



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

PADM-GP 4155

Disability, Policy and Leadership– Building an Accessible World

Spring 2022

Instructor Information

- Professor Breandan Ward
- Email: bpw252@nyu.edu
- Phone: 917-657-6618

Course Information

- Credits: 1.5
- Class Times: Saturday, March 26 & Saturday, April 2 2022, 9:00AM - 5:00PM
- Class Location: Bobst Library Building, Room LL141

Course Description

Advancements in awareness and understanding have led to greater equity and inclusion in society for people with disabilities and health conditions. Developments such as the establishment of Disability Studies as an interdisciplinary field in the 1980's and the introduction of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) in 1990 are key milestones in this journey. However, these achievements alone do not guarantee the extent of attitudinal and behavioral change needed within our communities and organizations to remove the barriers and prejudices that remain. Furthermore, how might our response to disability and health conditions be symptomatic of underlying beliefs or practices that compromise our impact as leaders and organizations more broadly?

As citizens, developing our knowledge and understanding of disability and health conditions is critical for us to build an inclusive society. As public service leaders, it will enable us to deliver more creative, effective, and lasting solutions for the organizations we lead and the public that we serve.

With an emphasis on developing both knowledge and practical skills, this two-day intensive course will provide a survey of the history, recent trends, and current topics that will enable public service professionals to become role models and leaders in the areas of disability, health conditions, and beyond. Whether collaborating on a project, leading a team, or managing service delivery with or for people with disabilities and health conditions, the course will help students to achieve more inclusive impact in their organizations and communities. By reflecting on their own response to the topics, students will be able to identify implications and tangible actions to inform and transform their broader leadership and impact.

Course and Learning Objectives

This course aims to support you in: (a) developing your knowledge of the factors that shape attitudinal and behavioral responses to disability and health conditions, (b) demonstrating applied and integrated practices to address the barriers that people with a disability and/or health condition face in society, and (c) leveraging your leadership skills in dialoguing with and empowering “difference” to achieve more inclusive and equitable impact as a public service professional.

Surveying this broad and complex topic necessarily means that specific areas of focus will be chosen. The intention is to expose you to particular concepts, tools, and approaches that allow you to reflect on and cultivate your leadership skills in the field of disability and beyond. Interviews with guest speakers who are passionate and experienced in the field will also be included in class. In total, there are five Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) - by the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Differentiate between definitions and models of disability to evaluate their impact on the experience of people with disabilities and health conditions, and their implications for how public service organizations respond.
2. Evaluate how disability, health conditions and their intersection with other aspects of identity can influence your frames of reference, attitudes towards normalcy and impairment, and your broader perceptions of self, others, and environment.
3. Evidence critical reflection on the role of empathy in leadership and its potential to disrupt bias and facilitate dialogue.
4. Assess your level of disability awareness and evidence a critical and reflective practice in discussing the topic in a variety of roles and settings.
5. Demonstrate critical engagement with the historical developments of the disability rights movement and future opportunities for affirmative action within your own context.

Learning Assessment Table

Graded Assignment	Intended Learning Outcome Covered
Class Participation	All
Reading Response Presentation	All
Individual Interview Assignment	ILO #4
Individual Reflection Paper	All

Required Readings

- Vaughn, Jacqueline. *Disabled Rights: American Disability Policy and the Fight for Equality*. Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2003. ISBN: 9780878408986 (0878408983) Paperback - \$31.95, Kindle - \$17.25
- Additional articles prescribed for each module will be posted under the Content section of the Brightspace course website. Journal articles are sourced from the NYU Bobst Library website and are subject to the restricted access of enrolled NYU students only.

Brightspace

All announcements and resources will be delivered through Brightspace.

Student Resources

Wagner tutors are available to help students with their writing skills. Please see [Writing Support offered by NYU Wagner](#). Other online resources are available to students to help achieve a high quality of written work. Students can obtain [automated readability statistics here](#): <https://igm.rit.edu/~jxs/services/TestReadability.html> and can access additional feedback at the [Writer's Diet](#): <http://writersdiet.com/test.php>.

Assignments and Evaluation

Evaluation for the course is based on the four components shown below. Given the intensive format of the course, it is essential that students attend classes, submit their written assignments on time, and adhere to COVID-19 guidelines. Absences or lateness, except in extenuating circumstances discussed with the instructor in advance, will not be accepted.

Assessment of each evaluation component will be based on three criteria: Grasp of materials (including logic and clarity); Introspection (including critical thinking, application, and reflection); and Persuasiveness (including format, organization, and oral/written style).

Class Participation (20%):

Students are required to attend all classes and are expected to participate actively in class discussions by demonstrating critical thinking and sharing their own insights and perspectives.

Reading Response Presentation – “RRP” (20%):

As part of the pre-work for the course, students will be arranged into groups and assigned portions of the prescribed readings to critically examine in advance and present for 15 minutes during the relevant module in class. The RRP should identify:

- What are the key points in the reading(s) and are they persuasive?
- What new or reinforced insights arose?
- What 3 questions do the readings prompt?

The RRP should not merely summarize the readings but should demonstrate an active engagement with the key points, insights, and questions that they prompt. No written document or presentation is required. Instead, students should use this assignment as an opportunity to deliver a logical, credible and impactful presentation that will evidence their engagement and critical thinking as well as prompt a meaningful class discussion.

Individual Interview Assignment (30%):

Using the course material and class discussions as a guide, each student will conduct an interview with a family member, friend, or work colleague who is familiar with an experience of disability. The purpose of the interview is for the student to practice having a real-world conversation where disability as an experience and a topic is discussed. Central to the assignment is the student's preparation of appropriate questions and developing their understanding of the interviewee's experience.

Upon completion, the student will write a 5-page reflection paper (double-spaced) outlining the preparation steps they took (including how they connected with the interviewee) and how they applied knowledge and tools from the class to gain an understanding of the interviewee's experience with disability. **Identifying personal details of the interviewee must not be shared in the assignment or in any student discussions**

Individual Reflection Paper (30%):

Students will complete a 5-page written assignment (double-spaced) on one of the three topics below:

1. Using the models of disability as a lens, critically assess disability services provided in a city, state, or national context of your choice. What benefits and drawbacks of these models in action do you observe? Which would you strengthen/remediate and why? (ILO #1 & 5)
2. Compare and contrast the impact of two disability activists or organizations of your choice. To what extent does leadership, empathy and an intersectional approach influence their achievements? Which laws have hindered or helped their mission? How could you contribute to their positive impact? (ILO #2, 3 & 5)
3. Identify a specific organizational challenge you face either in your professional or volunteer work related to the topic of disability. Applying what you have learned about models of disability, identity, and dialogue, describe how your understanding of the

challenge has evolved and what concrete steps you can lead to improve or resolve the situation. (ILO #1, 2 & 4)

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Points
A	4.0 points
A-	3.7 points
B+	3.3 points
B	3.0 points
B-	2.7 points
C+	2.3 points
C	2.0 points
C-	1.7 points
F	0.0 points

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

- (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
- (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”
- (C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
- (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

Class Overview and Readings

Pre-Work

- Read Course Syllabus
- Reflect on your learning objectives for the course as well as your knowledge and experience relevant for the course topics. Schedule a 20-minute introductory call with the instructor.
- Review and examine with your group the prescribed readings assigned for your Reading Response Presentation (RRP) and prepare your in-class 15-minute presentation.

Class 1 – Saturday, March 26, 2022, 9:00AM – 5:00PM

- Module 1: What is “Disability”?
 - Discuss class knowledge, experience, and learning objectives for the course
 - Definitions and Inclusive Language
 - Traditional and Normative Approaches to Disability
 - Comparing U.S. and International Perspectives
 - *Readings* - Vaughn: Introduction (p. 1-11) & Articles in Brightspace. (Follow the same RRP guidelines when reviewing the video and the viewer comments that it has attracted)

- Module 2: Different Models of Disability
 - The Medical Model – Fixing Impairment
 - The Social Model – Constructing Disability
 - Applying the Models - Case Studies
 - Perspectives on Independence
 - *Readings* - Vaughn: Chapter 3 (p. 44-67) & Articles in Brightspace

- Module 3: Confronting Disability Conversations and Leadership
 - Confronting Your Leadership
 - Empowerment, Self and Other
 - Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, and Imperfection
 - Recognizing and Acknowledging Emotion – StoryCorps Case Studies
 - *Readings* - Articles in Brightspace

- Wrap Up & Review

Class 2 – Saturday, April 2, 2022, 9:00AM – 5:00PM

- Module 4: Historical Perspective
 - Independent Living (IL) Movement and Section 504
 - Judicial and Legal Challenges
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Disability Studies
 - UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
 - Change Makers
 - *Readings* - Vaughn: Chapters 4 & 5 (p. 68-111) & Articles in Brightspace

- Module 5: Disability, Identity, and Intersectionality
 - Concept and implications of intersectionality
 - Applying an Intersectional Lens
 - Toolkit and Case Studies – the real world of intersectionality
 - *Readings* - Articles in Brightspace

- Module 6: Disability and Public Policy
 - Disability Policy Overview
 - Social Security – SSDI & SSI
 - International Comparative Case Studies
 - Opportunities for Change
 - Readings: Vaughn: Chapter 8 (p. 173-208) & Articles in Brightspace

- Module 7: Accessibility and Design
 - Accessible NYC Case Study
 - Technology and Mass Media
 - Disability, Innovation, and Design Thinking
 - Readings - Articles in Brightspace
- Wrap Up & Review

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to the instructor. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with the instructor.

Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify the instructor in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with classes to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.