

RACKHAM 580 Disability Studies
WS 590/ARCH 609/EDUC 580/ENGLISH 528/KINESLGY 505/PMR 580/ /SOC
580/SW 572

Tuesday 1-3pm

Petra Kuppers, petra@umich.edu

English Department, University of Michigan, 435 S. State Street, 3187 Angell Hall

Ann Arbor MI 48109-1003

Office hours: Wednesdays 2.30-5

and by appointment (always email me before you come to office hours: I am gladly available to you, but I'd like to know if someone is coming)

This class will introduce students to disability arts and culture. Our focus this semester will be on the speculative: forms of thinking forward in difference, in sci-fi and horror texts, designs, films and technologies, and in theoretical texts of imaginative futures. What will humans/animals/others be, how can and will social relations change, how do we reimagine power and life, education and the social contract, precarity and utopia? Our reading will include chapters from Donna Haraway's interdisciplinary science studies *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Alison Kafer's *Feminist Queer Crip*, Mel Chen's *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, Eli Clare's *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure* and Sunaura Taylor's animal rights perspectives in *Beasts of Burden*, and perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa's work.

We will also engage creative writing (excerpts) including Octavia Butler's novels, poems by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Samuel Delaney's *Empire Star*, Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*, and Emily Foster's maritime novella *The Drowning Eyes*, as well as short stories from the *Accessing the Future: A Disability-Themed Anthology of Speculative Fiction* collection. We will read some of these texts together, and some will be prepared for the group by collectives.

This version of the course will partly work through the arts, not just about them – some practical exercises will be part of the class work.

This class meets for two hours in class, with additional time in self-study and online engagement with exercises from *Studying Disability Arts and Culture*. This arrangement of the material hopes to make the class more widely accessible, and allows for a wider diversity of expression and disciplinary foci.

Requirements:

1 credit: attendance and Canvas responses to each class's readings/exercises, wellness exercise

3 credits: attendance, Canvas responses, wellness exercise, mid-term, final class project or paper.

The **mid-term** is for all people who take this class as a 3 credit option. Due: before class, as an email with one attachment (i.e. everything, all 6-7 pages, in one file). Name the attachment 580 2017 YourName Midterm.

1. Read two articles in any two of these four journals:

Disability Studies Quarterly (<http://www.dsqsds.org/>)

Canadian Journal for Disability Studies

(<http://cjds.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cjds/issue/view/20/showToc>)

Disability and the Global South

<https://dgsjournal.org/>

Journal for Literary and Cultural Studies (available through Mirlyn on Project Muse, just put the journal title into the search box. If you have trouble finding the journal, contact a librarian through the Mirlyn portal, and they'll gladly help you!)

Sum up and comment on each of these articles in less than one page each.

So in total, you should have four pages here (as well as a good overview over what is published in our field).

2. Design a disability culture exercise, for a group of seven people of your choosing – university students like yourself, in whatever class you'd like; or else in a community setting of some kind. Describe the exercise step-by-step, and list five issues you wish to achieve through it, things you want the group to take away from it, as well as three issues you see with the exercise – complexities, difficulties, stuff to think about. (2-3 pages overall)

The **final project** is to be appropriate to your discipline/career path: it could be a conference paper, a poetic sequence, a design mock-up, a grant proposal, an annotated syllabus, etc. In most case (i.e. apart from a research paper), accompany your project with a 2-3 page mini-essay about the project's relation to the course, referencing at least 4 specific course readings.

The **proposal for the Final Project** should be about 2 pages long, describing what you want to do, with an indicative bibliography of at least 2 course texts, and at least 2 texts found outside our class.

About **Canvas responses**: These are due before noon on class day, and they allow me to gauge your comprehension and engagement, find out what issues you had with the readings and the exercises, etc.. Please post two to three paragraphs, no need to polish these.

September 5th: **Introduction**. Arranging our classroom. SDAC, chapter 1 + Linton (both readings are on Canvas: please read them before class)

September 12th: **Disability Culture(s)**

Watch these two documentaries:

Disability Culture: Research in Motion. Participatory Video, Ann Arbor/Michigan (2012)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AI77zqrAvoo>

Disability: It's Not the End of the World. Participatory Video, Burkina Faso (2016)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNygwowI4xY&t=1013s>

Reading: SDAC, chapter 2 (Disability and Language)

September 19th: **Every Brilliant Thing**

Comment on three stories each in *Accessing the Future*.

SDAC, chapter 3: Disability Discourses.

Make a date with two of your classmates, and go see *Every Brilliant Thing* in the Power Center Theatre. We have \$15 tickets for this performance, and you have six dates to choose from.

After the show, discuss how your readings relate to the show, and the connections you see.

September 26th: **Every Brilliant Thing/Accessing the Future**

SDAC, chapter 4: Embodiment/Enmindment

October 3rd: **Octavia's Brood**

Read: three stories each in *Octavia's Brood*

SDAC, chapter 5. Disability Culture.

Additional Reading: Erevelles, Nirmala and Minear, Andrea (2010) "Unspeakable Offenses: Untangling Race and Disability in Discourses of Intersectionality," *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies*, 4(2): 127–45.

October 10th: **Speculating Disability**

Reading: excerpt from Donna Haraway: *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*

excerpt from Kafer, Alison (2013) *Feminist Queer Crip*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

On Canvas: Mid-Term: Literature Engagement

October 17th: Class Break

October 24th: **Guest Visit by Zhiying Ma**, Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan--Ann Arbor, Postdoctoral Fellow, Michigan Society of Fellows

Reading: excerpt from Karen Nakamura: *Disability of the Soul* (with video)

SDAC, chapter 6 (Institution)

October 31st: **Guest Visit: Sami Schalk: Bodyminds Reimagined**

Readings: two chapters from Sami's forthcoming book, *Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women's Speculative Fiction*

SDAC, chapter 9 (Superheroes).

November 7th: **Guest Visit: Denise Leto**

Readings: poetry selection.

November 14th: **Embodied Responses**

Additional Reading: Morales, Aurora Levins, Driskill, Qwo-Li and Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi (2012) "Sweet Dark Places: Letters to Gloria Anzaldua on Disability, Creativity, and the Coatlicue State." In Saldoval-Hull, S., Alarcon, N. and Urquijo-Ruiz, R. (eds) *El Mundo Zurdo 2: Selected Works from the Society of the Study of Gloria Anzaldua*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books: 77–97.

Final Project Proposals due

November 21st: **Audiences, Activism, Engagement**

Excerpts from Sunaura Taylor: *Beasts of Burden* and Eli Clare: *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*

November 28th: **Group Presentations: Speculating Disability**

Also: Toxicities.

Excerpt from Mel Chen *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*

In formats of your choice, you will present material that engages disability speculatively, in a variety of forms. For potential texts, see course description: Octavia Butler's novels, poems by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Samuel Delaney's *Empire Star*, Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl*, and Emily Foster's maritime novella *The Drowning Eyes*, as well as other examples sourced by you. Feel free to be imaginative in your choice of presentation style.

December 5th: **Group Presentations: Speculating Disability** continued

(Wellness Exercise due)

Also (optional): cinema visit to go see *The Shape of Water*, dir. Guillermo del Toro, to be released December 8th.

December 12th: Experience Day: student groups create experiences

Final Projects due

Course Books:

Petra Kuppers: *Studying Disability Arts and Culture*, Palgrave, 2014

Octavia's Brood, eds. Walidah Imarisha and adrienne maree brown, AK Press, 2015

Accessing the Future

Additional readings are provided via Canvas.

Attendance:

You are required to attend seminars: most of what we do is experiential, and hard (but not impossible) to recreate by yourself. You can miss up to two times: no need to email, hand in excuses or prepare doctor's notes.

Make sure to have a buddy in class who can fill you in on what you missed.

I realize that you have complex lives with lots going on. Note, though, that no excuses will count beyond these two absences. So be careful with your absences: you might need one of them for illness later in the semester. Having said all this draconian stuff, I want as many people as possible to participate, and to find ways to be with us. So if disability (documented or un-documented) and other long-term issues can make life and in-class presence hard for you, let's talk, and we'll find a way. That's one of the good things about writing and its relations to space and time.

ADA Statement – UMINDS courses

It is our intention to support the full participation of all students in the learning process of this class. We have incorporated a variety of instruction techniques and evaluation methods in the course process. In spite of these efforts, situations may occur in which the learning style of individual students is not met by the instructional climate. It is our expectation that students who require specific or additional support to acquire the course content or demonstrate their achievement of the objectives will inform us of their needs immediately. A useful contact is the Office of Students with Disabilities, G664 Haven Hall, at 763-3000.