



WGSS 3322 | Intersectionalities of Race, Class, Age, Disability & Gender

Section: 17329 | Asynchronous Online

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1302 or equivalent. WGSS 2350 or WGSS 2360, or by permission of instructor. This course explores the ways in which intersectionalities among gender and other identity markers, including race, class, age, and dis/ability, affect the experience, rights, privileges and opportunities afforded people in the US and other societies around the globe.

Instructor Information

Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda

Department: Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

Email: ajpegoda@central.uh.edu

Office Hours

Zooms by appointment weekdays roughly 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. CST

General Course Information

Course Theme: Intersectionalities and Disability Studies

Course Meeting Time: Asynchronous Online

Course Meeting Location: Canvas + Zoom, Microsoft Office, and UH Email

Due to this being a fully online course, Canvas is the primary means of administering this course. All weekly course materials are posted in preparation for each week. Students

must have strong computer skills and access to appropriate technologies (laptop or desktop, webcam, mic/earbuds, etc).

Tentative: All information herein is current to the best of my knowledge. This document remains tentative: Course handouts are living, evolving texts, not all-encompassing. Requirements, topics, and policies may change. Consider “Announcements” clarifications of, reiterations of, additions to, and/or modifications to this syllabus.

Note that this a WGSS class. Content may be sensitive and/or offensive to some. Materials are selected with learning in mind. This course approaches material in ways that are relevant to academic discourses. Students are, of course, never required to personally adopt any given fact, position, ideology, theory, or perspective.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Overview: Intersectionalities and Disability Studies (or, Crip Theories, Crip Narratives: Intersectionalities, Positionalities, and an Introduction to Critical Disability Studies) looks at how “crips”—whether disabled upon birth or later in life, whether long-term or short-term, whether in life or fiction—experience and (re)shape the world according to their individual hopes and fears and looks at how theory, history, and fiction can facilitate sophisticated understandings of the social construction called disability. Rooted in queer, feminist, and critical theories, this course uses the lens of intersectionality and positionality to study disability in the United States—with attention to age, class, family, gender, language, location, race, religion, and sexuality.

Students will attain—through lectures, discussions, and/or primary and secondary texts (e.g., fiction and nonfiction, alphabetic and non-alphabetic)—and demonstrate—through a variety of informal and formal compositions (e.g., quizzes, drafts, presentations, major papers)—high-level knowledge, perspectives, and theories about intersectionality and positionality, disabled lives, and critical disability theory. Students will be able to apply said information to analysis of disability and intersectionality to the world around them. Discussions and writing assignments will help students develop strong research, reading, writing, and analytical abilities.

Course Policies and Procedures

- Students need to embrace curiosity and a willingness to learn.
- Students are expected to behave in ways appropriate for the college classroom.
- As specified, assignments must be composed in the UH OneDrive and saved for the duration of the semester. Assignments must show incremental understandings of course concepts.
- Students are expected to read and follow the instructions on assignments.
- Students are expected to submit work by the deadline, always 11:59:00 p.m. CST on the specified day. All work has an automatic 6-hour emergency grace period. Work must also be submitted to the correct place in Canvas. Extensions might be possible for major assignments only but only when arranged in advanced and only when progress has been made on said assignment.
- Students will use the handout "Dr. Pegoda's Writing Rules" as they complete written work. This document details standard expectations for college writing related to format, structure, citations, etc.
- Students are expected to devote quality time to this course each week. Across the semester, around 180 hours total is standard.
- I might use completed work as an example in this class or a future class—anonymity will be maintained.
- Students must use their UH email account when emailing Dr. Pegoda and allow 48 hours for a reply, excluding weekends and holidays. Emails must follow professional standards. (Don't use Canvas Mail.)
- Access to a webcam is required for students participating in this course. Webcams must be turned on during Live Sessions, Office Hours, and for some assignments as specified.

Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence

Students are always expected to do their own work. The University of Houston Academic Policies define and prohibit academic dishonesty as follows: “Academic dishonesty’ means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that the student knows or should know is not permitted by the university or a course instructor to fulfill academic requirements.” The primary concern in this course is plagiarism, again defined in the Academic Honesty Policy: “Representing as one’s own work the work of another without acknowledging the source.” Plagiarism will be dealt with according to its type and severity: faulty citation of sources will be treated as a matter for teaching and revision; willful and knowing academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University policy and can result in failure of the assignment or the

course, and/or suspension from or expulsion from the University.

In addition, don't manipulate fonts/margins, don't adjust the speed of a video to be faster or slower, don't submit papers used in another class, don't buy papers, don't pay someone to do your work, don't get unauthorized help, and don't use any resources outside of those specifically assigned or recommended (unless you have prior approval). Don't upload, sell, or share your work or my materials to Chegg, Course Hero, or similar websites or to any AI or LLM.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Large Language Model (LLM) or similar is absolutely and strictly prohibited. Don't use any AI or LLM for brainstorming, consulting, thinking, reading, researching, writing, summarizing, translating, paraphrasing, revising, etc. Don't use CoPilot, Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude, Grammarly, Quill, or other tools/websites to help with anything, including any rewrite or edit suggestions from Word. Work completed with AI earns a zero.

****Only submit your own ideas in your own words.**** Should you learn of policy violations, you have an obligation to notify me—this helps protect the reputation of your degree.

Grading Rubrics and Weights

- 6 Live Sessions (12 points): six “Live Sessions,” live active attendance during scheduled Zooms (or if you cannot attend live, watching the recording and writing a short paper), 2 points each
- 4 Assessments (43 points): three timed objective exams, 10 points each; one metacognitive reflection, 13 points
- 3 Writing Assignments (45 points): Observations Paper, 10 points; Identity and Embodiment Paper, 15 points; *Then Came You Paper*, 20 points
- Bonus Opportunities: recover missed points or earn bonus points, 1 point each

Note that grades are earned. In general, A work is Excellent; B work is Good; C work is Satisfactory; D work is Unsatisfactory; and F work is Unacceptable.

Grades on small assignments (live sessions) are on a full credit/no credit basis. Grades on major essays and on open-ended questions are based on a holistic assessment according to what we have covered in class and general expectations for college writing.

Term grades are based on the following breakdown: 94.0 or more = A; 90.0-93.9 = A-; 87.0-89.9 = B+; 83.0-86.9 = B; 80.0-82.9 = B-; 77.0-79.9 = C+; 73.0-76.9 = C; 70.0-72.9 = C-; 67.0-69.9 = D+; 63.0-66.9 = D; 60.0-62.9 = D-; 59.9-0 = F

Students may receive a higher grade than their final point total, if they have shown substantial improvement or outstanding participation. I always look for ways to round up! Students should not ask for a higher grade; doing so will result in any rounding being revoked.

Discussion and Lecture Topics

- I. Introductions - Examples of Disability
- II. Disability Terminology
- III. Disability Embodiment
- IV. Disability Frameworks
- V. Disability History
- VI. Time, Space, Body, and Disability
- VII. Life, Death, Abuse, and Disability
- VIII. Authority, Tradition, Resistance, and Disability
- IX. Novel Disability
- X. Reel Disability
- XI. Conclusions

Crip Narratives and Crip Theory: Intersectionalities, Positionalities, and an Introduction to Critical Disability Studies

The Live Course Calendar

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Please go through materials in the order they are listed. Links often require your CougarNet username and password. If a link stops working, let me know!		
GETTING STARTED	"Chronic pain isn't just about what hurts today, it's about the fear that it's going to hurt tomorrow, and the day after that, and there's no end in sight. It's a constant reminder that pain is a part of my life, whether I like it or not." • The Syllabus (revisit when necessary) • READ ME FIRST (revisit when necessary) • Vocabulary Handout • The Live Sessions • Writing Center Bonus • Succeeding Asynchronously	
-W1- 8/24-8/30	<u>Introductions - Examples of Disability</u> "Hi. Disabled (including immunocompromised) people don't feel left behind by your pandemic ableism. We. Have. Been. Removed. From. Public. Life. That's not a feeling. That's a fact. And we have feelings about that fact." • "Neurofibromatosis Survivor: Snapshots From an MD Anderson Patient Who Doesn't Have Cancer" • "Commentary: Deaf Community Is Not Disabled" • "Deaf Man vs. Drive Thru: They Threw Away My Food!" • "Deaf and Destined to Bridge the World" • "DeafBlind: Blind But Not Blind" • "The Enchanting Music of Sign Language" • "I got 99 Problems... Palsy is Just One" • "Ambulatory Wheelchair Users Exist" • "Sensory Overload" • "Carly's Café - Experience Autism Through Carly's Eyes" • "Service Dogs and Invisible Disabilities" • "My Learning Disability: A Love Story" • "When My Mom Was a Kid..." • "Long COVID Puzzle Pieces Are Falling Into Place"	• First Day Quiz (8/29, 100% required to earn grades) • Course Folder (8/29, full credit required to earn grades) • Introductions (8/30, 1 bonus point)

	• Photos of authors in Disability Visibility • <i>Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-first Century</i>, article by Haben Girma -- get this book on your own **Mark your calendar: Zoom Meet and Greet, Wednesday August 26, 7-8 PM CST	
-W2- 8/31-9/6	<u>Disability Terminology</u> <i>"[Critical Disability Studies] obviously has many meanings, but at minimum means the questioning of institutionalized social assumptions from the perspective of the marginalized."</i> • "Terms and (Starting) Definitions" (revisit as needed) • Keywords for Disability Studies: "Accident," "Aging," "Illness," "Madness," "Medicalization," and "Passing" • "Person-First vs. Identity-First Language" • "Inspiration Porn and the Objectification of Disability" • "Is Wearing a Face Mask Performative?" • "10 Principles of Disability Justice" • "The Power of the 'C' Word" (optional) **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Monday, August 28, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Dr. Pegoda)--response required unless attended live (9/5, 2 points) **Start the Observations Paper
-W3- 9/7-9/13	<u>Disability Embodiment</u> <i>"People have way too much faith in the medical system's ability to find the cause of their health issues and help them. You've watched way too many medical dramas, folks. Usually they just shrug and tell you you're too fat."</i> • "Simi Linton: New Yorkers for Dance" • From "Disability and Embodiment" (Simon Dickel, <i>Embodying Difference: Critical Phenomenology and Narratives of Disability, Race, and Sexuality</i>) • "Crip Fairy Godmother" • "Art Exhibit: What Can a Body Do?" • "Against Technoableism: The Pulse" • <i>Disability Visibility</i>, articles Harriet McBryde Johnson, Ariel Henley, June Eric-Udorie, and Alice Sheppard • Additional information about embodiment (optional) **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, September 8, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Crip Panel)--response required unless attended live (9/12, 2 points)
-W4- 9/14-9/20	<u>Disability Frameworks</u> <i>"The doctor's note itself isn't what bothers me. What bothers me is the worldview where a doctor's note distinguishes credible illness from what is seen as lying. That's an ableist, classist, racist world, and probably a bunch of other bad things to."</i> • "The Medical Industrial Complex" • "Medical and Social Models of Disability" • "7 Hidden Costs of Disability" • "Supercrip and Eli Clare's The Mountain" • "A Model of Cripnormativity (Or, Is the Crip Body Accepted?)" • "Greg Abbott's Wheelchair" • The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability, Ch 2,	• The Live Sessions (Dr. Moore)--response required unless attended live (9/19, 2 points) • Test #1 (9/20, 10 points) **Suggestion: Schedule a visit with the Writing Center to discuss your Observations Paper, see "Writing Center Bonus"

	"The Social Construction of Disability" • "Hermeneutical Justice Is The Key To Social Justice" • "Unsolicited Advice Can be Hurtful" • "What Does 'Allostatic Load' Mean for Your Health?" • How Poverty and Racism 'Weather' the Body **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Monday, September 14, 7-8 PM CST	
-W5- 9/21-9/27	<u>Disability History</u> "I had a patient today who was a little elderly Black woman. She was telling me that she really didn't want to go to the hospital because her hair wasn't done and she notices that white doctors and nurse treat her differently when her hair is done vs. when it isn't." • "Big Idea History Syllabus" • Beginning with Disability: A Primer, Ch 4 "Disability Rhetoric" & Ch 10 "Disability History" • "The Spirit Chooses the Body it Will Occupy: Indigenous North America, Pre-1492" • "Disabled People Were Holocaust Victims, too" • "Edward Kienholz's The State Hospital (1966)" & Explanations • Texas Disability History Collection (take a look around, if you have time) • Disability Visibility, article by Jen Deerinwater	• Observations Paper (9/27, 10 points)
-W6- 9/28-10/4	<u>Disability History, cont.</u> "Written into works of fiction, religious texts, newspapers, art, drama, film, the annals of history, and, yes, the academic curriculum are the terms of the contract. Beliefs about disabled people, our worth and potential, are inscribed in these texts." • Crip Camp (documentary) • "Nothing About Us Without Us': Moments in the Fight for Rights" • "Disability Rights Activist Judy Heumann Dies at 75" • "Curb Cuts" • "Our Fight for Disability Rights -- and Why We're Not Done Yet" • "If You're in a Wheelchair, Segregation Lives" • "A Tale of Two Closets" • "The New Disability Landscape" • Long COVID and Society (optional, explore)	**Start the Identity and Embodiment Paper
-W7- 10/5-10/11	<u>Time, Space, Body, and Disability</u> "Crip time is flex time not just expanded but exploded; it requires reimagining our notions of what can and should happen in time, or recognizing how expectations of 'how long things take' are based on very particular minds and bodies." "When a disabled body moves into any space, it discloses the social body implied by that space. There is a one-to-one correspondence between the dimensions of the built environment and its preferred social body-the body invited inside as opposed to those bodies not issued an invitation." • Keywords for Disability Studies: "Space" • "The Spoon Theory" • "Different Spoons for Different Things"	

	• "Thread about Disability Denial" • "Crip Time" • "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time" • "Crippling Time at Work" • "Rejecting Curative Time" • "In Bed" • "Michel Foucault" • "What is Biopolitics?" • "Foucault: Disciplinarity and Creation of Docile Bodies" • Disability Visibility, articles by Sky Cubacub, Keah Brown, and s.e. smith	
-W8- 10/12-10/18	<u>Life, Death, Abuse, and Disability</u> "Sometimes disabled people can't/don't want to be resilient. When people expect disabled folks to perform the super crip, they are directly saying that overworking ourselves into the ground is a prerequisite to being human. I reject this role projected onto me; I'm done playing it." • "Clouds" • Keywords for Disability Studies: "Euthanasia" • Beginning with Disability: A Primer, Ch 41 "Assisted Suicide" • "My Mother's Final Wish -- and the Right to Die With Dignity" • "Why We Oppose Assisted Suicide Laws Not Dead Yet" • "Who Is the Victim in the Anna Stubblefield Case?" • "Tell Them You Love Me is Shamefully Ableist" • "The Sexual Assault Epidemic No One Talks About" • "It's Okay, I'm a Doctor': Recalling a #MeToo Experience" • "Recollection is Not Part of Informed Consent" • "Meet the Devotees: The People Turned on by Disability" • "Ashley Treatment' on the Rise Amid Concerns From Disability Rights Groups" • "My Body Is Not a Prayer Request" • Disability Visibility, articles by Sandy Ho, Rebecca Cokley, Keshia Scott, and Britney Wilson **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, October 13, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Angel Ponce)--response required unless attended live (10/17, 2 points) • Test #2 (10/18, 10 points) **Suggestion: Schedule a visit with the Writing Center to discuss your Identity and Embodiment Paper, see "Writing Center Bonus"
-W9- 10/19-10/25	<u>Authority, Tradition, Resistance, and Disability</u> "For many disabled people, it's not possible to live a fully sustainable or eco-friendly lifestyle. Whether it be relying on deliveries, ready meals, single use plastics, medication tested on animals, animal products... we can only do our best with the circumstances we are in." • "Passing as Sane, or How to Get People on the Bus to Sit Next to You" • "Wheelchair? Hearing Aids? Yes. 'Disabled'? No Way." • "A Hard Look at Invisible Disability" • "Forced Intimacy: An Ablest Norm" • "The Heumann Perspective: Kenny Fries" • "Hi Ren" • Crip Negativity (Chapter 2 and 3)	• Identity and Embodiment Paper (10/25, 15 points)
-W10- 10/26-11/1	<u>Reel Disability</u> "I adore its defiant external edge, its comfortable internal truth. Queer belongs to	

	me. So does cripple for many of the same reasons. Queer and cripple are cousins: words to shock, words to infuse with pride and self-love, words to resist internalized hatred, words to help forge a politics." • Keywords for Disability Studies: "Representation" • "The Pitt Erases the Pandemic's Past and Present" • "9 Ableist Tropes In Fiction I Could Do Without" • "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disability Existence" • "Trauma: Beyond Diagnosis and Clinical Treatment" • Starting Points: Reading Film as Literature • <i>Then Came You</i> (2018, dir., Peter Hutchings - available free/to rent various places online.) • "EDF Disabled English Commercial" • Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education, Ch. 5 "Disability on Campus, on Film: Framing the Failures of Higher Education" (optional)	**Start the <i>Then Came You</i> Paper
-W11- 11/2-11/8	<u>Reel Disability, cont.</u> "Every film is political. Most political of all are those that pretend not to be: 'entertainment' movies. They are the most political films there are because they dismiss the possibility of change. In every frame they tell you everything's fine the way it is. They are a continual advertisement for things as they are." • Beginning with Disability: A Primer, Ch 43 "Nondisabled Actors in Disabled Roles" • As Good As It Gets (Full movie, UH streaming) • "As Good As It Gets: Queer Theory and Critical Disability" (optional) • The Way He Looks (suggested after semester viewing)	**Suggestion: Schedule a visit with the Writing Center to discuss your <i>Then Came You</i> Paper, see "Writing Center Bonus"
-W12- 11/9-11/15	<u>Novel Disability</u> "I'll say it again: You've got to be as careful navigating healthcare as you are navigating prosecutors and police." • Good Kings, Bad Kings: A Novel (start) • Keywords for Disability Studies: "Dependency" and "Institutions" • "ACE Questionnaire" • "About Adverse Childhood Experiences" **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, November 10, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Dr. Waggoner)--response required unless attended live (11/14, 2 points) • Then Came You Paper (11/15, 20 points)
-W13- 11/16-11/22	<u>Novel Disability, cont.</u> "I don't think we talk enough about the psychological toll it takes on disabled people to spend your entire life navigating the societal assumption-sometimes made explicit, sometimes only implied-that you're, at the end of the day, a burden." • Good Kings, Bad Kings: A Novel (finish) • "Polyvictimization" • "In Her Words" • "Thread about the Psych Ward" • <i>Disability Visibility</i>, articles by Ricardo T. Thornton and A. H. Reaume	
-W14-	Thanksgiving Break, 11/25-11/29	• Test #3 (11/24, 10 points) • The Live Sessions (Dr. Forrest)--response

11/23-11/29	**Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Monday, November 23, 7-8 PM CST	required unless attended live (11/30, 2 points)
-W15- 11/30-12/5	<u>Conclusions</u> • <u>"Thank You Alice Wong"</u>	• <u>Course Reflection</u> (12/5, 13 points)

Dear class,

Welcome! Welcome! I'm Dr. Pegoda, and I'm glad you are here. I look forward to our time together.

To get started in this course, please complete the following in the order listed:

- Read the [Syllabus](#).
- Read the "First Day Addendum for Dr. Pegoda's Classes." (below)
- Take the [First Day Quiz](#) until you earn a 100%. If you haven't earned a full credit by the due date, you will be unable to advance in the class until doing so.
- Complete the [Course Folder](#) assignment. If you haven't earned a full credit by the due date, you will be unable to advance in the class until doing so. You'll get another opportunity if you miss a step the first time. I have to manually process submissions for the Course Folder, so please be patient after submitting. I'll be watching submissions closely.
- Read and study the [Live Course Calendar \(LCC\)](#) linked on the Canvas homepage. This setup is likely different from most college classes, but students say it's very effective. The LCC is extremely important. It lists all readings and assignments. This is the only place you should access readings and assignments. Everything in the class aside from my announcements and your grades is available through the LCC.

Whenever you have general questions or need to contact me, send me an email from your UH email account. Be sure to follow the guidelines of professionalism. My address is ajpegoda@central.uh.edu. I'm always glad to schedule a Zoom.

Note that we will have a Zoom meet and greet session on Wednesday, August 26, 7-8 p.m. CST. Please come in you have any questions or just want to say hi! Link forthcoming.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pegoda (and the Support Team!)

First Day Addendum for Dr. Pegoda's Classes

****The information herein is the kind of information we'd discuss together if we were together live**

discussing “first day” information and going over my expectations. It’s a bit long, but I want to be sure you have the necessary information to thrive.

Welcome to our *brave space*.

Students call me “Dr. Pegoda.” “Professor Pegoda” or “Professor” are also acceptable. I have been teaching since May 2007 and at the University of Houston since 2008. You can learn about my background by visiting <https://andrewpegoda.com>.

I’m glad you’re here. I know times are stressful and uncertain for many. My mission is to help facilitate your learning—and unlearning—and to provide opportunities for growth. I hope that we can all 1) appreciate “the learning worth crying about” (Dr. Michael Wesch); 2) understand the role of failure in learning (Professor Clint Tuttle); 3) own decisions and “become an active owner of [our] education” (Dr. Gabriela Diaz de Sabates); and 4) embrace “the emotional demands of college” (Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda). In sum, learn all that you can because they can never take that away. We’re going to nurture actual intelligence, not artificial intelligence. Thus, this AI is absolutely forbidden in this class.

Curiosity and a willingness to learn is vital. You will likely encounter views you find morally wrong and encounter persons and identities that are new, confusing, or uncomfortable. Please avoid agreeing or disagreeing. There are more sophisticated forms of engagement. For our purposes, we want to consider many different, different perspectives and think about how and why those exist. If we give respect to the thoughts that others offer (and consider intersectionalities and positionalities) we can learn and be more appreciative of our complex, nuanced world. Related, an important skill to learn in college is sometimes moving away from centering or referencing personal experience.

Note that I select content with education in mind. Materials might be excellent, terrible, new, or different. There should be no implied or assumed agreement between course content and myself. Covering every perspective on a given topic is not only impossible but irresponsible; thus, we cover a range I deem appropriate.

Further disclaimers especially for my WGSS classes.

Topics may include but are not limited to ableism, ageism, classism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, racism, and/or sexism, as well as death, murder, rape, and/or suicide and other forms of illness, trauma, and/or violence. Explicit, offensive, sensitive content, including language and nudity, may

appear. This list is not all-inclusive. Additional or specific warnings cannot be provided, as they make assumptions about what may harm (for example, Khan in *My Name is Khan* is greatly distressed by the color yellow) and as I cannot control what others may share. For some, such content may temporarily recall uncomfortable memories, and in more severe cases, content may trigger individuals. Students who are triggered may experience an extended flood of emotions that are difficult to regulate and that may make thinking rationally difficult. Being triggered/flooded could activate a flight, fright, or freeze reaction and can have physical manifestations. I am not a therapist and encourage you to consult with one, if needed. UH has on-call therapists available 24/7 at 713.743.5454. While studying, always feel free to take a break when/if needed. If you're interested in further details about nuances related to being a bit uncomfortable and then being triggered (by its correct, clinical, technical) definitions, see Dr. Melinda Wenner Moyer's piece "Are You 'Triggered' or Just Upset?" in the *New York Times*.

Some notes about college in general are in order, too.

Some think that since this isn't a STEM class, it won't be, can't be, or shouldn't be just as challenging. Remember that being a student is a job. Some also think that online classes will have less work than face-to-face classes. By law, all course formats are required to have equivalent workloads and to provide equivalent opportunities. You're paying the same price and earning the same credits, so it's only fair to have the similar responsibilities. If anything, online classes have *more* work because you are learning more independently.

There's also an alarming trend of students taking too many credits per semester. The traditional pathway was to take four or five classes in a regular semester (and one or two during the summer), while not doing any paid work or doing such on a very part-time basis. Now, students frequently attempt to take six classes in a regular semester (and three or four during the summer), while also holding down one or two jobs that demand 40-60 hours weekly. All before family responsibilities. This doesn't work well. If you're working full time, don't take an overload. To be successful in college, college must be a top priority. College is an investment in your future, your intellectual future most importantly. Sometimes investments require short-term sacrifices. For example, during the semester you might have to forgo some leisure activities to be successful.

College sometimes gets extra challenging for students. Note that anything shared concerning illness, safety, or wellness may be relayed to the appropriate office. I am a mandatory reporter if I learn about sexual violence that occurs by/to an enrolled student.

Some basic reminders and notes about the class.

This class is “Asynchronous Online.” Such, per the University, “do not meet face-to-face, and they do not have a regularly scheduled meeting time. Most of the class materials are available online at any time. Some asynchronous online classes may include virtual class meetings, which will be arranged on a class-by-class basis by the instructor.” In addition to weekly readings and assignments, this asynchronous class *does* include such virtual meetings in the form of Live Sessions and may also include a requirement to Zoom with me to discuss academic matters related to class. Dates for the live sessions are detailed on the Live Course Calendar (LCC). Please make every effort to attend these live, but if you cannot make it, there will be a recording and a short assignment to do

To succeed in online classes, you need a regular Windows or Apple computer. An iPad or iPhone (or similar) will not work. The Canvas App does not work correctly. A Chromebook will also not have the necessary power and functions to do everything. University policy [requires](#) that you have a regular laptop (or desktop) computer. Always contact UIT (University Information Technology) for help with anything computer related, not me. Cameras must be on during any virtual meetings and possibly during some assignments.

Speaking of the LCC from above. The LCC is the most important part of our Canvas shell, along with the Grades and Announcements tabs. This LCC is the only place you should access readings and assignments. You will encounter errors otherwise and will not have the necessary information to do well. If links ever stop working or become paywalled, let me know, and I'll fix it. When reading or watching the assigned material, take notes. These notes will help you with assignments. Take note of vocabulary, names, places, dates, stats, and the like. Chronology, significance, cause/effect are important, too. Songs are meant to be heard--so don't just look for the lyrics and read them. Songs and videos are meant to be watch on regular speed.

Test questions, essays, and other assignments must always show knowledge of course materials and be approached from such perspectives, so reading the material is absolutely essential.

Some notes about me and accommodations.

I am 40. I am a queer, crip (i.e., disabled), feminist scholar. I have neurofibromatosis and dozens of related conditions. I have had seven surgeries, so far(!); most recently a second brain surgery in January 2026. I take two dozen medications. I am dyslexic and neurodivergent. I have basically been in lockdown since March 2020, as SARS-CoV-2 continues its destruction, something I have written articles about. I was told by medical professionals long ago that my health posed too many obstacles to ever be a professor or even attend college. Yet, I have five college degrees, have countless publications, and am a professor.

Thus, I am committed to supporting equitable opportunities. You are encouraged to communicate access needs; please schedule a Zoom with me to do so. I know that the Medical Model of Disability doesn't always make healthcare accessible, safe, or comfortable. If you are registered with the Disability Center, let me know. As needed, you are charged with coordinating communication with the Disability Center. Every effort is made to follow these accommodations or appropriate and reasonable alternatives.

Some notes about communicating me with.

When you have a question or want to share something with me, please email. (Remember: I do not use Canvas Mail or Teams.) Depending on the message, I will reply directly to you, or I will address it in the next daily announcement. I will respond promptly (i.e., within 48 hours, excluding weekends/holidays), if the message is professional. Practice professionalism by sending messages from your UH email account and by including a subject, greeting (and addressing me by name) and sign-off with your full name, concise paragraphs, appropriate content, your student ID, and your class name. Emails should be written by you without any outsourcing to AI. When requesting an appointment, include all of the times you are available to expedite the process. Don't resend messages within minutes or hours or ask that I answer as soon as possible. Emails are triaged and answered according to relative importance (and according to the spoons I have available). Make sure to check your UH email regularly, and if you receive a direct email from me, please reply promptly.

Some notes recapping essential core requirements.

Commitment – Study every week. Three-credit college classes require around 180 hours across the semester, per UH and state/federal policies. If you work hard, you'll do well. If you make good-faith efforts to finish the class, you'll likely pass.

Writing – No AI. Written work must be in English and use appropriate capitalization, complete sentences, and paragraphs to earn credit. Give punctuation, grammar, and spelling due attention. Follow "Dr. Pegoda's Writing Rules." You are always expected to fully answer prompts with examples, analysis, and/or synthesis that explores who, what, when, where, how, and why. Further, except as otherwise noted, remember it's required to use the online version of Word provided in AccessUH for the entirety of written assignments—simply give files appropriate names and save them to your OneDrive Course Folder. This allows me to access a document's version history, as needed.

Instructions – Please read and follow them carefully. Not following instructions is the biggest thing

that frequently holds students back.

Materials – Most materials are provided. For this class, you need to buy or otherwise have access to ***Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-first Century***. It's college, so always allow for the possibility that you will need to spend small amounts on other supplies or materials.

Integrity – No cheating. No AI. No plagiarism. No shenanigans. Do your own work, and you'll be fine. Do note that unless otherwise noted, outside materials (i.e., that is materials not assigned to the entire class) are prohibited. You can and should always use course materials for assignments.

In addition, don't mass message the class, and don't make/join a group chat, such as GroupMe. This is because such spaces often foster cheating, bullying, and other behaviors that are not productive. You can use the Introductions activity and the UH Student Directory to contact one or two others in the class, if so desired. (As of Summer 2026, UH also specifically prohibits use of GroupMe and other means of communication outside the UH networks.)

Things you can do: You are always welcome to use course materials and your personal notes while completing graded work, including exams. Study groups are fine, too, just no more than two or three. You are encouraged to visit the Writing Center (<https://uh.edu/writing-center/>). For tutoring, student success workshops, or an academic coach, contact LAUNCH (<https://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch>). Both the Writing Center and LAUNCH offer services online and face-to-face. It's fine to have a friend or relative proofread work—provided they do not use any kind of AI or LLM and they only point out typos or areas in need of possible clarification. Of course, you can always reach out to me. I am happy to review assignments before you submit them for grading, but I need at least 48 hours (excluding weekends/holidays), and you need time to make any revisions.

Overall, my integrity policy underscores the importance of original, independent thinking and simply being truthful in all interactions with class. As Dr. David Smiley says, “[We] must state unequivocally that if you do not want to be formed in the classroom and be tested by the fires of critical thinking and academic rigor, then the University...is not the place for you.”

Some notes about grades.

Dr. Adam Grant writes, *“There’s a reason we award Olympic medals to the athletes who swim the fastest, not the ones who train the hardest. What counts is not sheer effort but the progress and performance that result. Motivation is only one of multiple variables in the achievement equation. Ability, opportunity, and luck count, too. Yes, you can get better at anything, but you can’t be great at everything. The ideal response to a disappointing grade is not to complain that your diligence wasn’t rewarded. It’s to*

ask how you could have [done better]...The true measure of learning is not the time and energy you put in. It's the knowledge and skills you take out."

Thus, grades are earned. Major writing assignments, projects, and open-ended questions on assessments are graded holistically according to the following general descriptions:

Assignments that earn the highest marks shine in original, creative, critical thinking and show serious engagement. Audiences read these works effortlessly when it comes to format, diction, grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Assignments follow instructions and go beyond minimum expectations. Work is interesting and engages with materials and makes use of examples, synthesis, and analysis, as appropriate. Sources are appropriately cited. Effort is not a factor. **In sum, "A" work is excellent.**

Assignments that earn the grade of "B" sometimes exist in an odd limbo. Generally, these assignments lack degrees of originality, analysis, and/or "correctness." Weaknesses might be present in the analysis and evidence or in the presentation of ideas. Such assignments tend to just do the assignment without anything special. **In sum, "B" work is good.**

Assignments that earn the grade of "C" tend to show disengagement. Analysis, organization, or prose lack sophistication due to generalizations, obvious statements, or already-established ideas. Submission lacks clear, personalized understanding of the topics. Work may appear rushed. Formatting might be on the sloppy side. **In sum, "C" work is satisfactory.**

Assignments scored at the "D" level typically show some very basic knowledge of some of the ideas at hand. Work might contain numerous factual or stylistic mistakes or might not follow the instructions. Work may show significant misunderstandings or partial understandings. Work may be incomplete. **In sum, "D" work is unsatisfactory.**

Assignments earn an "F" when serious gaps exist between submissions and expectations. Such work might be off-topic, show that important concepts have not been grasped, suggest that the student has guessed, have excessive stylistic mistakes, and/or be substantially incomplete. **In sum, "F" work is unacceptable.**

When you have questions about grades or feedback or if a mistake happened: first, take 24 hours to review and reflect upon your submission and class resources; and after this moratorium, second, please email me to schedule a Zoom. Grades will not be discussed by email. I am always glad to discuss improvement or correct a mistake. Don't use the Canvas "Comment" feature to communicate any thoughts or questions.

Once work is graded, focus on the future. DO NOT ask to re-do work. As above, assignments are open for large windows, there are numerous assignments, you can always receive feedback early, and UH offers its students many resources. Grades are always imperfect measurements—not indicators of worth—of your performance in the given contexts and goals of your life and the larger geopolitical realities we find ourselves in. When struggling, reach out early.

Grade bullying, per Professor Bridget Fernandes, is prohibited and is “when students ask for grades that have not been earned and/or place the blame for low grades on the professor.” Such unethical behavior is prohibited and can result in conduct sanctions. Specific examples of “grade bullying” or “grade grubbing” include when someone might fuss and (1) demand a higher grade, (2) suggest the grade earned will prevent graduation, law school, or a scholarship, (3) emphasize the time or effort used, (4) allude to other courses or programs with work considered more important, (5) reference past grades, or (6) say—after the fact—the assignment was confusing or too hard.