

Disability & Literature

ENGL 299 S02-01| Spring 2023

This course guides us in learning about disability through the critical and creative works of disabled writers. We will examine how physical, mental, and emotional disability have been portrayed across U.S. literature and popular culture—historically, often without the input of disabled people themselves. At the same time, we will draw upon the critical writing of disabled writers to help us consider the benefits and damages of such representations of disabled people in the public imaginary, while simultaneously reflecting on our own roles as learners and creators in our own communities. Our course discussions and materials will situate these conversations within the development of disability rights in the U.S., including the 20th-century Disability Rights Movement, anti-psychiatry/Mad Pride, the autism rights movement, and Disability Justice. Students will practice attending to embodiment in literature and rhetoric with an intersectional awareness of access, emotion, and movement. In addition to conventional academic writing, students in this class will work toward a culminating project that engages disability within the Holy Cross and Worcester communities.

Course Learning Goals

Throughout the end of this course, I hope that you will

- Strengthen critical analysis & writing skills
- Develop awareness of the disabled experience in the U.S.
- Identify common narrative structures and literary devices
- Practice information & visual literacy skills, and
- Engage in interdisciplinary research, drawing from literary studies, medical humanities, & disability studies
- Apply your knowledge by designing & working on a community-based learning project

COVID & Public Health in Our Class

While we do not have college-wide masking requirements & we have relaxed most restrictions with regard to social distancing, we are asking all individuals in the College community to apply the wisdom that they've gained over the past two-&a-half years of the pandemic to mitigate the spread of the virus and, with hope, to conclude the situation that put us into emergency mode in March 2020. For this seminar, I request that **if you are sick, please do not come to class. If you may have been exposed to COVID or another illness, please wear a properly-fitting mask to class.** Your health is more important than being in our classroom.

CLASS & INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Instructor

Hayley C. Stefan, Ph.D.
(she/her/hers)

hstefan@holycross.edu

Please refer to me as Dr. Stefan or Professor Stefan.

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. If you don't hear back from me after 48 hours, please feel free to send me a nudge / follow-up email.

Office Hours

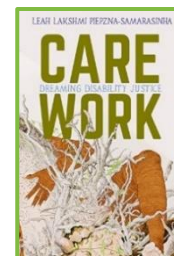
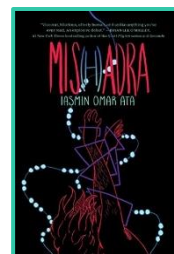
MW 1-2:00pm Fenwick 214

Thurs., 10-11am via Zoom

Office hours are designated weekly times for you to come chat about class, your work, or any questions you might have. If my standing hours don't work for you, please email me if you'd like to meet & we can find a time that works for you.

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Iasmin Omar Ata, *Mis(h)adra*
2. Cece Bell, *El Deafo*
3. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*
4. Nnedi Okorafor, *Noor*



You can use any publisher or edition of these texts. I also will provide additional materials via Canvas. You're welcome to engage with our texts in whatever format works best for you (e.g., audiobook, paperback, eBook, etc.), so long as you actively question as you read and are prepared to discuss how its format influences the way you read it.

If you are unable to afford course materials, please [reach out to Financial Aid](#) or request books via [the Holy Cross Lending Library](#), where they may be able to help. Books can be purchased through the [Holy Cross Bookstore](#) or other retailers. Pro tip: You can search for books on [bookfinder.com](#) to see the varied prices and places you can buy copies. You can also borrow books through your local library via [the Libby](#) and [Hoopla](#) apps.

TECHNOLOGY

You are welcome to use your laptops, phones, & other digital devices in our classroom. Please bring access to whatever texts we're discussing each day with you to class – either a printed hard copy of the text or a laptop or digital device. If you need hard copies but cannot access them, please let me know in advance so I can provide some for you.

Email



Major announcements from me will be sent via your Holy Cross email. I recommend checking your email in the morning before class, just in case there are any changes or cancellations.

Hypothesis



We will use the LMS & browser extension Hypothesis to analyze & annotate texts together.

Google Slides



I will maintain a running slide deck for our class using Google Slides. You can access our [course slides here](#) & on our Canvas homepage.

Canvas



Homework will be listed & submitted on Canvas. To prepare for class or to review a class, check the Weekly Modules available on our Canvas class shell. Each week will have an overview of the activities for each class & will list any homework.

POLICIES & RESOURCES

Accessibility & Accommodations

I know that we each learn through diverse methods, and my goal is to make our course as accessible as possible. This means we will work with methods and documents that prioritize how we process information, following the guidelines of the Universal Design for Learning. I know that our daily life directly affects how we engage in our education. This past year has shown us how true this is.

Please email or meet with me, as you feel comfortable, to discuss possible adjustments or alternative arrangements, as needed for homework, exams, or class. Please note that consistent with applicable federal and state law, this course may be video/audio recorded as an accommodation only with permission from the Office of Accessibility Services. Students are not permitted to record the contents of this class under any other circumstances without prior instructor & class approval.

Students may also request formal academic accommodations, housing and dining accommodations, modifications to college policies, procedures, and rules; environmental adjustments, and auxiliary aids and services through Holy Cross. Additional policies and procedures regarding accommodations can be found on the [Office of Accessibility Services webpages](#).

Meeting Your Basic Needs

We will be learning a lot this semester, but your wellbeing remains the most important. If you are having difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, please talk with me (if you are comfortable doing so), so that I can put you in touch with resources to help you. We are still in the middle of a pandemic, so let's extend care to one another when we can.

Mutual Respect

This class is founded on the basis of mutual respect & shared humanity. I expect you to actively demonstrate respect for one another, including using the names and pronouns that members of this class ask us to use & acknowledging each other's ideas as you build upon them.

Over the semester, we will read texts that introduce complex, multiply diverse, and occasionally controversial subjects. I want this class to be a space in which we all feel safe sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions—even when these conversations are uncomfortable. We will practice thinking about what it means to sit with this discomfort as we engage ideas that stretch our experience or knowledge.

Your thoughts and ideas as developing scholars are important and valuable. One of the goals of college is to challenge us to apply pressure about what we know (and all that we don't know). I will never ask you to change your mind, but I will expect it will remain open in this course.

Dehumanizing others stops us all from learning. Students who make implicitly violent or harmful remarks will be asked to leave immediately & will forego engagement credit for that day's work.

Submitting work

If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we have class, please submit it on Canvas by class time. If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we do not have class, please submit it on Canvas by the "end of the day," which Canvas considers 11:59 PM.

If you need to hand in something after its planned due date, that is okay. **I do not give penalties or deduct "points" for late work.** Each assignment is designed for you to practice or learn new ideas, not to measure how busy you are or how to "manage time." If you're planning to submit your work one day or so beyond the due date, please consider your extension already granted. **If you need an extended due date beyond two days after the due date, please email me.** I'll have us meet to set up a plan of action and coordinate a new date for you to submit the assignment. I want to make sure that we both have a copy of these plans of action so that you have a clear sense of what you need to accomplish and so I know best how I can help you and when to expect the work.

Academic Integrity

Developing your ideas is the basis of our class. Make sure that your work authentically represents your ideas and credits others for theirs. Submitting others' ideas as your own without crediting them is plagiarism, even if it is unintentional. All work in our class should be formatted and cited according to MLA's 9th edition guidelines. Please review Holy Cross's Academic Integrity Policy [here](#). You can also view the Holy Cross English Department's statement on "Academic Honesty" [here](#).

Attendance & Absences

Our class will largely run synchronously via Zoom and in person when it's safe. Your presence in class is crucial to learning and engaging with your classmates' ideas. Your classmates and I will depend on you to be in class. If you are unable to attend a session for any reason, please send me an email to let me know and reach out to your classmates to get a sense of what you missed. See Holy Cross's policies [here](#).

Resources for Students

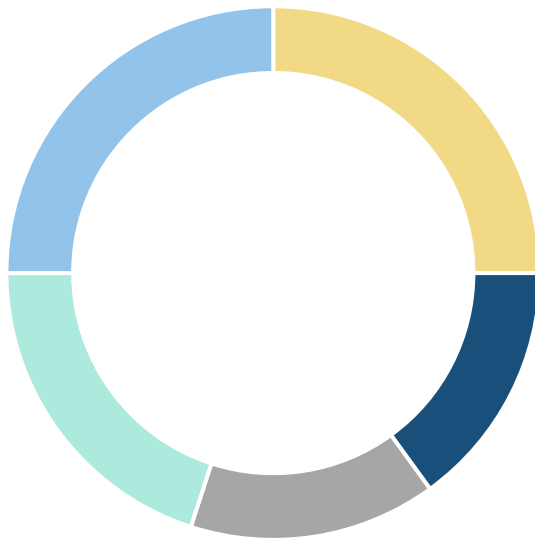
Holy Cross offers a variety of resources to help you learn and Students can access academic support, guides, and various learning workshops through Academic Services & Learning Resources [here](#). Any student can meet with writing consultants at the [Writer's Workshop](#) for support at any stage of the writing process—whether brainstorming, building ideas, revising, or otherwise.

There are also multiple spaces here at Holy Cross where you can find support for all of life that intersects with our learning. These include the many clubs and organizations at Holy Cross, specific support for first-generation students [here](#), the LGBTQIA+ communities [here](#), and international students [here](#), among others. At any point, you can find support from [the Counseling Center](#), which also offers guidance on how to practice self-care and learn new ways to manage life. The [Office of Student Wellness Education](#) and [Chaplains' Office](#) can also offer resources for your health.

If there's anything I can ever do to help, I'm happy to listen. Please note that I am a mandated reporter, and I am required to contact others per state & federal law if you report any risk of harm. You can learn more about these reporting-care mechanisms via the [Office of Title IX & Equal Opportunity](#) & the [Student CARE Team](#).

COURSE COMPONENTS & GRADING

- Course Engagement – 25%
- Annotations – 15%
- Discussion Leading – 15%
- Trope Analysis Essay – 20%
- Community-Based Learning Project – 25%



Grading Breakdown

A	96
A-	92
B+	89
B	86
B-	82
C+	79
C	76
C-	72
D+	69
D	66
F	≤60

Community-Based Learning

This course entails a CBL Project, which is intended to both deepen your learning in this course and provide service to one of our Worcester or campus partners. These partnerships will enable you to actively engage with the material & ideas from our course by working toward accessibility, radical care, and inclusion in projects developed by both you & your community partners.

The mission of the Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning (CBL) is to engage faculty, staff, students, and community partners in a process of integrating theory and practice. In the Jesuit tradition and through service and research, we promote experiential learning opportunities that foster the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources, as we strive to make a substantial contribution to our local community. The Donelan Office & I will assist you in getting connected to the community partner. The Donelan Office can also assist you with transportation, if you need it, and is available for support throughout the semester.

Donelan Office: Smith Hall 322/ 323 | communitybasedlearning@holycross.edu.

SCHEDULE

Below is a tentative weekly outline of what we will be focusing on in each class. I will notify you in advance of any minor changes. The most accurate daily assignments/reading will be on Canvas.

Week 1: Introduction

Wed., Jan. 25: Overview of the semester.

Fri., Jan. 27: *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*; Alice Wong, "Introduction" to *Disability Visibility*.

Week 2: Disability Rights & History

Mon., Jan. 30: Simi Linton, "Reassigning Meaning"; Nick Walker's "Neurodiversity: Some Basic Terms & Definitions."

Wed., Feb. 1: Alison Kafer, from *Feminist, Queer, Crip*; Sins Invalid, from *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement Is Our People*.

Fri., Feb. 3: Meda Kahn, "Difference of Opinion"; selection on ABA.

Week 3: Disability Justice: Sins Invalid

Mon., Feb. 6: Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*.

Wed., Feb. 8: Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work*; Fortesa Latifi's "Spoon Theory: What It Is and How I Use It to Manage Chronic Illness."

Fri., Feb. 10: Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work*.

Week 4: Disability Justice

Mon., Feb. 13: Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work*. Mia Mingus's "You Are Not Entitled to Our Deaths: COVID, Abled Supremacy & Interdependence."

Wed., Feb. 15: Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work*.

Fri., Feb. 17: Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Care Work*.

Week 5: Distress & Madness

Mon., Feb. 20: Esmé Weijun Wang's "Yale Will Not Save You."

Wed., Feb. 22: William Wan's "What if Yale finds out?"

Fri., Feb. 24: Madness in music.

Week 6: "Indigenous Disabled Creators"

Mon., Feb. 27: Jen Deerinwater, "The Erasure of Indigenous People in Chronic Illness." **Visit from the Donelan Office of Community-Based Learning.**

Wed., Mar. 1: Alice Wong Interview with Johnnie Jae for the *Disability Visibility Project*.

Fri., Mar. 3: Darcie Little Badger, "Black, Their Regalia."

Week 7: Spring Break

Mon., Mar. 6 - Fri., Mar. 10: No class!

Week 8: Children's Literature & Disability

Mon., Mar. 13: Cece Bell's *El Deafo*; from MK Czerwiec et al's *Graphic Medicine Manifesto*.

Wed., Mar. 15: Cece Bell's *El Deafo*.

Fri., Mar. 17: Cece Bell's *El Deafo*.

Week 9: Children's Literature & Disability, II

Mon., Mar. 20: Cece Bell's *El Deafo*.

Wed., Mar. 22: Cece Bell's *El Deafo*.

Fri., Mar. 24: Cece Bell's *El Deafo*.

Week 10: Graphic Medicine

Mon., Mar. 27: Iasmin Omar Ata's *Mis(h)adra*; Ian Williams's "Comics & the Iconography of Illness."

Wed., Mar. 29: Iasmin Omar Ata's *Mis(h)adra*.

Fri., Mar. 31: Iasmin Omar Ata's *Mis(h)adra*.

Week 11: The Medical Humanities

Mon., Apr. 3: Iasmin Omar Ata's *Mis(h)adra*; selection on narrative medicine.

Wed., Apr. 5: Iasmin Omar Ata's *Mis(h)adra*.

Fri., Apr. 7: No class!

Week 12: CBL Project Work

Mon., Apr. 10: No class!

Wed., Apr. 12: Iasmin Omar Ata's *Mis(h)adra* (if needed); in-class work on CBL projects.

Fri., Apr. 14: Research workshop.

Week 13: Disability & Science Fiction

Mon., Apr. 17: In-class work on CBL projects.

Wed., Apr. 19: In-class work on CBL projects.

Fri., Apr. 21: Presentations & presentation prep.

Week 14: Presentations & Cyborgs

Mon., Apr. 24: Presentations & presentation prep.

Wed., Apr. 26: **Academic Conference Day - No class!**

Fri., Apr. 28: Nnedi Okorafor's *Noor*; the Cyborg Jillian Weise's "Common Cyborg."

Week 15: Crip Technoscience

Mon., May 1: Nnedi Okorafor's *Noor*; From Aimi Hamraie & Kelly Fritsch's "Crip Technoscience Manifesto."

Wed., May 3: Nnedi Okorafor's *Noor*.

Fri., May 5: Nnedi Okorafor's *Noor*.

Week 16: Critical Reflections

Mon., May 8: Review of the semester.