**Course Information:**
College: Arts & Sciences  
Department: Sociology  
Prefix: SYO  
Number: 4430-901  
Credits: 3  
Location: SOC 303  
Meeting Time: TR 9:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m.

**This course is part of the University of South Florida's Foundations of Knowledge and Learning (FKL) Core Curriculum. It is certified for the Capstone Core Area and for the following dimensions: Critical Thinking; Inquiry-based Learning; Human and Cultural Diversity; Oral and Written Language Skills. Students enrolled in this course will be asked to participate in the USF General Education assessment effort. This might involve submitting copies of writing assignments for review, responding to surveys, or participating in other measurements designed to assess the FKL Core Curriculum learning outcomes.**

**Instructor Information:**
Instructor: Loren Wilbers  
Office: Cooper Hall 216  
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 a.m.-12 p.m., or by appointment  
Instructor E-Mail: lwilbers@mail.usf.edu

I check my email multiple times a day Monday-Friday until 5 p.m. and it is the best way to contact me outside of class. I will make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours during the school week.

**Notice about Blackboard:**
Readings, assignments, grades, and other materials and information essential to the class will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester. They will not be handed out in hard copy form. It is essential that you know how to access your Blackboard account and do so regularly! To do so, visit www.usf.edu, click on “myUSF” at the top of your screen, log in with your NetID, click on “Blackboard,” and select the “Disability and Society” class from your course list.

**Required Books:**


**Supplementary Readings (Available on Blackboard):**


Number 2B: Berger, Leigh. (Forthcoming) “Silent Movies: Scenes from a Life.” In Fact/Fiction. A. Banks and S. Banks (Eds.). Alta Mira Press.


**Hard copies of readings will NOT be handed out in class. They can only be accessed by following these instructions:
1. Log on to Blackboard through the USF website
2. Click on “Content Collection” at the top of your screen
3. Click on “USF Collection” at the left of your screen
4. Click on “SY04430”
5. Click on “Library”
6. Click on “E Reserves”
(Clicking on the “E Reserve” icon that appears in the center of your screen will not lead you to the readings)

Course Description and Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to examine the applicability of basic sociological concepts to the experience of disability; and to examine the experience of disability as a means to a better understanding of the nature of social life.

As we move toward broader definitions of community designed to encourage and celebrate the diversity of human experience, it is useful to employ the “sociological imagination” to peer behind the “official” conceptions of disability and examine the experience as another aspect of human diversity. The study of disability from a sociological standpoint heightens our understanding of the adaptability of human beings and the commonalities of social life that exist, and persist, despite the presence of biological differences. Such study also encourages critical evaluation of the impact of social systems, institutions, and professional understandings of disability, and our own assumptions about the disability experience, on the well-being of people with biological differences and members of their families.

Course Objectives:

The objectives of the course are for students to develop the skills and experiences necessary to:

1. critically examine personal assumptions about the meaning and experience of disability
2. compare and contrast understandings of disability held by individuals with biological differences, family members of such individuals, and others in the community
3. differentiate among three aspects of the disability experience: the existence of biological
differences (impairments), the need for human and/or technical assistance with everyday
activities (functional limitations) and the existence of structural, attitudinal and physical barriers to
full participation in the life of one's community (handicap).

4. apply basic sociological theories and concepts to the experience of disability and to one's own life
experiences

5. identify similarities and differences in one's own social experiences and those of individuals living
with biological differences

6. critically evaluate the usefulness of sociological theories and concepts in understanding one's
own experiences and those of individuals living with biological differences

7. think creatively about the ways in which understanding the disability experience sheds light on
social structures and processes and can help to refine social-scientific theories and concepts

8. appreciate disability as an aspect of human diversity (such as gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) and to
critically evaluate the impact of cultural values, norms and ways of knowing on the experience of
disability

9. observe and critically evaluate interactions between individuals with and without visible biological
differences in public places

10. critically evaluate depictions of the disability experience in the media and the arts

11. increase one's level of skill and comfort in social encounters involving individuals with and without
biological differences

12. convey ideas about the social experience of disability in writing

13. convey ideas about the social experience of disability in oral form

14. work cooperatively and productively in a small group of peers

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. students will demonstrate their ability to examine their own understandings of disability by taking
part in an in-class survey, discussing the results of the survey in small groups, and keeping a log
of their ideas, feelings, reflections and observations about the disability experience in an informal
journal.

2. students will discover the relationship between having a biological difference (or being a close
family member of someone who has such a difference) on one's understandings of the disability
experience by comparing the answers given on the in-class survey by students with and without
personal or familial experience with disability. They will demonstrate their understanding of these
differences in writing (on in-class exams, take-home written assignments and in a journal) and
orally in small group discussions.

3. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the differences among impairments, functional
limitations and handicaps by correctly defining these terms and applying them to the experiences
depicted in personal narratives and films and to their own observations in public places. They will
do so in writing (on in-class exams, take-home written assignments and in a journal) and orally in
small group discussions.

4. students will demonstrate their understanding of the sociological theories and concepts discussed
in class by: 1. providing correct descriptions and definitions of these abstract theoretical ideas;
2.creatively applying them to the disability experiences depicted in personal narratives and films
and to their own observations in public places; and 3. creatively applying them to their own life
experiences. They will demonstrate their ability in this areas in writing (on in-class exams, take-
home written assignments and in a journal) and orally in small group discussions.

5. students will demonstrate their ability to identify similarities their own experiences and those of
individuals with biological differences by comparing and contrasting their own experiences with
those depicted in personal narratives and films. They will do so in writing (on in-class exams, take-
home written assignments and in a journal) and orally in small group discussions.

6. students will discuss the relevance of the abstract theoretical concepts discussed in class to their
own experiences and those depicted in narratives and films in small group discussions and will
demonstrate an understanding of the usefulness (or lack thereof) of specific concepts in writing
on exams and take-home assignments and orally in group discussions.
7. students will discuss (in small groups) the ways in which the study of disability and exposure to the experience of disability through personal narrative accounts has helped them to better understand the way the social world operates in their own lives. They will demonstrate an understanding of the usefulness of examining the disability experience to specific concepts (of their own choosing) in writing on exams and take-home assignments.

8. students will demonstrate an appreciation of disability as a form of human diversity by comparing and contrasting the disability experience to that of members of other sub-cultural groups. They will do so orally in small group discussions and in writing on exams and take-home assignments. Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the values and norms of the dominant culture of the US, their agreement or disagreement with these values and norms and how their ability to conform to societal expectations might be affected by the acquisition of a disability. They will do so in writing on a take-home assignment and on in-class exams and orally in a small group discussion.

9. students will demonstrate their ability to observe and critically evaluate interactions between individuals with and without visible biological differences in public places by writing about these observations in a journal.

10. students will demonstrate their ability critically evaluate depictions of the disability experience in the media and the arts by keeping a log of their observations such depictions in a journal.

11. students will demonstrate their ability to interact appropriately and constructively with individuals with biological differences by asking questions during a class discussion with a panel of students with disability experience.

12. students will demonstrate the ability to convey ideas about the social experience of disability in writing: on two in-class exams (which are 30% essay), five take-home assignments and in a journal of their observations, ideas, thoughts and feelings about the disability experience. In each of these written assignments, students will be evaluated on the following criteria: 1. content - has the student properly defined the terms used, given appropriate examples from the required source(s) and offered sufficiently detailed evidence from the source(s) to support his/her analysis?; 2. organization - has the student presented a smooth, logical argument in essay form that clearly supports the claims made in the analysis?; 3. creativity - has the student shown evidence of original thought in her/his selection of examples and in the application of concepts?

13. students will demonstrate the ability to convey ideas about the experience of disability in oral form in small group discussions and in a group oral presentation to the class. The group presentation will be evaluated on the same three criteria used for written work. The quality of the student's participation in the small group discussions will be evaluated in two ways: 1. showing evidence of being prepared to contribute to the discussion by having a written draft of the assignment prepared on the day of the discussion; 2. averaging the grades given to the student by group members for the quality of his/her contribution to the group discussions during the semester (peer grades).

14. students will demonstrate the ability to work productively in small groups in two ways: 1. by participating in discussions of written-assignments throughout the semester; and 2. by participating in a group oral presentation of the critical analysis of a reading to the class. Students will be evaluated on this participation by the means outlined in #13.

Policies:

Academic Integrity
The integrity of the academic program and degree rests on the principle that the grades awarded to students reflect only their own individual efforts and achievement. Students are required to perform the work specified by the instructor and are responsible for the content of work submitted, such as papers, assignments, examinations, and other work.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in this course. Assignments must be written in your own words. If I discover that you have plagiarized on an assignment or cheated on an exam, you will receive a zero, with no possibility of re-doing the assignment or re-taking the exam. If you are unclear about what constitutes cheating and plagiarism, see: http://www.cte.usf.edu/plagiarism/plag.html.
Class Cancellation
Class meetings can occasionally be called off due to bad weather, a college closing, or a teacher absence or illness. In any cancelled class situation, deadlines for tests, papers, assignments, etc. will be in effect for the next class session. If I must cancel class, I will do my best to send out a notification via e-mail and blackboard before the scheduled class time.

Emergency Plans
In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It's the responsibility of the student to monitor Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information.

Email Policy
Each enrolled USF student is provided a free email account while in attendance. I prefer that you use only your USF e-mail for class purposes. You may also e-mail me from Blackboard. Make sure to check your email often as I will be sending important class information to your account throughout the semester!

Notice of Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Any student with a disability is encouraged to meet with me privately during the first two weeks of class to discuss accommodations. Each student must bring to this meeting, a current Memorandum of Accommodations from the Office of Academic Support and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (ASASD). This letter is prerequisite for receiving accommodations. Accommodated exams through ASASD require two weeks' notice. Please give me a reminder notice two weeks before each exam so that arrangements can be made for an accommodated exam. All course documents can be made available through the Office of Student Disability Services in alternate format if requested in the student's Memorandum of Accommodations.

Note-taking/Taping of Lectures
Taking good notes is essential for doing well in this class and is highly encouraged. If you plan to record any class lectures, please discuss this with me beforehand.

Classroom Conduct
It is very important that all members of the class are respectful to their fellow students and to the instructor at all times. The classroom should be a safe place for the sharing of knowledge, and therefore direct name-calling or other forms of disrespect will NOT be tolerated.

It is important that full attention is given to the person who is addressing the class at any given time. Whether it is the instructor or a fellow student who is speaking, I ask that you please DO NOT have conversations on the side or engage in any distracting behavior.

If you bring your cell phone to class, turn it off or put it on silent. NO TEXTING while class is in session.

If you bring your laptop, please do not use it for non-class-related purposes. Stay off of Facebook please! If this becomes a recurring problem I will no longer permit computers during class.

WARNING: If I witness you breaking one of the above classroom conduct policies, I may call attention to it in front of your classmates. If I perceive your conduct as highly disrespectful, I hold the right to ask you to leave the classroom and/or to report the behavior to the appropriate student conduct officials.

Attendance
In order to do well and to get the most out of this course, regular attendance is vital. I WILL be taking attendance at the beginning of each class period. However, I do realize that sometimes things occur (sickness, etc.) which can prevent a student from being able to attend, and so attendance points will not be affected unless the student has missed more than ONE class period.
WARNING: If you do miss class more than once without a documented reason, be aware that 1 point will be deducted from your attendance grade per day missed. **If you have 6 or more unexcused absences you will automatically receive an F in the class.**

If you must miss significant days due to a serious illness, family emergency, or another reason that is out of your control, please get in contact with me within 5 days of the first absence and we will work something out (at my discretion).

**Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the third class meeting.**

**Missed Exams**
Make-up exams will only be offered if you contact me within 24 hours of the missed test with a legitimate reason. **If you miss an exam and fail to make it up, you will receive a zero for that exam. TO PASS THIS CLASS IT IS CRUCIAL THAT YOU DO NOT MISS ANY EXAMS.**

**Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Exams</td>
<td>60 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Assignment Drafts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home Assignments</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Grade</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 pts</strong></td>
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</table>

**Grading Scale**
90 through 100 points = A
80 through 89.9 points = B
70 through 79.9 points = C
60 through 69.9 points = D
Below 60 points = F

**Final grades that are less than or equal to ½ a point away from the next highest letter grade may, under some circumstances, be rounded up. Grades that are more than ½ a point away from the next letter grade will NOT be rounded up.**

**Exams (60 pts.)**
There will be two in class exams. Each of these exams will be composed of a mix of multiple choice and essay questions. Each exam will be worth thirty points toward the final course grade.
There is no final exam in this course. The final versions of your five take-home assignments (described below) serve as the final exam.
Journal (10 pts.)
Each student will be required to keep a journal throughout the semester. You will need to make entries at least twice each week (a minimum of 30 entries) to earn full credit. These entries should include the following types of information:

1. Descriptions of and reactions to personal encounters with individuals with disabilities/impairments/biological differences that occur during the semester or have occurred in the past.
2. Observations of and reactions to interactions between individuals with and without disabilities/impairments/biological differences.
3. Descriptions of and your reactions to information about and/or images of individuals with disabilities/impairments/biological differences that you find in the public media (newspapers, magazines, catalogues, movies, books, art, television, etc.).
4. Descriptions of and your reactions to any other observations relevant to the experience of disability that you make during the semester.
5. Your reactions to your own current or past experiences with disability.

Your Journal (described above) is designed to give you a "safe space" in which to explore your own ideas about the disability experience. I am the only one who will read it. You are encouraged to express your candid opinions here. As a much more subjective task than the exams and assignments, the journal will be graded based on the degree to which you have given serious thought and consideration to your observations and have reflected on the meaning of your own ideas and opinions.

**Journal Entries should NOT address the books and films assigned for this course. These will be discussed in the Written Take-home Assignments described below.

Group Presentation (5 pts.)
Each student will be required to participate in a group presentation on one of the supplementary readings. Details will be provided in class.

Take-Home Assignments (15 pts.)
During the semester, you will be given five take-home writing assignments on which you will be asked to answer a series of questions. These questions will involve the application of the theories and theoretical concepts we have discussed in class to the experience of disability as depicted in readings, films and other sources. You will also be asked to apply the concepts and theories to your own experiences and to the observations on which you have reported in your journals.

Each Take-home Assignment will be worth a total of 3 points toward your final grade (1 point for a draft and 2 points for the final version). As a whole, your grades on these assignments will, therefore, be worth 15 points or 15 percent of your final grade for the semester. They are also designed to prepare you for the exams.

You will be required to bring a written draft of each assignment to class on the day of its group discussion (see dates noted in the schedule below). Up to one point toward your final course grade will be based on the written draft of each assignment. These points will be awarded in class on the day of the class discussion. The purpose of awarding points for having a draft available on the day of the discussion is to reward you for being prepared to contribute to the discussion. You, therefore, cannot receive credit for handing a draft in at any other time.

The final versions of the five Take-home Assignments will be graded when they are turned in on the date noted in the schedule below. Each final version is worth a maximum of 2 points toward your final grade for the semester.

Peer Evaluations (5 pts.)
Five percent of your final grade will be based on peer evaluations of your contribution and cooperation to your group’s efforts during the semester (including all group discussions as well as the oral presentation
of a supplementary reading). The ratings given to you by members of your group will be averaged to form your individual peer grade.

**Attendance (5 pts.)**
Attendance will be worth 5 points toward your final grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class meeting. In order to receive full credit, you must have no more than one unexcused absence, and you must come to class prepared to participate in discussions. In order to be properly prepared, do the assigned reading before each class.

Lectures are supplemental to, not a repetition of, the materials in the assigned readings. Lecture materials will be covered on the exams and take-home assignments. If you must miss class, you will need to make arrangements with a classmate to obtain copies of notes. Since much of what happens in the class is the result of small group and class discussion (which most students do not record in the form of formal notes), missing class will definitely be detrimental to your performance on exams and the take-home assignments.

**Extra Credit**
I may offer various opportunities for earning extra credit points throughout the semester. These offers will be extended to the entire class. I will not provide any individual extra credit opportunities as this would not be fair to everyone.

**Evaluation Criteria**
The essay portion of each exam, the final versions of your five take-home assignments and your group oral presentation will all be graded according to the following criteria:

**Content:**
1. Appropriately defines sociological concepts used in analysis
2. Selects examples that are pertinent/relevant to the argument made and come from appropriate sources
3. Appropriately applies sociological concepts to illuminate and analyze the issues/examples explored
4. Analysis avoids bias (argument does not appeal to prejudice, prevailing opinions, personal feelings, etc.)

**Creativity:**
1. Demonstrates sociological imagination by looking beyond "official" or "common sense" explanations
2. Indicates awareness of the social-structural (class, gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.), historical and/or cross-cultural contexts of the examples utilized
3. Mentions two sides of an issue or argument
4. Demonstrates critical thinking (shows evidence of original thought in applying sociological concepts to examples and evaluating the usefulness of these concepts to our understanding of social situations)

**Organization:**
1. Essay (or oral presentation) is smoothly organized and well-constructed
2. Reasoning is clear

**Syllabus as a Contract:**
This syllabus is a contract between you the student, me the instructor, and USF. By accepting this syllabus and remaining in the course, you are implicitly agreeing to abide by the terms therein.

**Disclaimer:**
As the instructor I reserve the right to change this syllabus at my discretion at any time and will give you adequate notification of changes if they do occur.
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week #1
1/10: Introduction to the course and completion of the disability survey
1/12: Applying the "sociological imagination" to disability
      Selection of groups and supplementary readings

Week #2
1/17: Examining popular, professional and academic understandings of the disability experience.
      Current international controversies over the definitions of the terms: impairment, disability and handicap
1/19: Perceptions of disability and stigma among individuals with and those without biological differences. Analyzing the results of the disability survey

Week #3
1/24: Draft of take-home assignment #1 due. Class and small group discussions
1/26: The importance of meanings: Social Action Theory in the context of disability

Week #4
1/31: Socialization and the importance of social interaction in the lives of children with disabilities
2/2: Roles and statuses and the use of impression management, covering and passing

Week #5
2/7 & 2/9: Film – Temple Grandin

Week #6
2/14: Group Oral Presentations: Supplementary Readings #1A, 1B, 2A and 2B
2/16: Disability in a family context. Riding the Bus with My Sister (Simon) must be read by today

Week #7
2/21: Draft of take-home assignment #2 due. Class and small group discussions
2/23: EXAM #1

Week #8
2/28 & 2/31: Film - Passion Fish

Week #9
3/6: The impact of cultural “ways of knowing” and values and norms on the experience of disability.
      Merton’s Typology and the acquisition of a disability.
3/8: Draft of take-home assignment #3 (Part A) due. Class and small group discussions. Part B completed in class

Week #10

3/13 & 3/15: No class – Spring Break

Week #11

3/20 & 3/22: No class – SSS Meetings

Week #12

3/27: Power differential and the disability experience (Tentative guest speaker – Skyler Lauderdale)

3/29: Common reactions of adults who suddenly acquire impairments and common reactions of others to adults with disabilities. Best Seat in the House (Rucker) must be read by today

Week #13

4/3: Draft of take-home assignment #4 due. Class and small group discussions

4/5: Group Oral Presentations: Supplementary Readings #3, 4A, 4B and 4C

Week #14

4/10: Mental health and disability. Unquiet Minds (Jamison) must be read by today

4/12: Prejudice, bigotry, social inequality, discrimination and exploitation in the context of disability

Week #15

4/17: Social movements and social change in the US and UK: From the Medical and Charity Models of Disability to the Disabled People’s Movement (UK), the Independent Living Model of Disability (US) and the American’s with Disabilities Act

4/19: Film – Lives Worth Living

Week #16

4/24: Exam #2


FINAL TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS DUE MAY 3rd BY 5:00 P.M.!

HAVE A FANTASTIC SUMMER!
### Perceived Stigma Scale


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Most young men and women would be reluctant to date a person with a disability</td>
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<td>2. Most people in my community feel nervous and/or awkward when they meet someone with a disability</td>
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<td>3. Most people in my community feel sad when they meet someone with a disability</td>
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<td>4. Most people in my community would treat a person with a disability just as they would anyone else</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Most people think less of a person who has a disability than they do of other people</td>
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<td>6. Most people would willingly accept a person with a disability as a close friend</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Most employers will hire a person with a disability if he or she is qualified for the job</td>
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<td>8. Most people feel that having a disability is a sign of personal failure</td>
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Note: For items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8, “Strongly Agree” is coded 5 and “Strongly Disagree” is coded 1. Items 4, 6 and 7 are reverse coded so that “Strongly Agree” is coded 1 and “Strongly Disagree” is coded 5.

**NOTE:** Please answer the questions on the other side of this page as well.
1. Do you yourself have (or have you ever had) a disability or impairment (or a difference that other people consider to be a disability or impairment)?

(   ) No
(   ) Yes (if yes, please indicate the nature of the disability or impairment below)

__________________________________________________________________

2. Does someone in your immediate family (your parent, sibling, child, spouse or life partner) have (or have they ever had) a disability or impairment?

(   ) No
(   ) Yes (if yes, please indicate the nature of the disability or impairment below)

__________________________________________________________________

3. Does a more distant family member (grandparent, cousin, aunt, uncle, etc., or a friend) have (or have they ever had) a disability or impairment?

(   ) No
(   ) Yes (if yes, please indicate the nature of the disability or impairment below)

__________________________________________________________________

4. Does your current job (or your future career plan) include working with people with disabilities or impairments?

(   ) No
(   ) Yes (if yes, please describe your job or career plans below)

__________________________________________________________________