

MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, B.A., APPLIED DISABILITY STUDIES OPTION

The framework for a Concentration in Applied Disability Studies combines courses in educational foundations with courses in social sciences and prepares students to work in the rapidly expanding area of disability services, education support and advocacy organizations. Employment opportunities exist in the government, business, and non-profit sectors. Regarding services for people with disabilities, for example, current Pennsylvania labor data reveals a need for middle level professionals with competencies in leadership, management and supports for people with disabilities.

CAREERS OPPORTUNITIES

Students are prepared to play leadership roles in the field of disability. Future careers include program director and policy positions in community service agencies, advocacy organizations, independent living centers, parent centers, planning councils, and government agencies.

- Protection and advocacy agencies
- Parent training and information centers
- State agencies for Intellectual/developmental disabilities
- Self-advocacy associations
- Community and family support agencies
- University or college offices for students with disabilities
- Independent living centers
- Inclusive Post-Secondary Education programs
- Human service organizations

Applied Disability Studies also prepare graduates to consult organizations on disability issues and pursue graduate degrees in Disability Studies, a multidisciplinary field of inquiry that draws on the experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities to address discrimination. Disability Studies scholarship explores the dynamic interplays between disability, culture, and society. Applied Disability Studies combines critical inquiry and political advocacy and enables students to apply scholarly approaches from the humanities, social sciences, and the arts to evaluate and address disability issues and support inclusion (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability_studies (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability_studies/)).

This curriculum combines specific vocational competencies with skills and practice in critical thinking and allows highly individualized career planning.

PROGRAM GOALS

These goals are conceptualized as the ultimate "ends" we hope to achieve in educating students and trainees in disability studies.

- Promote full social integration by providing knowledge, awareness, and experience of inclusion and integration of people with disabilities as a foundational ethical principle of disability studies.
- Position disability as a social justice issue by exposing students to historical and contemporary disability issues and providing learning opportunities to identify, articulate, and address inequities and injustices affecting the lives of people with disabilities.

- Position disability as diversity by providing theoretical and practical contexts for thinking about disability as a component of human diversity, and providing students with tools to critically examine social and cultural constructions of disability.
- Create circumstances for the analysis and knowledge of the human services system and its role in shaping the life experiences (segregated & integrated) of people with disability.
- To provide an understanding of the social, economic, historical, political, cultural, and legal forces that shape policy and practices in the field of disabilities

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The following list of learning outcomes represents key areas of expertise for all students graduating with an applied disability studies concentration.

- Students will demonstrate understanding of biopsychosocial implications of disability.
- Students will produce interdisciplinary disability studies research questions and analyses.
- Students will analyze and critique enabling and disabling ideological assumptions that shape social institutions, professions, policies, and systems of representation.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to theoretically connect ideological assumptions about disability to those regarding gender, race, age, class, nationality, and sexual orientation.
- Students will gain knowledge about disability history, rights, policies, and contemporary issues, especially in terms of the way people with disabilities, through their own agency, advocacy, and voices, have shaped conceptions of disability in specific historical and contemporary contexts.
- Students will demonstrate skills in working with people with disabilities, and increased ability to understand individual and family concerns.
- Students will apply disability studies to a wide range of professional contexts.

PROGRAM ADVISORS

Dr. Emily Baldys, Associate Professor (English)

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For more information visit: <https://www.millersville.edu/mdst/approved-programs/applied-disability-studies.php>