

**RACKHAM 580**



**NOTHING  
ABOUT US  
WITHOUT US**

**DISABILITY RHETORICS**

**M 1:00-3:00PM • ANGELL G232**

**CROSS-LISTINGS: ARCH 609 / EDUC 580 / ENGLISH 528 / KINESLGY 505 /  
PMR 580 / RACKHAM 580 / SOC 580 / SW 572 / WS 590**

**INSTRUCTOR**

Melanie Yergeau  
Department of English

**OFFICE HOURS**

W 10:30am-12:30pm  
& by appointment

**CONTACT**

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## Course description and objectives • • •

In 1984, Jim Corder described rhetoric as an “inventive universe,” as a “a way of being in the world.” That same year, disabled activists nationwide protested inaccessible public transit, with many arrested and thrown from their chairs as they chained themselves to busses and blockaded doorways and streets with their bodies.

In this class, we will explore the many inventive universes that disability—as embodiment, as critical modality, as site of reclamation and protest—yields in past and present moments. Among other items, our explorations will take us through rhetorical theory and theories of affect and embodiment, multimodal technologies, and intersectional discourses on disability, race, gender, sexuality, and class. Our conversations will consider the topoi, commonplaces, and rhetorical affordances of disabled being in the world, by means of disability literature, blogs, and pedagogical offerings.

## Required materials • • •

Dolmage, Jay. (2013). *Disability Rhetoric*. Syracuse University Press.

Wilson, James C., & Lewiecki-Wilson. (2001). *Embodied Rhetorics: Disability in Language and Culture*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

## Assignments + activities • • •

**1 credit:** 8 reading responses (one of which must be a final reflection), participation & attendance

**3 credit:** 8 reading responses, resource creation project, proposal + final project, participation & attendance

### Reading responses

Throughout the semester, you will be expected to compose at least eight responses to our course readings (to be posted to our CTools discussion forum) and to comment on your peers' posts as well. These postings will enliven our discussion and thus be an important part of our time together.

### Resource creation project

For this project, you will develop a small resource (in the form of a brief bibliography, lesson plan, and/or instructional guide) that examines the intersections of disability studies and your home discipline—something that others in your field can make use of in their own work. You might, for instance, develop a singular, 20-minute lesson plan on trauma and trigger warnings that can be used in field training; or, you might create a 60-

second video or 5-panel photo illustration that explores how to make a presentation cognitively accessible. The resource(s) you create are not intended to be exhaustive, but are rather an opportunity for you to explore what's out there in your field and to craft something of use to the community. Your projects will have many potential homes, including digitally-born resources such as [Disability Rhetoric](#), [Composing Access](#), the [MLA Commons](#), among others.

## Final project

This final project is a rather flexible one. You may compose your project in any form, mode, genre, or register that makes most sense for your field. Your project might take form in/as poetry, technical or field reports, seminar papers, multimodal narratives (video, audio, artwork), syllabi or lesson plans, and so on. Your project should be broadly comparable to what is being produced in a 500-level (i.e., intro to grad school) class in your home discipline. This means that your project should be researched, with no fewer than 10 sources: You might think of the resource creation project, for instance, as a preparatory move in this regard.

As well, with your project I will ask you to also include a short statement (2 to 3 pages) that positions your work within the context of our class. This statement should be both explanatory and reflective: It should provide detail that guides our reading/viewing, but it should also reflect on the process of creation and its connections back to disability studies.

Midway through the semester (**March 10**), I will ask you to submit an informal proposal that describes your intent for the project, in terms of form, scope, topic, and audience. We will discuss your proposals in class together. As well, I have reserved our last two class sessions (**April 14 + 21**) for workshopping of your projects. During this time, you will share your work with the class, as well as offer feedback for your peers.

**\*\* 1-credit folks:** Your final reading response will take form as a reflection on the course, including some of your peers' final projects. You may use these workshop sessions as material for these reflections.

## Course policies • • •

**Participation** // Effective participation in class discussion means being well-prepared through reading, listening carefully to others, and contributing positively to the ongoing conversation (both online and off) by offering a reflection based on the reading, posing a question, or identifying passages that are confusing or difficult to understand.

**Technological mishaps** // Technology failures aren't a matter of *if*—they're a matter of *when*. Save early and save often, and be sure to back up your work. I recommend that you save your work in two separate locations (e.g., your external hard drive, your home computer, flash drive, and/or CD).

## Resources • • •

**Accessibility & accommodations** // Services for Students with Disabilities, located in G-664 Haven Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. With documentation, I am especially interested in providing any accommodations that have probably been best determined by you and an SSD counselor in advance. Regardless of whether or not you are registered with SSD, please let me know what we can do to maximize your learning potential, participation, and general access in this course. You can contact SSD at (734) 763-3000 or <http://ssd.umich.edu/>.

**LSA Instructional Support Services** // [ISS](#) provides equipment and technical support to students enrolled in LSA classes. You will be using ISS's resources extensively throughout the semester. ISS operates three centers where UM students may check out AV equipment for classroom use and for short-term loans. You can contact ISS at (734) 615-0100 or email them at [lsa-iss-reservations@umich.edu](mailto:lsa-iss-reservations@umich.edu).

# SCHEDULE

*ER = Embodied Rhetorics*  
*DR = Disability Rhetoric*

	Reading Due	Assignments Due
<b>Week 2: Introductions</b>		
M 1/13	Linton, "Disability Studies / Not Disability Studies" Weise, <a href="#">"Cloning Disabled Subjects"</a>	
<b>Week 3: Probably more snow?</b>		
M 1/20	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
<b>Week 4: Narrative &amp; identity</b>		
M 1/27	Couser (ER) Wilson & Lewiecki-Wilson (ER) Milner, <a href="#">"Voice Giving (Way)"</a>	
<b>Week 5: Pedagogy &amp; professional development</b>		
M 2/3	Brueggemann (ER) Erevelles, "Coming Out Crip" Kerschbaum et al., <a href="#">"Faculty Members, Accommodation, and Access in Higher Education"</a>	

<b>Week 6: Theories of Design</b>		
M 2/10	Selections from Pullin's <i>Design Meets Disability</i> Siebers, "Culture Wars" Hamraie, <a href="#">"Designing Collective Access"</a>	
<b>Week 7: Rhetorical condition(s)</b>		
M 2/17	Dolmage, chs. 1-3 (DR)	<b>Resource project due (3 credit)</b>
<b>Week 8: Guest speaker - Jay Dolmage</b>		
M 2/24	Dolmage, chs. 4-6 (DR)	
<b>3/3: winter break: NO CLASS</b>		
<b>Week 9: Rhetorics of disclosure, rhetorics of ableism</b>		
M 3/10	Vidali, "Rhetorical Hiccups" Kerschbaum, "Avoiding the Difference Fixation" Cherney, <a href="#">"The Rhetoric of Ableism"</a>	<b>Proposals due (3-credit)</b>
<b>Week 10: Neurodivergent rhetorics</b>		
M 3/17	Prendergast (ER) Selections from Price, <i>Mad at School</i> Derby, <a href="#">"Accidents Happen"</a>	

<b>Week 11: Intersectionality</b>		
M 3/24	Schalk, <a href="#">“Coming to Claim Crip”</a> Kim, “Asexuality in Disability Narratives” Kafer, selections from <i>Feminist, Queer, Crip</i>	
<b>Week 12: Guest speaker - Elizabeth (Ibby) J. Grace</b>		
M 3/31	Grace, “Autistethnography” and “Autistic Community and Culture” Jack, “Gender Copia” Duffy & Dorner, “The Pathos of Mindblindness”	
<b>Week 13: Accessibility &amp; digital rhetoric</b>		
M 4/7	Michalko & Titchkosky (ER) Oswal & Hewett, “Accessibility Challenges for Visually Impaired Students and Their Online Writing Instructors”	<b>Project drafts due to CTools by noon on Friday, April 11 (3 credit)</b>
<b>Week 14: Workshopping &amp; sharing</b>		
M 4/14	your peers’ works-in-progress	
<b>Week 15: Workshopping &amp; sharing, continued</b>		
M 4/21	your peers’ works-in-progress	<b>Final projects (3 credit) &amp; reflections (1 &amp; 3 credit) due by 5pm on Friday, April 25</b>