AMH 3340-4492
DISABILITY IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Spring 2010
M-W-F 4th Period
Keene-Flint Hall 119

Dr. Steven Noll
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Office Hours- Keene-Flint Hall 217- M-W-F 9-10AM & T-TH- 3:30-4:30 PM

This course is a seminar in the historical treatment of persons with disabilities in the United States. It will be both a reading and research seminar, in which students will learn about disability in historical context and produce a paper about a particular aspect of disabilities using primary and secondary sources. This course will stress reading as well as interaction between professor and students. Lecture time will also be part of the course, but this course is designed to get students actively involved in the learning process. This assumes students will be serious about the readings and will take part in the course to make it a dialog about the place of disabled individuals in American History.

This course will be both chronological and topical in nature. We will be examining particular disabilities and their treatment over time. We will also look at the medical, legal, and social contexts in which disabilities exist. The course will investigate the relationship of governmental policy and its effects on the lives of persons with disabilities. Finally, we will examine the social construction of disabilities and how new conditions are “discovered,” labeled, and treated.

This course is multi-disciplinary in nature, therefore research materials will be spread out throughout the university’s many libraries. Your research may take you to Library West, the Science Library in the CSE building, the Education Library in Norman Hall, the Legal Information Center at the Law School, or the Health Center Library at the medical school. It is important for you to become familiar with these facilities and how to conduct research there.

This is a course about both persons with disabilities and how these individuals have been treated by “normal” Americans. We will focus on how the issues of disabilities relate to major themes in American history.

Due to the increasingly technological nature of our society, I find it necessary to address the issues of cell phones in class. Please turn off all of these electronic devices before coming to class, as they are disruptive to the learning environment and distracting to other students. Thank You.

I also need to address tardiness to class in a more formalized manner. Lateness is
disruptive and distracting to a positive learning experience. Constant carping on this issue both deems the class and takes away from learning time. Therefore, I urge you, as responsible adults, to arrive to class on time ready to learn, having done the reading assignments beforehand.

Class attendance is an important component of your learning experience. Since students are adults, and this is an honors course, a mandatory attendance policy will not be in effect for this course. But understand that you cannot achieve a good grade in this course without coming to class. The success of this course depends on interaction between me as professor and you as student- therefore preparation and attendance are important for a positive learning experience. Since much of the course is based on in-class discussions and 20% of your final grade is based upon class participation, it is certainly in your best interest to go to class.

Students requesting classroom accommodations for disability issues must first register with the Office of the Dean of Students. This office will provide documentation to the student who then must provide this documentation to me. I am more than willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure an optimum learning environment for all students.

Be aware of the University’s policy on plagiarism. The Internet has made this situation more problematic but understand that plagiarists will be caught. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask. All plagiarism offenses will be reported on a Faculty Adjudication Form and forwarded to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. You may get more information on UF’s Judicial Affairs process at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php

The H-DISABILITY website is a valuable resource to use and will provide a valuable help to you in this course. H-DISABILITY is a website and list-serv maintained by H-Net, a series of moderated history topic sites, run through Michigan State University. The URL for this site is: www2.h-net.msu.edu/~disability