

## NEW SPECIAL TOPICS COURSE

Spring 2015 – Monday & Wednesday 11:45am – 12:55pm

### *PS 375 – Seminar: The Social Psychology of Disability*

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*Course description.* This course explores social psychological theories regarding disability. We will consider both the perspective of people with disabilities (insiders) and nondisabled people who often hold uninformed beliefs about them (outsiders). People with disabilities are often considered to be an “invisible minority” (Asch, 1988). Race, gender, ethnicity, and increasingly social class and even religion and spirituality are making their way into mainstream psychology curricula. This is not the case for the study of disability, which is usually only introduced in the context of special education or rehabilitation psychology. We will be discussing a variety of topics including psychosocial constructs and concepts linked to disability (e.g., spread, the fundamental negative bias, the mine-thine phenomenon, the requirement of mourning), attitudes towards people with disabilities, disability identity, and the WHO ICF Model of Disability.

#### *Learning Goals and Outcomes for this Course*

Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions derived from psychological research

Design and conduct basic studies to address psychological questions using appropriate research methods.

Follow the APA Ethics Code in the treatment of human participants in the design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of psychological research.

Generalize research conclusions appropriately based on the parameters of particular research methods.

Recognize and respect human diversity.

Anticipate that psychological explanations may vary across populations and contexts.

Exhibit sensitivity to issues of power, privilege, and discrimination.

## Required Texts

Dunn, D. S. (2015). *The social psychology of disability*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, H. B. (2006). *Too late to die young: Nearly true tales from a life*. New York, NY: Picador

Additional readings are noted in the syllabus.

## Recommended Text

Dunn, D. S. (2011). *A short guide to writing about psychology* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Pearson/Longman. ISBN: 9780205752812

## Course Requirements

1. **Exams.** There will be two exams (one mid-term and one final). The exams will be comprised of *essay questions*. Each exam will be worth 25% for a total of 50% of your course grade. A missed exam will be recorded as a zero (0) grade. Make-up exams will be given at the discretion of the instructor and for valid reasons only (e.g., documented medical excuse, emergency).
2. **Class participation and attendance.** Critical evaluation of the various approaches to construing personality is essential, thus you are expected to attend all classes prepared to discuss the assigned material. A portion of your final grade (15%) will reflect your contribution to our discussions.

Please note that I **will** be taking role, thus your absence from class will affect your participation grade (i.e., if you are not in class, you cannot contribute to discussion). If you miss a class, you are responsible for any material covered, notes given, announcements, etc. If you are absent, please see one of your classmates regarding that day's assignments.

3. **Later Paper/Project Policy.** You have three written assignments for this class. Hard copies of all paper assignments are due at the beginning of class or in advance of the dates listed in the syllabus. Papers submitted later than this time—**for any reason**—will be penalized by 20% (i.e., an paper that would have earned a 95 on time receives a 75) on the first day and 10% each day thereafter (including weekends), up to 50%. Practically speaking, a paper that is 5 days late receives a grade of 50 once it is turned in—if it is never submitted, then it receives a grade of 0. I will not accept electronic copies of papers sent via email, only hard copies. Plan accordingly by working ahead and consistently on your papers.
4. **Submitting work early.** I am happy to accept your papers before they are due.

5. **Academic honesty.** The College's policy on Academic honesty (particularly regarding plagiarism) will be strictly enforced. Please see the Psychology Department handbook for a copy or obtain one from the Academic Dean's office. Please see me if you have any questions about academic honesty (e.g., proper citation and source crediting).
6. **The Writing Center.** The Writing Center, located on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall, is there to support the efforts of all writers at Moravian College. The tutors there are students who are good, experienced writers and who are professionally trained to help you improve your writing. They will go over an essay draft with you and guide your understanding of how you might improve that draft. You could also drop by to pick up some of the free handouts on virtually every part of writing: getting started, writing a thesis, developing paragraphs, eliminating wordiness, using commas, and the like. The Writing Center is generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and Sunday evenings during the semester. The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.
7. **Accommodations for Disabilities.** Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.
8. **Cell Phones and Laptop Computers.** Please be courteous and respectful to me and to your peers. Please turn your cell phone off or put it on “vibrate” when coming to class. Texting is not permitted during class, ever. Checking your phone constantly is rude as well as distracting.

Laptops and iPads are welcome in class as aids to our discussions. However, please avoid the temptation to check email, Facebook, etc.

9. **Grading.** Your final course grade will be based on the following percentage weights:

Two essay exams (midterm and final)	40% (20% each)
Short Paper 1	10%
Short Paper 2	10%
Disability paper/project	20%
Class attendance and participation	20%

10. **Office hours.** My office hours for spring 2015 are listed below. Appointments at other times may be scheduled.

Monday 10:15-11:15am

Wednesday 2-3pm

Friday 8:30-10:30am

## Course Schedule

\*\*\* Available via PsycINFO

### **Week One – Organizational Meeting and Course Overview**

**M Jan 19** – Defining Disability

**W Jan 21** – Social Psychology and the WHO Model

Read Dunn chapter 1 *Overview: The Social Psychology of Disability*

### **Week Two – Insider and Outsider Perspectives on Disability**

**M Jan 26** – Mine/Thine Exercise

Read:

Dunn, D. S., Fisher, D. J., & Beard, B. M. (2012). Revisiting the mine-thine problem: A sensitizing exercise for clinic, classroom, and attributional research. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 57*, 113-123.\*\*\*

*Final Day for Course Changes*

**W Jan 28** – Psychosocial Concepts and Disability

Read Dunn chapter 2 *Fundamental Psychosocial Concepts for Understanding Disability*

*Short Paper 1:* Write a reaction/reflection paper regarding your views of the Mine/Thine Exercise. Did it change your beliefs about disability? If so, how? If not, why not? Do you believe this basic exercise can actually improve people's attitudes as Dunn, Fisher, and Beard (2012) argued? Your paper should be between 3 and 5 pages, and written in modified APA style (title page, no abstract page, just the text of your essay, and an APA style Reference page for any works (including Dunn et al.) that you cite.

### **Week Three – Research Review**

**M Feb 2** – Quantitative Methods

Read Chapter 4 *Basic Experimental Design* in Dunn (2013) *Research Methods for Social Psychology*

**W Feb 4** – Qualitative Methods

Read Chapter 5 *Alternatives to Experimental Research in Social Psychology* in Dunn (2013) *Research Methods for Social Psychology*

*Week Four – Challenges: Stigma and Stereotyping*

Read Dunn chapter 3 *Challenges: Stigma, Stereotyping, and Disability*

**M Feb 9**

**W Feb 11**

*Week Five – Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities*

**M Feb 16** – Attitudes and Disability

Read Dunn chapter 4 *Attitudes Towards People with Disabilities*

**W Feb 18** – Implicit Attitudes and Disability

Read

Pruett, S. R., & Chan, F. (2006). The development and psychometric validation of the Disability Attitude Implicit Association Test. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 51*, 202-213.\*\*\*

*Paper/Project Topic due today.* Write a one-page proposal explaining your idea in detail. Include references as appropriate.

*Week Six – Autobiography and Disability: Harriet McBryde Johnson*

Read Johnson's (2006) *Too Late to Die Young: Nearly True Tales from a Life*

**M Feb 23**

**W Feb 25**

*Week Seven – Midterm Exam and Project Discussion*

**M Mar 2**      *Midterm Exam*

**W Mar 4** – Discussion of Projects

**F Mar 6**      *Midterm point of the semester*

*Spring break Sat March 7 – Su March 15*

## *Week Eight – Coping with and Adjusting to Disability*

Read Dunn chapter 5 *Coping with and Adjusting to Disability*

**M Mar 16**

**W Mar 18**

*Short Paper 2 due:* Write a critical and thoughtful review of Johnson's *Too Late to Die Young*. What is her message about disability where insiders and outsiders are concerned? Pick one issue that she discusses (Not Dead Yet, disability rights, her debate with Singer, the Jerry Lewis Telethon, her views on assisted suicide, etc.) and discuss it in depth. By that I mean, briefly summarize her view—a paragraph or two—no more—and then spend the rest of the 3 – 5 pages reflecting and responding to her views. Do you agree with her views—why or why not? Will her perspectives help outsiders better understand insiders?

## *Week Nine – Disability Identity*

**M Mar 23**

Read Dunn chapter 6 *Towards an Understanding of Disability Identity*

**W Mar 25**

Read

Dunn, D. S., & Burcaw, S. (2013). Disability identity: Exploring first person accounts of disability experience. *Rehabilitation Psychology*.\*\*\*

## *Week Ten – Disability Identity Continued*

**M Mar 30 – No Class Meeting**

**W Apr 1 – Guest Speaker: Shane Burcaw**

***Easter Break – Friday, April 3rd – Sunday, April 5th***

## *Week Eleven – A Positive Psychology of Disability and Rehabilitation*

**M Apr 6**

Read Dunn chapter 7 *A Positive Psychology of Disability and Rehabilitation*

**W Apr 8** – Disability and the Good Life

Read

Dunn, D. S., & Brody, C. (2008). Defining the good life following acquired physical disability. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 53, 413-425.\*\*\*

*Week Twelve* – **Work on Projects**

**M Apr 13** – No Class Meeting

**W Apr 15** – No Class Meeting

*Week Thirteen* – **Project Presentations**

**M Apr 20**

**W Apr 22**

\*The Take Home Final Exam will be passed out this week.

*Week Fourteen* – **The Ecology of Disability**

**M Apr 27**

Read Dunn chapter 8 *The Ecology of Disability*

**W Apr 23** Conclusions/Last Class

Classes end Sat May 2

**Final Examinations:** May 3 - May 8, Sunday – Friday

**Due date for the Take Home Final Exam – no later than Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am**



## Project Ideas

Below are some suggestions for possible projects dealing with the social psychology of disability. This list is neither exhaustive nor divinely inspired. You may work individually or in teams of up to three people. Besides this list, you may develop project ideas based on our readings (consider the questions listed at the end of each chapter, for example) and class discussion. Please note that I must approve your topic (you should submit a project topic to me no later than *Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>*).

1. Write a literature review of a currently under-researched area of the social psychology of disability. Identify new questions investigators should pursue empirically in order to invigorate the topical area.
2. Develop a new variation of the mine-thine exercise by identifying additional variables to manipulate and measure.
3. Design and propose an experiment aimed at reducing prejudice towards people with disabilities. How will you assess pre-and post-test attitudes?
4. Write a literature review on “micro-aggressions” with an eye to identifying those that can affect people with disabilities.
5. Design an experiment whose purpose is to use mental simulation (imagined contact between nondisabled people and people with disabilities) in order to foster positive attitude change.
6. Can people with disabilities be susceptible to stereotype threat? Design an experiment to demonstrate and counteract this problem.
7. Write a review of research on the contact hypothesis that deals with disability. Why has so little research investigated this topic? Propose a study designed to demonstrate the benefits of meaning contact between people with and without disabilities.
8. Propose a topic on the social psychology of disability of your own design.