Disability Cultures:
Art, Film and Literature of People with Disabilities

NEJS 184B, Spring 2019, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:20

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A still from the music video for “Put the Spoon to My Mouth” by Sweetmeat, featuring Wobbly Dance (Yulia Arakelyan and Erik Ferguson). Yulia and Erik are sitting on a pile of feathers, facing each other, against a backdrop of a voile canopy. There is a ventilator tube they share, each with an end in their mouths.

Course Description
This course explores cultural representations of disability in Israel, Europe, and the US. By focusing on literature, film, dance, and visual art, it looks at personal and socio-political conceptualizations of disability. This course explores physical, mental, neurological, and emotional disability experiences, and their relations to gender, sexuality, nationalism, and creativity.

While in the past the experience of disability has been viewed as a condition of personal deficit and misfortune, our course will explore the work of writers, artists, scholars and activists, who have reinterpreted disability as a fact of life and a form of human variation. By discussing representations of people with disabilities, the course will provide in-depth analysis of the roles and stereotypes of disabled figures, women with disabilities in film, people with disabilities as artists and performers, disability and the Holocaust, the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and disability, and Crip and alternative self-
representations by artists with disabilities.

**Learning Goals and Objectives**
Through this course, students will understand key-terms, debates, and exigencies in the field of Disability Studies, and will gain an awareness of disability as a social and cultural construct. Students will acquire various frameworks for analyzing works of artists with disabilities, as well as other representations of disability in culture.

**Course Requirements**
Attendance and participation are particularly important and will count as part of the course grade. Students are expected to prepare for each class, participate in class discussion, present a short talk, and hand in written assignments in a timely manner. The final grade will be calculated as follows:
- Attendance, participation and oral presentation – 20%
- Midterm paper (due date: **Tuesday, February 26, 2019**) – 40%
- Final paper (due date: **Tuesday, April 30, 2019**) – 40%

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

**Access Accommodations**
I welcome you to discuss all access accommodation issues with me early in the semester. Please do not wear scented products.
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.
Please do not wear scented products.

**Courtesy**
I require and expect all students to treat each other with courtesy. We may be discussing some sensitive and sometimes upsetting topics; I expect this classroom to be a safe space for students to express their views. If you have any problems or questions, I encourage you to bring them to me.

**Academic Integrity**: You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.

**No cell phones or other communication devices will be permitted in class.**
**Laptops will also not be permitted without my prior consent.**
Special Events:

**Tuesday, January 29:** Guest Lecture, Professor Sarah Imhoff, Indiana University – “Jessie Sampter, Zionism, and the Challenge of Finding Historically Appropriate Models for Disability.”

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019:** Screening of the movie *The Sign for Love* (2017), and Q/A with co-directors El-Ad Cohen and Iris Ben Moshe. Location TBA

**Date TBA:** Guest Lecture: Professor Gannit Ankori, Brandeis University – “Frida Kahlo: Posing, Composing, Exposing”

Required Book:
Susan Nussbaum: *Good Kings Bad Kings* (2013) [Novel]

The course materials (readings, movies, video clips, etc.) may be found on LATTE.

**January 15: Introduction**
- *Ishon* (Pupil) *Theater, Inner Colors*, Tal Mazliach, Efrat Dotan, Shaked Zmirali, Gabriel Balachsan

**January 17: Models of Disability**
Paul K. Longmore: “The Second Phase: From Disability Rights to Disability Culture,” in: *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*

**January 22: No Class (Monday schedule)**

**January 24: Disability Culture**
- Nataly Zukerman: “The Other Body” (2013) [Autobiographical Performance]

Dror Harari: “Performing the Un-Chosen Israeli Body: Nataly Zukerman's *Haguf Ha'acher*,” *TDR* 60(1), 2016.

**January 29:** Guest Lecture, Professor Sarah Imhoff, Indiana University – “Jessie Sampter, Zionism, and the Challenge of Finding Historically Appropriate Models for Disability.”

**January 31: Disability and Nationalism (Zionism as a case study)**
- Moran Zuckerman (director): *Men on Wheels (Gvarim Al Galgalim*, 2003) [Documentary]

Suggested Reading:

Sagit Mor: “Hierarchies of Disability in Israeli-Zionist Collective Ethos and Public Policy.”


**February 5: Choreographing a Political Change**


**Suggested Reading:**


**February 7: Disability and Sexuality – Part 1**


**Suggested reading:**


**February 12: The Right to Parenthood**

- Screening of the movie *The Sign for Love* (2017), and Q/A with co-directors El-Ad Cohen and Iris Ben Moshe. Location TBA


**February 14: Disability and Sexuality – Part 2**

- Patty Berne (director): *Sins Invalid - An Unshamed Claim to Beauty in the Face of Invisibility* (2013) [Documentary]


**February 19: No Class**

**February 21: No Class**

**February 26 and February 28: “Furiously Rebellious Crip”**

Susan Nussbaum: *Good Kings Bad Kings* (2013) [Novel]
Suggested Reading:

March 5: On Being Ill
Susan Sontag: “The Way We Live Now” (The New Yorker, 1986) [story]
Virginia Woolf: On Being Ill

March 7 and March 12: Interdependence
- Alexandra Codina (director): Monica and David (2009) [Documentary]
- Wobbly Dance (Yulia Arakelyan and Erik Ferguson): "Put The Spoon to My Mouth" (2014), "You Too Are Made of Stars" (2014) [Dance Performance]

Suggested Reading:
- Astra Taylor (director): Examined Life: Influential Thinkers and The Spaces that Shape their Ideas [Martha Nussbaum, Judith Butler and Sunaura Taylor]

March 14 and March 19: People with Disabilities during the Holocaust
- Avi Nesher (director): The Matchmaker (Paam Hayiti) [Movie]
- Shahar Rozen (director): “Liebe Perla” (Dear Perla) (1999) [Documentary]
- “Worthy of a Voice—People with Disabilities during the Holocaust” [An on-line exhibition on the Nazi persecution of people with disabilities, 1933-1945]

Suggested Reading:

March 21: Weaponizing Disability
Liat Ben-Moshe: “Weaponizing Disability” (October 25, 2018)

March 26: Blind Self-Portraits

Suggested Reading:
Georgina Kleege: Sight Unseen (1999)


April 2 and April 4: Disability, Ethnicity, and Gender
  o Hanna Azoulay Hasfari (writer) and Shmuel Hasfari (director): Shchur (1994) [Movie]

April 9: Sexualized Violence against Women with Disabilities
  o Nitzan Gilady (director): Wedding Doll (2016) [Movie]

April 11: [WGS Distinguished Faculty lecture, Location: TBA]

April 16: No Class

April 18: “Natural Born Freak”
  o Sarah Houbolt [a circus and physical theatre performer]
  o Cirque Bijou and Diverse City: “Weighting,” “Extraordinary Bodies”

April 23: No Class

April 25: No Class

April 30: Imagining Disability Futures
  o Dani Menkin (director): 39 Pounds of Love (2005) [Animated Documentary]

Suggested Reading:

May 2: No Class (Friday schedule)