DISABILITY STUDIES

Romel W. Mackelprang, Program Director,
department page (https://www.ewu.edu/css/programs/disability-studies)
233 Senior Hall
509.359.6484

Ryan Parrey, Ph.D. Lecturer
216 Senior Hall
509.359.6487

Undergraduate Degrees

Undergraduate Minor


Undergraduate Certificate


Undergraduate Program

The Disability Studies Certificate Program is an interdisciplinary program involving multiple academic departments throughout the university. Administratively, it is located in the College of Social Sciences drawing students from multiple disciplines from every EWU college. It is offered in both traditional and online educational formats.

Disability Studies is a multidisciplinary field drawing from humanities, liberal arts and the sciences and is taught by faculty from multiple fields and disciplines. The Disability Studies Certificate program, offered at the undergraduate and graduate levels, educates students to develop an understanding of disability, disability culture and people with disabilities as inclusive members of society. The program’s emphasis on universal access complements the university’s mission to prepare its graduates to live and work in a diverse society.

The Disability Studies Certificate program recognizes disability is part of the tapestry of a diverse society. It emphasizes universal access the philosophy that society should be inclusive of people of all diverse backgrounds and traits and that the responsibility for diversity transcends traditional identity based characteristics. Universal Access (UA) embraces an approach that responsible societies do not just accommodate minorities but are constructed; for all people; majority and minority, typical and atypical.

Graduate Certificate


Graduate Program

The Interdisciplinary Disability Studies Program encourages people with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree preparation and who are interested in disability, disability culture, and the lived experiences of persons with disabilities to enroll in the graduate courses offered. Post-baccalaureate students and matriculated graduated students are invited to enroll in Disability Studies course that are offered in both traditional and online formats. Non-matriculated students will be required to follow university procedures to enroll in the Certificate Program.

Disability Studies Courses

DSST 310. DISABILITY, CULTURE AND SOCIETY. 5 Credits.

Notes: may be stacked with DSST 501.
Satisfies: cultural and gender diversity university graduation requirement.
Disability and persons with disabilities have been with us throughout the history of humankind. This course familiarizes students to disability as a component of the diverse tapestry of society. Historical disability conceptualizations and issues are discussed. Contemporary and emerging explanations of disability in contemporary society and Disability Culture are explored.

DSST 410. DISABILITY AS DIVERSITY. 5 Credits.

Cross-listed: WMST 418.
Notes: may be stacked with DSST 510.
Pre-requisites: DSST 310 or permission from DSST program chair.
Disability shapes, and is shaped by, multiple social and cultural identities as well as lived experiences. This course teaches students to recognize, analyze, and comprehend disability, and disabled persons, as part of the rich tapestry of human experience; including disability intersections with other diverse identities and groups in society. Working through interdisciplinary scholarship, cultural artifacts, and first-person accounts, students will learn how disability compliments and also complicates existing identity categories and notions of diversity.

DSST 420. HUMAN DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. 5 Credits.

Notes: may be stacked with DSST 520.
Pre-requisites: successful completion of a university diversity course or permission of the instructor.
Satisfies: international studies university graduation requirement.
This course explores how laws and policies affect diverse people and groups; majority and minority, domestically and globally. It goes beyond laws and policies affecting discrete groups based on their characteristics by addressing intersectionalities, analyzing beliefs and practices that transcend specific times, identities, and locations. It looks at how societies and contexts frame people’s individual characteristics and traits and develop policies and practices that reflect and reinforce those perceptions and promote or limit people’s access. It addresses historical and contemporary practices such as internal and external colonialism in domestic and global contexts.

DSST 430. DISABILITY: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES. 5 Credits.

Notes: may be stacked with DSST 530.
Pre-requisites: DSST 310 or permission of instructor.
Representations of disabled people in literature, art, film, music and theatre reflect and shape what disability means and what it means to be disabled. In addition to exploring mainstream representations, we will examine works that demonstrate artistic, scholarly and concrete ways of doing disability differently.

Eastern Washington University
DSST 490. SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT IN UNIVERSAL ACCESS. 5 Credits.
Notes: may be stacked with DSST 590.
Pre-requisites: DSST 410 or permission of the instructor.
Satisfies: senior capstone university graduation requirement.
This course provides students the opportunity to develop a community-based, service-learning project with colleagues from multiple academic disciplines. Under the direction of the instructor, students participate in a project that addresses universal access in the context of a diverse society. Weekly lectures integrate conceptual and practical learning relative to universal access for diverse populations including those with disabilities. At the discretion of the student's academic major advisor, it can also serve as a Senior Capstone experience.

DSST 496. EXPERIMENTAL COURSE. 1-5 Credits.

DSST 499. DIRECTED STUDY. 1-15 Credits.
Pre-requisites: permission of the instructor, department chair and college dean.
Independent study under faculty direction, adapted to individual needs of the students.

DSST 501. DISABILITY, CULTURE AND SOCIETY. 5 Credits.
Pre-requisites: baccalaureate degree or instructor permission.
Disability and persons with disabilities have been with us throughout the history of humankind. This course has been developed to familiarize students to disability as a component of the diverse tapestry of society. Historical disability conceptualizations and issues will be discussed. Contemporary and emerging explanations of disability in contemporary society and Disability Culture will be explored.

DSST 510. DISABILITY AS DIVERSITY. 5 Credits.
Notes: may be stacked with DSST 430.
Pre-requisites: baccalaureate degree or instructor permission.
Disability shapes, and is shaped by, multiple social and cultural identities as well as lived experiences. This course teaches students to recognize, analyze, and comprehend disability, and disabled persons, as part of the rich tapestry of human experience; including disability intersections with other diverse identities and groups in society. Working through interdisciplinary scholarship, cultural artifacts, and first-person accounts, students will learn how disability compliments and also complicates existing identity categories and notions of diversity.

DSST 520. HUMAN DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS. 5 Credits.
Notes: may be stacked with DSST 420.
Pre-requisites: bachelor's degree or permission of the instructor.
In this course, students explore how laws and policies are formulated and applied across diversities; minority and majority, advantaged and disadvantaged. We investigate the explicit and implicit effects of laws and policies and how they enhance and inhibit human rights for people based on characteristics such as gender and gender identity, race and ethnicity, disability, religion, and economic status. Beginning with a foundation in U.S. laws and policies, students also explore international human diversity and human rights. We assess historical and contemporary approaches to human rights including mechanisms employed by leaders such as the founding leaders of the U.S., Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, and Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela of South Africa, and apply them to contemporary issues and events.

DSST 530. DISABILITY: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES. 5 Credits.
Notes: may be stacked with DSST 430.
Pre-requisites: bachelor's degree or permission or instructor.
This course addresses Disability Studies as it as unfolded within and across the humanities and liberal arts. Over the last generation, disability studies scholars have analyzed representations of people with disabilities as they appear in literature, myth, art, film, photography, music and theatre. These fields reflect and shape the meaning and reality of disability. Poetic and other artistic modes of discourse can deepen our understanding of the lived experience of disability. These shared representations of disability are, for the most part, taken for granted even though they have a powerful effect on popular culture, influence the attitudes and behaviors of individuals, and play a part in the formation of public policy related to disability. In addition to exploring analysis of disability representation, we will also look at scholarly interventions within the humanities and learn about humanities-based research methods that have come out of disability studies.

DSST 590. INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECT IN UNIVERSAL ACCESS. 5 Credits.
Notes: may be stacked with DSST 490.
Pre-requisites: DSST 510 or permission.
This course is applies classroom learning to community settings. Students in this course will participate in community engaged service learning with colleagues from multiple academic disciplines. Under the direction of the instructor and working with a community mentors, students will participate in projects that enrich the community by enhancing universal access and full participation in society by diverse groups.

DSST 596. EXPERIMENTAL COURSE. 1-6 Credits.