

SO259-15 Disability, Inequality, and the Life Course

21/22

Department

Sociology

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Angharad Butler-Rees

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This is a Year 2 optional module that introduces students to the sociology of disability. The particular focus of the module is to provide explanations for numerous disability inequalities that exist across the life course. Upon completion of the module, students will have an appreciation of existing theoretical approaches to understanding disability inequalities as well as knowledge of empirical research on a wide range of relevant topics. Students will also be able to appreciate the insights that sociological thought brings to the study of disability and the influence of other ascriptive inequalities in experiences of disability and trajectories and outcomes of individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions. The module is primarily research-led: we will regularly engage with existing empirical work on disability in order to better understand mechanisms and social processes behind the association of disability with social inequality.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

the overall aims of this module are:

1. to provide a critical understanding of varying theoretical understandings of disability and

- highlight the contribution of a sociological perspective in the study of disability
2. to explore contemporary trends surrounding disability-related inequalities
 3. to situate disability inequalities within a broader political and historical context
 4. to explore key social processes implicated in the (re)production of disability-related inequalities

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Students will be introduced to different theoretical models and definitions of disability, and their implications for policy and research. We will pay particular attention to the development of the social model of disability alongside the development of disability movements. We will also problematize the marginal place that disability had occupied within mainstream sociology and the development of disability studies. A series of theoretical models and concepts will be covered to provide a framework to understand the (re)production of disability-related inequalities. The module will demonstrate the parallels of disability with other inequalities as well as the importance of an intersectional approach to understand life course outcomes of disabled individuals. Different domains influencing the trajectories and lives of those with disabilities will be scrutinized e.g. family, school, societal attitudes, social policy etc. We will draw on examples from different parts of the world, exploring the importance of situational context for the study of disability.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- By the end of this module students should be able to: 1) Demonstrate an understanding of the different theoretical models of disability, and their implications for policy and research 2) Present an awareness of the challenges in defining what disability is, and the difficulties in producing reliable and meaningful measures of disability in research 3) Critically appraise existing quantitative and qualitative sociological research focusing on issues surrounding disability 4) Contextualize, synthesize, and draw links between appropriate literature on disability, inequality, and the life course 5) Demonstrate an appreciation of the insights that sociological thought brings to the study of disability 6) Illustrate an understanding of the appropriateness of different methodological approaches to research different issues surrounding disability and inequality 7) Identify the role of other inequalities in experiences of disability and outcomes and trajectories of individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions 8) Develop skills in accessing and evaluating relevant literature for seminar discussion, presentations, independent study, research and essay writing.

Indicative reading list

There is no textbook for this module. Students will be provided with weekly readings at the beginning of the term (book chapters and/or journal articles).

Indicative background reading:

- Connors, C and Stalker, K (2002) *The Views and Experiences of Disabled Children and their Siblings: A Positive Outlook*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Connors, C and Stalker, K (2007) *Children's Experiences of Disability: Pointers to a Social Model of Childhood Disability*. *Disability & Society* 22(1): 19–33.
- Dowling, M and Dolan, L (2001) *Families with Children with Disabilities - Inequalities and the Social Model*. *Disability & Society* 16(1): 21–35.
- Fine, M and Asch, A (1998) *Disability Beyond Stigma: Social Interaction, Discrimination, and Activism* *Journal of Social Issues* 44: 3-22
- Goffman, E (1963) *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hodkinson, A (2007) *Inclusive Education and the Cultural Representation of Disability and Disabled People: Recipe for Disaster or Catalyst of Change?* *Research in Education* 77: 56-76.
- Hollomotz, A (2012) *Disability, Oppression, and Violence: Towards a Sociological Explanation* *Sociology* 47(3): 477-493.
- Holt, L (2004) *Childhood Disability and Ability: (Dis)ableist Geographies of Mainstream Primary Schools*. *Disability Studies Quarterly* 24(3):20-48.
- Janus, A (2009) *Disability and the Transition to Adulthood*. *Social Forces* 88(1):99–120.
- Jenkins, R (1991) *Disability and Social Stratification*. *British Journal of Sociology* 42(4): 557-580.
- Powell, J (2003) *Constructing Disability and Social Inequality Early in the Life Course: The Case of Special Education in Germany and the United States* *Disability Studies Quarterly* 23(2): 57-75.
- Thomas, C (1999) *Female Forms: Experiencing and Understanding Disability*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Oliver, M (1992) *The Politics of Disablement*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Priestley, M (2003) *Disability: A Life Course Approach*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Watson, N (2012) *Theorising the Lives of Disabled Children: How can Disability Theory Help?* *Children and Society* 26: 192-202
- Altman, B. M. 2014 'Definitions, Concepts, and Measures of Disability', *Annals of Epidemiology* 24 (1): 2–7.
- Department for Children, School, and Families. 2010 *Breaking the Link Between Special Educational Needs and Low Attainment: Everyone's Business*, Nottingham: Department for Children, School, and Families.
- Holloway, S. 2001 'The Experience of Higher Education from the Perspective of Disabled Students', *Disability & Society* 16 (4): 597–15.
- Pescosolido, B.A. and Martin, J.K. 2015. 'The Stigma Complex', *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (1): 87–116.
- Reskin, B.F. 2005 'Including Mechanisms in Our Models of Ascriptive Inequality', *American Sociological Review* 68: 1–21.
- Scambler, G. 2009 'Health-Related Stigma', *Sociology of Health and Illness* 31 (3): 441–55.
- Scambler, G. and Hopkins, A. 1986 'Being Epileptic: Coming to Terms with Stigma', *Sociology of Health and Illness* 8 (1): 26–43.
- Tomlinson, S. 2017 *A Sociology of Special and Inclusive Education*, Abingdon: Routledge.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of the area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed

use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis

Transferable skills

ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making
the ability to undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Private study and independent learning for this module include:

- workshop preparation
- reading module materials and engaging with additional learning resources (e.g. films, videos, podcasts)
- preparation for formative assessments
- preparation for group presentation and summative essay

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Group Presentation	25%	
This is a group presentation assessment, students are asked to present their work on a topic of their own choice engaging with theoretical concepts covered in the module.		
Essay	75%	
In this essay students are asked to answer one of five essay topics, engaging with literature covered in the module and beyond to construct their analytical arguments		

Feedback on assessment

Feedback on presentation will be provided on Tabula. Feedback on formative (essay plan of 800 words) will be provided on Tabula and in person (if required) before the end of term. Students will have the opportunity to use Advice and Feedback Hours for further clarification and guidance on their work.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 3 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Optional for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
 - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
 - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
 - Year 2 of L301 Sociology
- Year 2 of USOA-L314 Undergraduate Sociology and Criminology

This module is Option list A for:

- ULAA-ML34 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 3 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
 - Year 4 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
- ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
 - Year 2 of ML33 Law and Sociology
 - Year 4 of ML33 Law and Sociology

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology

This module is Option list G for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
 - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)