

Critical Disability Studies Reflection

I am currently crying while writing this because I loved this class so much. The person who left portraits in the fall of 2020 and the person leaving Critical Disability in the spring of 2022 is very different. During the interim of those periods, I went through a lot of physical and mental pain that almost nobody saw. I now identify as both chronically ill and someone with mental health challenges and addition to being physically disabled. I am still working on being proud of those things, but I am getting there. Yet again a Kristen Lindgren class reminded me that all people add value to the world and are worthy of commendation. I genuinely am not sure I would have made it through the semester without the constant joy and support of this class. I only hope that I was able to put some of the positivity you gave me back into the community. I will definitely be taking the lessons you all taught me to heart. Thank you.

In addition to the personal stuff, this class was a good follow-up to portraits since it helped me build on what I learned about disability in 2020. Portraits taught me that I belong and am needed in the disabled world. Critical disability challenged me to be a better member of my community. I have always said that I wanted to build spaces where everyone can thrive regardless of their challenges. Thinking about how to create the CCW exhibition forced me to realize that it's not always possible to cater to everyone constantly. This is because people's needs are often unintentionally in conflict with one another. Some people need a quiet space while others need to be loud and it is not possible to create rooms with both space to run and a comfy couch. It seems that the best solution to meet everyone's needs is to have options. I think the CCW exhibition was again an excellent example of this. The art gallery itself was spacious and had places for people to sit and the quiet space was well used. It seemed that everyone had a great time at the opening. This would not have been possible without teamwork. I occasionally get in the mindset

where I have to do everything myself but I was again reminded that the only way everyone's needs can be met is if we have multiple perspectives at the table. Even though I was the original person who posted that we had to start thinking about an accessible art space on Serendip, that hope could not possibly have been achieved without the suggestions for the social story and the quiet space, as well as everyone working together to complete audio and visual descriptions of the art. This class helped me realize that while it's not possible for every single need or complication to be dealt with at once, it is possible to help every person, regardless of need, as long as you have patience and teamwork.

Another place where my idea of disability was challenged was in reference to politics and economics. I usually do not like talking about either of those fields because I know I am not an expert in neither politics nor economics yet they are so talked about that everyone has to have an opinion because politics and economics are so central to all of existence. I also always felt that since my parents are both working in jobs related to economics, if I had an opinion different from theirs on how the world should be run, then I deserved to be incorrect. However, the proof from this class is incontrovertible: disabled people are limited and oppressed by our political system primarily because economics and the art of getting more money are central to life in the United States. This means that as a triple minority identity (disabled/non-binary/biologically female) I have to get off my butt and fight for my rights before they get deleted. I think that being part of the hybrid learning model petition, participating in Plenary, and voting in the Haverford elections were important steps to preserving disabled students' rights on campus, I need to follow through on my resolve and prepare to participate in the next set of Florida elections.

The best (and most difficult) part about this class was the opportunity to contribute to group learning through the midterm and final projects due to the types of classes that I tend to take. I do not often have the chance to exercise my creative muscles, so I wanted to take full ownership of what could be my last shot to be creative in an academic setting. I am so glad that I was able to expand upon topics in class that my background made me well positioned to tackle. The CRISPR comic was an adventure because unlike the eugenics and statistics comic I had no prior knowledge of the history or how the components worked. However, I knew that this was the area I wanted to center my final project around since the concept of bodily autonomy is up for debate again in the supreme court. I appreciated the help of my biology-inclined classmates for their patience in explaining concepts I used in the comic and finding some cool resources for me to use. I am proud of the final project as well as my ability to confront where my understanding of disability was originally lacking.