

# DISABILITY STUDIES (DIS)

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## DIS 100 Disability in Home and Community (4 credits)

This course examines concepts of ability and disability in a diverse and changing society. By examining historical, philosophical, legal and social perspectives on disability, students are introduced to the interactions among society, families, communities and cultures that impact the lives of children and adults with disabilities. Through guided field experiences, students will observe and reflect on different aspects of ability and disability in home and community, including the development of personal identity, literature and media presentations, and implications for persons with disabilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The role of the human service professional as an agent of social change and empowerment will be explored. During this course, students will be challenged to examine disability in the context of a diverse community where all participants can participate fully as members. Four classes will be held in face-to-face sessions, interspersed with interactive, on-line learning experiences.

## DIS 104 Human Development and Developmental Variations (4 credits)

This course examines concepts of human development and developmental variations as a foundation for understanding human growth, development and challenges applied to the field of human services. By examining the life span in the context of recent research and developmental theory, students will grapple to be prepared to apply general knowledge and understanding of the various stages of human development to developmental challenges experienced by persons with disabilities and their families at different stages of life span. Through guided field experiences, students will observe and reflect on different aspects of developmental research and theoretical principles, including the development of personal identity, cultural and developmental variations, as well as cognitive, social and vocational implications for persons with disabilities living in 21<sup>st</sup> century communities. During this course, students will consider ways in which interpersonal relationships, roles and relationships in home and community living can be designed to support the developmental process throughout the lifespan. Four classes will be held in face-to-face sessions, interspersed with interactive, on-line learning experiences.

## DIS 110 Community, Culture and Global Perspectives on Disability (4 credits)

This course will explore ways in which cultural and community perspectives influence perceptions of ability and disability in the United States and abroad. Participants will trace the disability rights movement as it has emerged, as well as consider the degree to which the community supports quality of life for persons across a broad range of disabilities. Participants will analyze the impact of legislation on the quality of life of persons with disability, in the context of culture and community. Four classes will be held in face-to-face sessions, interspersed with interactive, on-line learning experiences.

## DIS 200 Communication, Collaboration and Quality of Life for Persons with Disabilities (4 credits)

Participants will learn the importance of collaboration among human service Providers, health care and mental health personnel, therapists, parents, schools and community-based organizations in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in the community. Participants will learn to work as members of person-centered interdisciplinary team to design and implement programs and services that facilitate increasing autonomy, self-direction and independent living for individuals with varied physical, cognitive and emotional challenges.

## DIS 202 AT-PACE: Assistive Technology for Participation, Accommodations, Communication, and Empowerment (4 credits)

Essential skills for effectively trained staff within the human services field fall generally within both content knowledge and an empathic understanding of the individual's needs. This overall awareness enables trained staff to more effectively support their clientele. Successful selection, implementation, and integration of valuable assistive technologies are premised on this foundation. Before staff can be expected to adequately serve the technological support needs of individuals, they must understand how an individual may benefit from and interact with such tools in their daily lives. This course begins with empathy training sessions and historical/cultural lectures so that students may nurture a foundation of understanding. Subsequently, students will explore medical and legal models for utilized for defining disabilities. Environmental design factors are then explored for their role in the occurrence and amplification of obstacles for individuals with disabilities. Finally, extensive investigation into Assistive Technologies serves as the core of the course, examining the value of such tools for helping people compensate or ameliorate the challenges they face in their daily lives. Course highlights: • Weekly guided empathy training sessions which expose students to alternative insights • Classroom opportunities for reflection/discussion of ideas/materials presented • Interactive lectures on current research and methods regarding all topics • Ongoing guest speakers: Working AT professionals and users of assistive technologies • Weekly exams to insure effective retention of material covered • Google+ postings by students generating professional dialogue and information sharing. Class visits to locations where assistive technologies are employed or could be implemented.

## DIS 205 Working with Mental Health Providers in the Community (4 credits)

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the mental health issues people with disabilities encounter throughout their life. Students will be exposed to the process of identification, diagnosis, treatment of mental health disorders, prevention, access to services and resources by mental health providers. Students will learn how to help families and caregivers explore ways in which they can promote positive mental health in individuals with disabilities. Students will learn to provide families and caregivers with support and direction on how to access resources and services that will help enhance emotional wellbeing and full inclusion. Students will participate in fieldwork experience that will provide hands-on learning opportunities in an organization supporting people with disabilities.

DIS 210 Positive Behavior Approaches and Inclusion Support Addressing Behavioral Challenges (4 credits)

This course will provide a definition of the evolving practice of positive approaches and a comprehensive review of the effective strategies of behavior to utilize when working with people with behavioral challenges. Emphasis will be placed on proactive techniques, alternatives to aversive methods and effective approaches for both individuals and groups in a variety of settings. Students will learn to conduct a functional assessment of behavior and will learn how the information is used to develop a behavior support plan. Behavior modification, maintenance of positive behavior and how direct service personnel assist with the transference of new behavior to other environments will be explored. The principles of positive reinforcement and the interpretation of reinforcement schedules will be examined.

DIS 300 Health and Wellness for People with Disabilities (4 credits)

This course provides the student with a general overview of the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and environmental dimensions of health and wellness and their applications to people with disabilities. This course is designed to assist students in making informed decisions about personal health behavior. Students will examine the risk factors and high prevalence diseases impacting people with disabilities. Through health knowledge and proactive planning, students will learn prevention strategies that can be effective for protecting and preserving individual health when working with people with disabilities. The health content to be covered includes topics such as health terminology, history of advancements in health and technology relating to people with disabilities, health disparities, nutrition, fitness, psychosocial health, stress management, alcohol and tobacco use, relationships, communication and infectious diseases, injury prevention, environmental health, and the aging process.

DIS 305 Supervising and Developing Personnel in Human Services Organizations (4 credits)

The purpose of this course is to examine the broad range of services and functions of the human service professional in his or her workplace. The student will become knowledgeable about the many roles and functions of the human service professional, gain an understanding of the types of agencies where human service professionals are employed, and will examine the skills required to educate, enrich, inspire and supervise the human service professional. Students will participate in fieldwork and receive hands-on training from experienced management personnel in the human service field in a variety of settings. Students will participate in experiential observations to develop an understanding of the role and function of the human service professional and the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be successful in this honorable field of work. The many needs of different groups who benefit from direct service provided by human service professionals are identified. Introductions to interviewing, active listening, and report writing skills are presented.