





Housekeeping

1. **Recording** – This event is being recorded.
2. **Audio** – Please leave microphone on mute. Individuals can enable closed captioning in the bottom toolbar.
3. **Q&A** – Please use the Q&A section for any questions. Chat will not be monitored for questions. We encourage participants to populate questions as the presentations advance, but all answers will be held until the Q&A. Any questions collected here but not answered during event will be reviewed and answered afterwards.
4. **Chat** – Chat will be used to share information with attendees and can be used for attendees to chat with each other. We encourage you to share comments and talk to each other in this area.



SUNY DEISJ Fellows Webinar Series 2025

Critical Disability Studies and Intersectional Ableism

February 21, 2025

Milo Obourn, SUNY Brockport and Lorna Perez, Buffalo State University



Opening/Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the land on which we are experiencing this workshop is the seized and unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which includes the Onödawa'ga:' Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Onedia, Mohawk, and Tuscarora Nations.

<https://native-land.ca/>

<https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/>

We note at the outset that dominant Western medical models of idealized embodiment, ability and disability as well as the treatment of those socially categorized as disabled, have been formed and informed by a colonial history of violence against and erasure of native cultures and peoples. And that white Western ideals of body and mind have been used as genocidal tools against native peoples in the land currently claimed as the United States of America.

We commit to centering Indigenous peoples' movements as an integral part of questioning and challenging ableist hierarchies.



DEISJ Fellows



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DEISJ Fellows

- Support faculty in updating and developing courses that fulfill the DEISJ General Education requirement.
- Develop resources and provide targeted support for DEISJ curricular matters
- Committed to developing, sustaining, and growing a community of practice on diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice curricular issues across the SUNY system.



DEISJ Learning Outcomes

- describe the *historical and contemporary societal factors* that shape the development of individual and group identity involving race, class, and gender;
- analyze the role that complex networks of *social structures and systems* play in the creation and perpetuation of the *dynamics of power, privilege, oppression, and opportunity*; and
- apply the principles of rights, access, equity, and autonomous participation to past, current, or future *social justice action*.



Where do we
most often hear
about disability in
the context of
higher
education?

- Student Accessibility Services
- Compliance
- Online learning platforms
- Universal Design for Learning
- “Inclusion” of students with disabilities



Where do we
most often see
disability appear
on course
content and
curricular
development?

- Education: “Special Ed” courses and certifications
- Psychology: “Abnormal Psych”
- Sports Studies/PE: Adapted activities, sometimes rehabilitation therapy
- Healthcare and Medicine: working with or treating PWD



Growing numbers of courses in Critical Disability Studies

- Critical Disability Studies (CDS) comes out of knowledge from Disability Rights Movements
- Centers the social and cultural construction of the ability/disability binary
- Sees Disability as a social identity like and in intersectional relationship to class, race, gender
- Resists the medical model of disability
- Is integrated in knowledge areas across the curriculum



Disability as a
social construct
and social
identity

Disability as
contextually
created

- Disability as a potentially universal experience
- Social construction of some bodily difference as disabled
- Environment and context define disability
- Disability as a broad and diverse category of experiences
- Our environments are not neutral but reflect ableist norms and assumptions



Critical Disability Studies sees ableism as:

- a social system
- encoded in cultural beliefs, legal histories, and institutional practices
- impacting all areas of society
- creating normative expectations for all bodies

- *Definition of ableism*: “The implicit belief that disability makes one less deserving of respect, a good education, membership in the community, equal treatment, equality before the law, opportunities to live independently and have self-fulfilling lives.” (Slesaransky-Poe & Garcia, 2014)
- Specifically targets people with disabilities
- Constructs definitions of disability
- Has been used to oppress and disempower women, LGBT people, Black people, Indigenous/Native people, immigrants, working class and poor people, etc.



Application to the DEISJ Gen Ed Category



Historical and Contemporary Shaping Factors

Practices of legal enslavement
Colonization of Indigenous land and cultures
Eugenics
Immigration
Institutionalization
Gender and sexual norms and ideals



Social Structures and Systems

Medical Industry—Disability as individual problem

Non-profit Industry—Charity Model

Capitalism—Worth based on productivity as worker

Structures of Poverty—Class and Disability

Education/School System—Pipelines, Segregation, and Access

Prison Industrial Complex—Continuation of Carceral Logics



Social Justice Action

Disability Rights Movements
Mad Pride
Radical Crip Collectives
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Disability Justice
Black Panthers
Mutual Aid
Sex Worker Liberation



Reflections

How has ableism impacted your field/discipline?

What ways do you incorporate a critique of ableism into your courses or disciplines?

What barriers do you worry about or questions do you have about including disability as part of DEISJ course and curricular content?



Citations and Additional Resources

The ADA <https://www.ada.gov/disability>

Autistic Self Advocacy Network <https://autisticadvocacy.org/>

Crip Camp (film): <https://cripcamp.com/>

Disability Visibility Project: <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/about/>

Mad Pride Resources <https://aci.uinfo/mad-pride-resources/>

Sins Invalid: Ten Principles of Disability Justice <https://sinsinvalid.org/10-principles-of-disability-justice/>

World Institute on Disability <https://wid.org/moving-from-disability-rights-to-disability-justice/>

Ben-Moshe, Liat. *Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition*. University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. *The Future Is Disabled : Prophecies, Love Notes, and Mourning Songs*.

Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2022.

Schalk, Samantha Dawn. *Black Disability Politics*. Duke University Press, 2022.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=3358996>.

T. Ward, John. *Indigenous Disability Studies*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2024. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032656519>.

Wong, Alice. *Disability Visibility: 17 First-Person Stories for Today : Adapted for Young Adults*. First edition., Delacorte Press, 2020.

Burch, Susan. "Access as Practice: Disability, Accessible Design, and History." *Reviews in American History*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2020, pp. 618–24. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rah.2020.0068>.

Jones, Angela. "I Can't Really Work Any 'Normal' Job:' Disability, Sexual Ableism, and Sex Work." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v42i2.9094>.

Schalk, Sami. "Critical Disability Studies as Methodology." *Lateral*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2017. *csalateral.org*, <https://doi.org/10.25158/L6.1.13>.

Sniatecki, Jessica, Holly Perry, and Linda Snell. "Faculty Attitudes and Knowledge Regarding College Students with Disabilities," 2015.



SUNY DEISJ Fellows Webinar Series 2025

Developed by SUNY DEISJ Fellows, these webinars are aimed at supporting faculty in teaching Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice courses in the SUNY General Education Framework and beyond.

February 14 Teaching DEISJ - Constructions of Class Identity and Power

February 21 Teaching DEISJ - Critical Disability Studies and Intersectional Ableism

March 7 Teaching DEISJ - Developing DEISJ Content Across the Curriculum

March 28 Teaching DEISJ - Intersections of AI and DEISJ

For more information, visit www.suny.edu/DEISJFellows



DEISJ Curriculum Development Certificate

<https://cpd.suny.edu/deisjcert/>



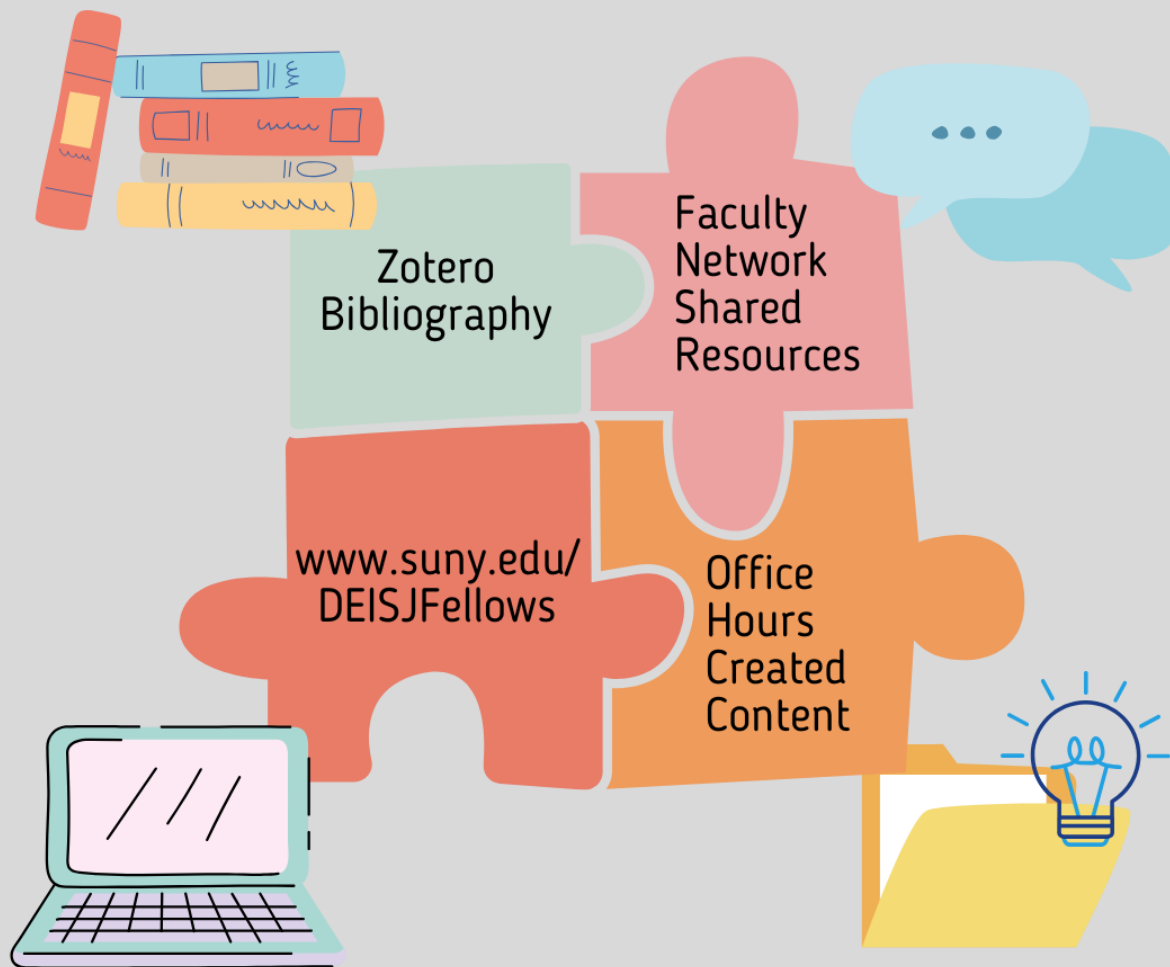
DEISJ Fellows Webpage

www.suny.edu/DEISJFellows

- Sign up for the mailing list
- Request to meet a fellow in office hours
- Join the DEISJ Faculty Network
- Check out DEISJ curricular resources
- Contact us at deisjfellows@suny.edu



SUNY DEISJ Fellows Repository





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