

Possible Readings, Rethinking Disability

How do we understand dis/ability today? In recent decades, interdisciplinary and intersectional work has shifted conversations about dis/ability from terms like 'deficit' and 'disadvantage' to concepts like 'access' and 'care.' In this course, we will explore topics, issues, and changes facing contemporary society across different dis/ability domains: education, healthcare, artistic representation, and more. Students will draw on methods of inquiry from multiple disciplines to develop a collaborative project that addresses a significant issue or question about dis/ability today.

[Guidelines for Emergent Classes](#)

Potential Building Blocks of Rethinking Disability: A Long But Not Exhaustive List

Theory

Readings from [Keywords for Disability Studies](#).

We'll add to these readings about disability, but this volume alone contains a wide range of starting topics.

Premodern Literature (Medieval & Renaissance)

Ophelia Eryn Hostetter's translation of "[Dream of the Rood](#)," "[The Wanderer](#)," and "[The Wife's Lament](#)" from [The Book of Exeter](#)

These are poems from the 10th century, composed in Old English, likely in Scandinavia, and written down by a monk in an illuminated manuscript in England. They're about loss, exile, divorce, and grief.

Maria Dahvana Headley's [Beowulf: A New Translation](#), alongside [The Ninth Hour](#)

An Old English story from about the 10th century, about viking heroes that look like monsters and monsters that look like people.

Marie de France's "[Bisclavret](#)"

14th century Arthurian comic legend about a knight who shapechanges into a werewolf every week, until his wife steals his clothes and leaves him stuck as a wolf.

Chaucer's [*The Canterbury Tales*](#), alongside [*A Knight's Tale*](#)

Hoccleve's "[*Complaint*](#)"

14th century poem about a middle class worker whose friends ostracize him because he took time away from work for his mental health.

[*The Book of Margery Kempe \(excerpts\)*](#)

15th century memoir of a woman who experienced chronic illness and mystical religious visions. Both her pain and her visions were widely disbelieved by the men in charge of the medieval church.

Boccaccio's [*The Decameron*](#), alongside NYT Magazine's [*The Decameron Project*](#) and Netflix's [*The Decameron*](#)

Boccaccio's *Decameron* is a series of short stories narrated by Italian nobles who are hiding from the Black Death in a countryside villa. Netflix just released a show this summer about the same. And the NYT commissioned a series of short stories during the early pandemic under the same title.

Sidney's [*Astrophil and Stella*](#)

A 16th century sonnet sequence (short poems) about a guy who loves a girl he'll never possibly be in a relationship with. Contains vivid imagery of love, despair, obsession, and how these affect the body and the mind.

Shakespeare's [*Macbeth*](#).

An early 17th century play about a medieval Scottish noble (Macbeth) who conspires with his wife (Lady Macbeth) to kill the current king and claim the throne. Macbeth is highly anxious about all the murder he commits, Lady Macbeth has a mental break when Macbeth shuts her out, and everyone talks the whole play about Scotland as a wounded body. Also, there are witches.

Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy*

Another early 17th century play about a noble, Vindici, whose fiancée Gloriana was murdered nine years ago by the lustful Duke. Vindici hatches elaborate plots of revenge that involve, among other things, multiple corpses disguised as living people. Murder, incest, obsession, and speaking to the dead abound. Also, there's a 2003 version with Christopher Eccleston:

 [Revengers Tragedy Trailer](#)

Shakespeare's [*Sonnets*](#), selections.

An early 17th century sonnet sequence. Ostensibly this is another set of poems about a guy loving an unattainable girl, except that over two thirds of the poems are written about a young

male 'friend' (the last 25 are written about 'the dark lady'), and the speaker is as concerned with aging, death, and procreation as he is with his beautiful beloveds.

Shakespeare's [*The Tempest*](#), (free performance at PSU on Tuesday, Sep 25)

A 17th century play in which Prospero, the banished Duke of Milan and a Wizard, conjures a magical storm to shipwreck his political enemies on an island. Prospero's servant, Caliban, is a native of the island and is Prospero's slave. Caliban is variously described as monstrous, disabled, and a person of color.

John Donne's [*Holy Sonnets*](#), selections.

This is another 17th century "guy loves an unattainable girl" set of poems...except that the speaker is a sinner and the girl is the Christian god. Bodies and minds get very weird here. And there's still about as much erotic imagery as in other sonnet sequences!

[*Milton's Paradise Lost*](#), selected books.

An epic poem about Christian myth (i.e. origin story) of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden. Set against the backdrop of a civil war in Heaven. Satan is often the point-of-view character. Shows like *Supernatural* and *The Sandman* wouldn't exist without this epic. Also, Lil Nas X's "[*Montero*](#)." And Milton wrote most of the story after he had gone blind. Lots of reflection throughout on embodiment, ableism, and the connection between mind and body.

Milton's "[*The Passion*](#)".

An 'unfinished' 17th century poem about a Christian meditating on the pain and suffering of Jesus Christ at the Crucifixion (known in the period as "The Passion").

[*Lady Mary Wroth*](#), poems.

The first English sonnet sequence written by a woman (17th century), which shows differences in how embodiment is described based upon lived experience.

[*Andrew Marvell*](#)'s "To His Coy Mistress," alongside Ursula K. Le Guin's "Vaster Than Empires and More Slow." [wiki](#)

A mid-17th century "carpe diem" love poem alongside a mid-20th century science fiction story about an autistic space explorer and a very odd planet.

Margaret Cavendish's [*The Blazing World*](#)

A late 17th century science fiction novel about a woman who is kidnapped and abducted to the North Pole, only for her captors to all freeze to death and to then pass through a portal to another world, where she is put in charge of a system of animal scientists (scientists who are animals). Cavendish was herself a scientist.

Margaret Cavendish's poems, such as "[It is Hard to Believe There Are Other Worlds in this World](#)" and "[Similizing the Brain to a Garden](#)."

Late 17th century metaphors about the human mind from a woman scientist.

Potential Campus & Community Partners

[Able NH Disability Justice Advocates](#)

"Advocates Building Lasting Equality in NH advocates for the civil and human rights of children and adults with disabilities. We promote full participation by: improving systems, connecting families, inspiring communities, and influencing public policy."

[Campus Accessibility Services](#)

Sydney Bellimer has done recent work on staff & faculty training to support students with executive function needs

[Cedarcrest School](#)

"Cedarcrest School is a New Hampshire Approved Private Special Education Program, providing comprehensive, year-round special education services to 23 residential and day students with significant cognitive impairments and complex medical and therapeutic needs. Believing that all students learn and grow, Cedarcrest School educators devote themselves to delivering a high-quality educational program."

[Communities for Alcohol and Drug-Free Youth](#)

"Since 1999, our non-profit organization, has served 18 rural towns in Central New Hampshire in various capacities. Our focus is comprehensive, outcome-based substance misuse prevention via extensive collaborations, implementation of environmental prevention strategies, and development of award-winning, youth empowerment programming. From 2003 through 2013 CADY was a 10-year Drug Free Communities grantee and we currently serve as the Central NH Substance Misuse Prevention Provider and Substance Use Disorders Continuum of Care Facilitator for the Central NH Public Health Network and the NH Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services"

[Dee Dee Nold](#), PSU professor and licensed Play Therapist with a local practice

[Equality Health Center](#)

Equality Health Center is a non-profit health care facility that provides individualized and compassionate health care to people throughout New England. We empower our clients and communities through advocacy, education, outreach, and the provision of quality, non-judgmental care. We are New Hampshire's longest standing abortion provider.

[Growing Roots](#)

Growing Roots Integrative Health & Wellness was established in 2009 in Plymouth, New Hampshire.

We strive to provide exceptional service to our surrounding community through our expertly trained multidisciplinary staff. We deliver compassionate and comprehensive evidence-based **mental health and wellness services** to adults, adolescents, and families throughout central New Hampshire. This includes counseling, depression and anxiety treatment, couples therapy, adolescent therapy, ketamine assisted psychotherapy, pain management, and more.

[Hannaford, community outreach, and inclusive workplaces](#)

“Hannaford is recognized as an industry leader for its commitment to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. For 12 consecutive years, Hannaford has received a score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s (HRC) Corporate Equality Index (CEI), the nation’s foremost benchmarking survey and report measuring corporate policies and practices related to LGBTQ+ workplace equality.”

[The Lovering Health Center](#)

The Joan G Lovering Health Center is located just outside of Portsmouth New Hampshire in Greenland NH and welcomes people of all genders, ages, and sexual orientations in a supportive environment. It is our passion to honor, respect, and advocate for the right of everyone to maintain freedom and choices regarding their own sexual and reproductive health. Our comfortable and modern health center is easily-accessible to Nashua, Manchester, UNH, Southern Maine and Essex County Massachusetts, off of Route 95 in Greenland NH. Our entrance is privately situated at the rear of the building where parking is plentiful. We look forward to hearing from you!

[New England Disabled Sports](#) (contact Kurtis Pieret)

New England Disabled Sports is a nationally recognized program providing year-round adaptive sports instruction to adults and children living with a physical or cognitive disability. NEDS is a program that focuses on the student’s ability, not his or her disability.

[Planned Parenthood NH Action Fund](#) (contact Fiona Geary, via Prof. Kristin Stelmok)

PPNHAF is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization formed as the advocacy and political arm of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England. The Action Fund engages in educational activity, including legislative advocacy, and grassroots organizing.

[Plymouth Regional High School Sports Medicine](#)

“I am committed to providing the best care for all students within SAU 48 who suffer from concussion and/or any orthopedic injury. Ranging from concussion management to injury rehabilitation, I am dedicated to helping not only the student, but the family as well. Community based healthcare is an important element in today's world and I would like our community of SAU 48 to be a front runner and leader in this endeavor.”

Queer Student Union at PSU

Newly reorganized LGBTQ+ student group (2023-2024) that prioritizes accessibility

[Reproductive Freedom Fund of NH](#)

“The Reproductive Freedom Fund of New Hampshire removes financial barriers for anyone receiving abortion care in or from New Hampshire through direct service funding and movement building, guided by patient need.”

Reproductive Rights student group, Prof. Kristin Stelmok, faculty advisor

[Synergy Dance Studio, Ashland](#)

Kaitlyn Cass, Samantha Brode; dance studio without competition and leveling, incredibly inclusive with accessible practices

[Voices Against Violence](#)

“We provide information and support to victims and survivors, their family and friends, community members, and professionals around domestic violence, children who witness domestic violence, sexual violence and harassment, stalking, and bullying. We are Southern Grafton County’s resource for the most updated and current information, state and federal guidelines, and best practice around these issues.”