Disability is a feminist issue. Most women will be disabled at some time in their lives. Over 15% of women in Canada have disabilities now. In addition most women will spend part of their lives giving care to people with disabilities. We will explore disability issues by focusing on the thoughts and experiences of women with disabilities and of women who provide care to people with disabilities.

Topics covered in this course will include: Defining disability; how disability is socially constructed from difference; cultural attitudes toward the body, including the quest for perfection and control; the ‘Otherness’ of people with disabilities and its consequences; violence against women with disabilities; the cognitive and social authority of medicine over our experiences of our bodies; how disability and gender affect education, training and employment; sexuality and friendship for women with disabilities; reproductive issues; mothers with disabilities; women’s experiences of caring for people with disabilities, including disabled children; dependency/independence/interdependence; and disability cultures and politics.

Required Readings:


In addition, a package of readings for the course will be available for purchase from the bookstore.

Course Requirements:

Students will be required to write two short (2 pages at 250 words/page) discussion papers on assigned readings (for 20% of the final mark), one take-home mid-term exam (4-5 pages at 250 words/page) on the lectures and readings (for 30% of the final mark), and one research/discussion paper (approximately 10 pages at 250 words/page, for 40% of the final mark), and to attend class and to participate in class discussion (10% of the final mark).

Prerequisite: WS 101 or 102 (may be taken concurrently)
Designated Credit: This course may be applied to the certificate in Liberal Arts.