

**ANTH 3390/5391**  
**Disability and Difference**  
**Spring 2023**

Lecture: Wednesday 9:30 AM – 11:15 AM  
MA Tutorial: Wednesday 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM  
UG Tutorial: Wednesday 3:30 PM – 4:15 PM

Instructor: Teresa KUAN, tkuan@cuhk.edu.hk, NAH 325, 3-7728  
Office Hours: By appointment



Remedios Varo, On *Homo rodans* (1959)

Disability may appear to be a brute fact, a form of difference readily apparent in a person's body or behavior. But is this necessarily the case?

The study of disability from an anthropological perspective is in fact a study of difference, that is, how categories of difference are made and experienced. In what contexts does bodily, neurological or cognitive difference become a problem to be solved, managed, or eradicated? How do local ideas about personhood and the good life shape the way people in different societies understand disability, impairment, and debility? What does the lived experience of disability reveal about the human condition?

The study of disability from an anthropological perspective is never merely a study of a medically defined deficit. It leads instead to questions about how politics, economics, policies, social practices, moral values and the potential for human flourishing and community are co-constituted. Like other categories of difference, disability provides an occasion for questioning the normative and the hegemonic. Unlike other categories of difference, disability is a form of otherness anyone could enter into at any time.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will acquire intellectual resources for thinking about disability and difference from a holistic and cross-cultural perspective.
2. Students will learn to contextualize seemingly universal categories and values.

**GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework</i>
A	<p>1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. Observations are nuanced, the argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims. The work responds directly to the assignment prompt.</p>
A-	<p>1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.</p>
B-range	<p>1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</p> <p>2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to handling complexity, building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence. Response to the assignment prompt may not be sufficient.</p>
C-range	<p>1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</p> <p>2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made. Understanding of course materials and key ideas has not been demonstrated.</p>
D-range	<p>1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.</p> <p>2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.</p>
F	<p>1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</p> <p>2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.</p>

## Required Texts

All readings and necessary links will be posted on Blackboard. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* may be purchased at the University Bookstore if you prefer a hard copy.

## Evaluation

<i>Grade Item</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Midterm Paper	30%	March 16
Mini-project proposal	--	March 24
In-class presentation of mini-project	20%	April 12 and April 19 (please plan for April 12)
Final Paper	35%	May 5
Participation	15%	-

Paper questions and choices will be posted ahead of time.

UG students and MA students will have different requirements.

All assignments must be submitted to VeriGuide, and declarations uploaded to Blackboard.

\*\*

NOTE: “📖” indicates required readings for both UGs and MAs, “📖📖” indicates required readings for MAs.

### Week 1 (January 11): Course Introduction

☞ No readings.

## Locating Humanity

### Week 2 (January 18): Locating humanity in difference

📖 Patrick MCKEARNEY, “Receiving the Gift of Cognitive Disability: Recognizing Agency in the Limits of the Rational Subject.” *Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*.

📖📖 Eva Feder KITTAY, “When Caring Is Just and Justice is Caring: Justice and Mental Retardation.” *Public Culture*.

👤 *Shower*

### Week 3 (January 25): Public Holiday

☞ No class. Happy lunar new year!

### Week 4 (February 1): Locating humanity in rehabilitation

📖 Jean-Dominique BAUBY, excerpts from *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (i.e. “Prologue” to “Bathtime,” “Tourists” to “The Photo,” “Through a Glass, Darkly” to “Outing,” “The Duck Hunt” to “The Ladies of Hong Kong,” “A Day in the Life” to “Season of Renewal”).

📖 Cheryl MATTINGLY, “Therapeutic Plots.” In *Healing Dramas and Clinical Plots*  
(can skip pp. 89-97).

🎬 *Murderball*

Week 5 (February 8): Neurodiversity

📖 Melissa PARK, “Beyond Calculus: Apple-apple-apple-ike and Other Embodied Pleasures for a Child Diagnosed with Autism in a Sensory Integration Based Clinic.” *Disability Studies Quarterly*.

📖 Dawn PRINCE-HUGHES, selections from *Songs of the Gorilla Nation: My Journey Through Autism*

Week 6 (February 15): Field Trip

☞ Details to be announced

Week 7 (February 22): Locating humanity in activism

(assign SAERBERG?)

🎬 *Crip Camp* (Please watch the entire film in preparation for class)

Week 8 (March 1): Locating humanity in activism

📖 Kristin BUMILLER, “Quirky Citizens: Autism, Gender, and Reimagining Disability.” *Signs*.

📖 安孟竹, “教室裡的希望”. 載《尋求有尊嚴的生活:在中國城市養育自閉兒》.  
(CUHK PhD thesis)

📖 Rayna RAPP and Faye GINSBURG, “Reverberations: Disability and the New Kinship Imaginary.” *Anthropological Quarterly*.

🎬 *In My Language*

Week 9 (March 8): Reading Week

☞ No class.

MIDTERM PAPER DUE: March 16

🖨️ Guiding questions will be posted March 2. Paper is due March 16, no later than 11:59 p.m.

**Deconstructing Disability**

Week 10 (March 15): The impact of genetic testing

📖 Gail LANDSMAN, “Doing Everything Right: Choice, Control, and Mother-Blame.” In *Reconstructing Motherhood and Disability in the Age of “Perfect” Babies*.

📖📖 Meira WEISS, “The Chosen Body and the Rejection of Disability in Israeli Society.” In *Disability in Local and Global Worlds*.

📖📖 Tine GAMMELTOFT, “Toward an Anthropology of the Imaginary: Specters of Disability in Vietnam.” *Ethos*.

Weeks 11 (March 22): Local moral worlds

📖 Aud TALLE, “A Child Is a Child: Disability and Equality among the Kenya Maasai.” In *Disability and Culture*.

📖📖 Julie LIVINGSTON, “Family Matters and Money Matters.” In *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana*.

PRESENTATION PROPOSAL DUE: March 24

🗉 The proposal is not a graded assignment. It is a chance for us to communicate about your project idea. Please submit by email March 24, no later than 11:59 p.m.

Week 12 (March 29): Making subjects in the context of state bureaucracy

📖 Matthew KOHRMAN, “Why Am I Not Disabled? Making State Subjects, Making Statistics in Post-Mao China.” In *Disability in Local and Global Worlds*.

📖📖 Matthew KOHRMAN, “A Biomythography in the Making.” In *Bodies of Difference: Experiences of Disability and Institutional Advocacy in Making of Modern China*.

📖📖 Xiangjun FENG, “Productivity: The Work Life of *Guazi*.” In *Accommodating the “Abnormal”: Intellectual Disability in a Gansu Village*. (CUHK MPhil thesis)

Week 13 (April 5): Making groups in the context of corporate social responsibility

📖 Michele FRIEDNER, “Deaf bodies and corporate bodies: New regimes of value in Bangalore’s business process outsourcing sector.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*.

📖📖 Ronen SHAMIR, “The age of responsabilization: On market-embedded morality.” *Economy and Society*.

(OPTIONAL 📖) Nora Ellen GROCE, “The Island Adaptation to Deafness.” In *Everyone here spoke sign language*.

**Project Presentations**


Week 14 (April 12): Project Presentations

🗉 No readings, no tutorials.

Week 15 (April 19): Project Presentations

🗉 No readings, no tutorials.

FINAL PAPER DUE: May 5

 Guiding questions will be posted April 21. Paper is due May 5, no later than 11:59 p.m.

## TIPS & POLICIES

### Opinions vs. Arguments

There is a difference between opinion and argument. Your personal viewpoints are welcome during class discussion, but your papers will be evaluated based upon your ability to formulate an argument rather than your ability to express an opinion. An argument is analytical. Arguments propose relationships between variables, and they support assertions with empirical evidence.

There is also a difference between opinion and perspective. An opinion usually contains some kind of judgment about how the world should or should not operate. A perspective, on the other hand, is a way of looking at the world. In other words, having perspective involves the ability to see patterns and themes, or differences and divergences, which may not be obvious at first glance. Having an opinion is easy. Having the insight that comes with perspective is much harder.

### Late Submissions

Papers submitted after the due date will suffer a fraction of a grade deduction for every day it is late. For example, an A- will become a B+, a B will become a B-, et cetera.

### Academic Honesty

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on cheating in examinations and plagiarism. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Students should read the detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources in the University's website at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty>. Students are required to submit all papers through VeriGuide, which is also explained at the above website.