helen Keller Story*  
David B., *Epileptic*  

**November 22**  
Looking and Looking Back  
Guest Lecture Via Skype: Beth Haller, Towson University
Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory*, Ch. 5.


**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.


**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”


**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.asx
