SESP Student Organized Seminar on Disability Studies
Northwestern University: Spring 2005

Time: Wednesdays 6:00-9:00
Instructor: Ariel Schwartz
Office Hours: By appointment

Any Student with a documented disability needing accommodations is requested to speak directly to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) (857-467-5530), and the instructor, as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter). All discussions will remain confidential.

Course Rationale:
People who have disabilities are making a place for themselves in society. This seminar will educate undergraduates and cultivate a deeper appreciation and understanding of people who have disabilities. This seminar will look at societal conceptions of disability as America becomes a more inclusive society. This course will benefit students interested in education, psychology, policy design, journalism, etc.

Course description:
This course counts for an elective credit and is graded on a pass or not pass basis. Designed for all students on campus, This Student Organized Seminar (SOS) provides an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of Disability Studies and explores issues which are at the forefront of American society today. The first part of the course explores the societal, political, and medical definition of disability. The second part of the course examines several different disabilities in depth from an individual and societal view. The course will encompass speakers, simulations, lectures, discussion and one off-campus volunteer trip; students will either attend the Special Olympics off campus, observe the Teaching Life Skills classroom at Glenbrook North High School, or attend the University of Illinois vs. Northwestern wheelchair basketball game to be held on April 23rd. Scholarly readings in Disability Studies, class discussion and written reflections are designed to engage undergraduates in the process of examining the challenges that will face them on the personal and societal level as more people are living longer with disabilities.

Content Objectives:
1. To introduce students to a wide array of material and literature written by leading scholars in the newly emerging field of Disability Studies.
2. To become knowledgeable about the Disability Rights Movement
3. To engage students in thinking about how individuals who have disabilities, families/friends and society at large react to disabilities.
4. To make students aware of the various differences among disabilities and personal experiences of having a disability.

Skills Objectives:
1. To experience spending time with individuals who have disabilities as a volunteer.
2. To develop an understanding for individuals who have various disabilities.
3. To submit four written reflections on movies, lectures, readings and field experience (minimum one page) and to be an active and informed participant in class discussions by regular attendance.

Value Objectives
1. To sensitize students to their own and other’s stereotypes about disabilities.
2. To reduce the tendency to stereotype individuals who have disabilities.
3. To explore the anxiety about interacting with individuals who are disabled.
4. To develop a deeper appreciation and understanding for individuals who have disabilities.

Course Books to purchase at Barnes and Noble or order online:

Course Readings (To be purchased in a course packet in SESP Student Affairs office in Annenberg Hall):

Course Requirements
1. Class attendance and active participation. Because this course is graded on a P/NP basis, students who miss more than one class without a valid excuse will be dropped from the class.
2. 4 written responses to the readings.
3. Participation in one volunteer trip
4. Bring one question to class each day. The question may be related to anything from the reading or the topic of the week. The goal of the question should be to inspire discussion.

**General Guidelines for Reflection Paper:** Reflections should convey a deeper understanding and insight of course materials. They should show students personal exploration of the topics discussed in class. The purpose of the reflection is to enhance students own mental processing of the complex nature of this issue (1-2 pages).

**Tentative Class Schedule:**

Week One: 3/30/05  
Topic: What is a disability? Definitions, Political Correctness, Trigger Words, What does the literature say? What do you say?  
Movie: When Billy Broke his Head  
Readings Due:  
**A Matter of Dignity:** pg. 47-85  
**Nothing About us Without Us:** pg. 21-36  
**Why I Burned My Book:** pg. 102-115  
**The Ragged Edge:** pg. 4-6, 15-18

Week Two: 4/6/05  
Topic: Deafness, Blindness- Spectrum of Disability  
Movie: Sound and Fury,  
Readings Due:  
**Seeing Voices** pg. 3-30  
**A Matter of Dignity** pg. 15-44  
**The Ragged Edge:** pg. 100-1

Week Three: 4/13/05  
Topic: Autistic Spectrum Disorders  
Movie Excerpt: What’s Eating Gilbert Grape,  
Speakers: Panel of house managers who work at Little City  
Readings:  
**Somebody Somewhere:** pg. 18-42  
**The Curious Incident of the dog in the nighttime**

Week Four: 4/20/05  
Topic: Mental Retardation, Cerebral Palsy  
Movie Excerpt: **My Left Foot, The Other Sister**  
Reading Due:  
**We’re the People Too:** 96-106  
**Staring Back:** pg. 168-9  
**Disability Rights Movement:** pg. 1-13
Week Five: 4/27/05
Topic: Personally finding out you have a disability and coping mechanisms. Genetic Disorders (Chronic Illness) later in life. Accidents and acknowledging and accepting disability. Self Advocacy.
Panel: Professor Gaetjens, Chris Sanchez
Readings:
No Pity: 12-40, 184-211
Why I Burned My Book: 215-230

Week Six: 5/4/05
Topic: The reactions and adaptations of parents, family and the individual to disability.
Panel: Mary Jacobs and daughter Sonya, Ellen Bronfeld, Jane and Jack Lee-
Readings:
Difference in the Family: 215-240
Expecting Adam: 192-198, 211-223, 244-247, 312-316

Week Seven: 5/11/05
Topic: Education and Community Integration, i.e. Mainstream versus Separation.
Speaker: Danielle Dubi
Movie excerpt:Sean’s Story
Readings Due:
No Pity: pg. 41-73, 142-183, 322-332
Disability Rights Movement: pg. 184-199

Week Eight: 5/18/05
How much do you want to know? Amniocentesis and the Human Genome Project. Life and Death, who has the right to make that decision, the doctor, the individual, the family? Stem Cell research.
Movie: Possibly for this class we will go and see the movie Million Dollar Baby
Readings Due:
No Pity: 258-288
Disability Rag: Suicide Political or Personal, Silence on the Psychiatric Holocaust, Springtime for Hitler, Eugenics and Reproductive choice
Life As We Know it: Humans Under Construction, pg. 40-94
Why I Burned My Book: 149-175, 204-215

Week Nine: 5/25/05
Media’s role in awareness of disability
SPEAKER: STACEY BUELL
Readings Due:
BRING IN AN ARTICLE FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEK- BE IT NEWSPAPER, BLIP, ETC. that discusses disability
FDR’s Splendid Deception: pg. 59-67, 88-106, 145-152
Why I Burned My Book: 119-149

Week 10: 6/1/05
- Wrap up discussion on Media’s role of portraying people who have disabilities
- Bring in an article about people who have disabilities
- Critique of the class

I hope you enjoyed the class! Good luck on final exams!!