



Society for the Study of Social Problems

In Pursuit of Social Justice

Disabilities Division
Winter Newsletter
January 2014

Welcome from the Disabilities Division Co-Chair

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A note on teaching
Disability as a Social
problem

-By Brian R. Grossman

Dear Members of the SSSP Disabilities Division,

Happy New Year! We hope that those of you in cold climates are staying warm. Beyond the frigid temperatures, January is an important month for SSSP – entries for the student paper award and abstract submissions are due by/on the **31st**.

I hope that you will submit and that you will help encourage new voices (be they faculty, students, or community members) to do so as well. With co-sponsored sessions with other divisions, including:

- *Community Research and Development;
- *Conflict, Social Action, and Change;
- *Environment & Technology;
- *Family;
- *Health, Healthy Policy, & Health Services;
- *Labor Studies; Drinking & Drugs; and
- *Social Problems Theory,

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Letter from the Disabilities Division Co-Chair (cont.)

There are multiple opportunities to present work reflecting a wide variety of perspectives and methodologies. In addition to these sessions and the Division's sole-sponsored, thematic session (Session 26 **War on Disability: Deprivation, Disparities, and Disenfranchisement**), we will again be hosting both a critical dialogue session (Session 7 **Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Disability**) and a Papers-in-the-round session (Session 28 **Directions in Disability Research**). Last year's

critical dialogue session was a great success and we look forward continuing this innovative approach to scholarly engagement.

And while you are thinking about your own New Year's resolutions, please be sure to take a look at the recently revised and expanded [mission statement](#) for the Disabilities Division. I hope that you will feel your work reflected in the scope of the mission statement and find the document as a useful starting point for discussions with colleagues and students!

In the spirit of the New Year, I would like to offer gratitude to all those who presented, moderated, facilitated, and organized for the 2013 Annual Meeting. Thanks also to those of you who attended the Disabilities Division Business Meeting and the Special Problems Division Reception. Additionally, I would like to offer thanks to Laura Lorenz for her leadership as Division Co-Chair 2011-2013 and to Mona Whisler Smith for her work as newsletter editor. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new Division Co-Chair, Alexis Bender, 2013-2015 and our new newsletter editor, Rob Gould. I am looking forward to the year ahead and to working with both of these talented individuals.

The Disabilities Division remains a thriving and productive division of SSSP. However, we also remain on the "small" side in terms of membership. Please add "recruit one (1) new member to the SSSP Disabilities Division" to your list of New Year's resolutions. If only half of our current members make (and keep!) this resolution we will be in excellent shape for the 2014 year (and Annual Meeting).

Thank you for the work that you do as scholars, activists, authors, and researchers.

Here's to a wonderful 2014!

Brian R. Grossman

Co-Chair, Disabilities Division, Society for the Study of Social Problems (2012-2014)



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The Call for papers for the 2014 Annual meeting is now open and available at: <http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/565/m/562>

- The 2014 Annual Meeting will be held from August 15-17 in San Francisco, California. This year's theme is the "War on Poverty to a War on the Poor," paying homage to the changing social and political contexts since president Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty in 1964.
- All submissions are made electronically. Interested participants are permitted to submit one sole-authored paper and one critical dialogue paper (a short roundtable session), but additional co-authored papers may be submitted. The full instructions for submitting are located on the website.
- Please forward this call and information about the sessions to any interested colleges. We also want to encourage all faculty to reach out to their students, encourage them to present, and bring them along to San Francisco!
- This year the Disabilities subsection is sponsoring or cosponsoring a number of sessions:

8. Communities, Disabilities, and Inclusion

Cosponsoring division:

- Community Research and Development

Organizer:

- Michael Gibbons [michael.gibbons@maconstate.edu]

13. Disability, Poverty, and Work: Multiple Locations of Disadvantage - THEMATIC

Cosponsoring division:

- Conflict, Social Action, and Change

Organizer:

- Sara E. Green [sagreen@usf.edu]

26. War on Disability? Deprivation, Disparities, and Disenfranchisement - THEMATIC

Co-Organizers:

- Thomas P. Horejes [thomas.horejes@gallaudet.edu]
- Deborah L. Little [LITTLE@ADELPHI.EDU]

(sessions continued on next page)

The Disabilities Division becomes "cool"



Greetings! I am Tommy Horejes – Assistant Professor of Sociology at Gallaudet University ([my full bio can be found here](#)). We are living in the 21st century and in catching up with the fast-paced digital era, I set up a Facebook Group for our Division! The purpose of the Facebook group is to retain & increase membership and share updates with other Division members and folks interested in the social problems approach to disability in society. While we encourage everyone to keep up their membership in SSSP and specifically in the Disabilities Division, people are welcome to [join](#) the Facebook group whether or not you are SSSP members! See you there! I look forward to reading your posts and sharing news on Facebook!

7. CRITICAL DIALOGUE: Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Disability

- Brian R. Grossman [BrianRGrossman@gmail.com]

28. PAPERS IN THE ROUND: Directions in Disability Research

Co-Organizers:

- Alexis A. Bender [alexisbender@gmail.com]
- Kate Caldwell [kcaldw3@uic.edu]

29. Person-Environment Interaction: The Role of Innovative Technology

Cosponsoring division:

- Environment and Technology

Organizer:

- Erin E. Robinson [robinso5@canisius.edu]

30. Families, Disability, and Poverty - THEMATIC

Cosponsoring divisions:

- Family
- Health, Health Policy, and Health Services

Co-Organizers:

- Laura S. Lorenz [LLORENZ@BRANDEIS.EDU]
- Ebonie L. Cunningham Stringer [e.cunninghamstringer@wingate.edu]

31. Disability and the Labor Force

Cosponsoring division:

- Labor Studies

Co-Organizers:

- Sarah Parker Harris [skparker@uic.edu]
- Robert Gould [rgould3@uic.edu]

32. Drinking, Drugs, and Disabilities

Cosponsoring division:

- Drinking and Drugs

Organizer:

- Aukje Lamonica [lamonicaa1@southernct.edu]

33. Historical Transformations of Constructions of the 'Poverty Problem' - THEMATIC

Cosponsoring divisions:

- Health, Health Policy, and Health Services
- Social Problems Theory

Organizers:

- Jack W. Spencer [JSPENCER@PURDUE.EDU]



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PAPER COMPETITION

Deadline: 1/31/14

The Disabilities Division is pleased to announce its 2014 Graduate Student Paper Competition. Papers may be empirical or theoretical, may concern any social aspect of disability, and should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages. They should be prepared for anonymous review. Current graduate students and recent graduates (who received their degrees after December 2013) may submit a paper if it was written while still a student. Co-authored papers are acceptable as long as all the listed authors are current graduate students. Double submission to other SSSP award competitions will be disqualified. The award recipient will be required to present the winning paper at the 2014 SSSP Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Thus, it is also a requirement that an abstract be submitted through the [annual meeting Call for Papers process](#), preferably to a Disabilities Division session, by the January 31st deadline. The recipient will receive a monetary prize of \$50, student membership in SSSP (\$30), SSSP conference registration (\$60), and recognition at the conference awards banquet. Send an electronic copy of the paper (in Word format) and a cover letter identifying your graduate program to: Brian Grossman at brg@uic.edu.

For a full listing of scholarships and award please visit the SSP website:
http://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/24/Awards_&_Scholarships/

Interested in SSSP leadership?

We are currently looking for a new co-chair of the SSSP Disabilities Division for 2014-2016. If you are interested please contact Brian Grossman directly at brg@uic.edu. We need to have a new co-chair elected by sometime in late spring... so the time to start thinking about leading is now!



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New Books on Disability from a Social Problems Perspective

Ancestors and Antiretrovirals: The Biopolitics of HIV/AIDS in Post-Apartheid South

Africa. By: Claire Laurier Decoteau

University of Chicago Press Books

<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/A/bo16382189.html>

Don't Call me Inspirational: A Disabled Feminist Talks Back. By: Harilyn Rousso

Temple University Press

<http://www.harilynrouosso.com/book-info.php>

Mobility Impairment and the Construction of Identity. By: Heather Ridolfo and Brian W. Ward

Lynne Rienner Publishers

https://www.rienner.com/browse_books/32

Raising Henry: A Memoir of Motherhood, Disability, and Discovery. By: Rachel Adams

Yale University Press

<http://yalepress.yale.edu/book.asp?isbn=9780300180008>

Reframing Disability and Quality of Life. Edited by: Narelle Warren and Lenore Manderson

Springer Social Indicators Research Series, Vol. 52

<http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/wellbeing+%26+quality-of-life/book/978-94-007-3017-5>



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Links to Know

Key happenings in Disability and Social Policy

- White House celebrates 50th anniversary of the Developmental Disabilities Act and National Disability Employment Awareness Month.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/11/21/observing-50th-anniversary-developmental-disability-act-and-national-disability-em-0>
- US Department of Labor announces updated rules to Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 and Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to improve employment of veterans, people with disabilities
<http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/ofccp/OFCCP20131578.htm>

Recent reports

- US Census Facts for Features releases special edition in honor of Veterans Day (including key stats on disability)
http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb13-ff27.html
- Mathematica Policy Research and Truven Health Analytics, in contract with the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), release report on Section 1915(c) waivers and financing for home and community-based services.
<http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Long-Term-Services-and-Support/Downloads/CMS-372-Report.pdf>
- AARP Public Policy Institute releases report that presents findings from a national survey of family caregivers of older adults and people with disabilities who qualify for Medicaid HCBS services.
http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/ltc/2013/the-need-to-include-family-caregiver-assessment-medicaid-hcbs-waiver-programs-report-AARP-ppi-ltc.pdf

In Memoriam

- **Adrienne Asch: 1946-2013**
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/23/nyregion/adrienne-asch-bioethicist-and-pioneer-in-disability-studies-dies-at-67.html?_r=0
- **Marta Russell: 1951-2013**
<http://socialistworker.org/2014/01/03/committed-to-a-caring-society>
- **Cheryl Marie Wade: 1948-2013**
<http://www.newmobility.com/2013/09/cheryl-marie-wade-1948-2013/>

Teaching Disability as a Social Problem to Undergraduate Students

By Brian R. Grossman – Assistant Professor, Disability and Human Development, University of Illinois at Chicago

In my new position as an Assistant Professor of Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), I have had the opportunity to develop and pilot test a course called DHD 101 - *Disability in Society*. It has been quite a treat and also an opportunity for me to create new types of assignments to enhance student learning. In order to help my students become acquainted with scholarly outlets for disability research, I designed a scavenger hunt assignment that would deepen students' sense of curiosity and enhance their information literacy skills.

First, some background. DHD 101 is intended for an enrollment population of first- and second-year students. In actuality, only four of the thirty-five students met this criterion. However, I designed the course with this level of student in mind, including this assignment. Whether or not the students think I succeeded is another issue, and an empirical one at that!

I created the **Disability Awareness Scavenger Hunt (DASH)** to meet the needs of students who, in all

likelihood, were being exposed to the *social problems approach to disability* for the very first time. I specifically designed this assignment as a consciousness raising activity. The DASH provided context for what we were reading and writing in class and helped students expand their awareness of this approach to disability. I wanted students to be aware that the conversations that we were having in class were not only happening in class. Given the expected level of students, I connected these goals to orienting students to the parts of the university necessary for their success (i.e., the physical and digital library offerings) and to introducing the processes of knowledge production in academia.

My experience with an earlier version of a scavenger hunt activity, for an introduction to sociology course, had highlighted the utility of this type of assignment. Students were able to practice using library resources as the basis for their academic writing and to identify journals as a key source of academic knowledge production.

“I wanted students to be aware that the conversations that we were having in class were not only happening in class.”

Much to my gleeful surprise, the students often cited this as one of the most helpful parts of the class in their evaluations.

Based on this earlier positive experience with library-based assignments, I retooled the scavenger hunt into the DASH for students in DHD 101, narrowing its focus to give students with “the opportunity to interact with digital and physical resources related to disability in Chicago, at UIC, and at a national level”. To achieve this goal, the DASH was broken down into a series of tasks that sequentially built upon one another.

In the first task, students used the library's website to identify the titles of specific journals in which conversations about the role of disability in society are occurring.

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Students were asked to figure out the titles of two journals with only one piece of information about each:

- 1) DSQ
- 2) 1044-2073 (the ISSN).

Once students had identified the title of these journals, their next task was to figure out the most recent issue to which they had digital access through the UIC library. After completing this task, students needed to select one article from the most recent issue of either journal to read. Finally, students needed to identify and explain one new concept, term, or idea that they encountered while reading.

Each task was constructed so that students would develop skills specific to this class and generalizable to their work in later classes. For example, the first task provided students with an enhanced awareness (i.e., name recognition) of key journals in the field – something useful for this class. Additionally, students were able to experience the process of searching the digital library with very limited information. Further, the assignment was structured to highlight the nested nature of academic literature — journals are periodicals that are released on a regular (monthly/quarterly) basis and each year is indicated by a volume and each volume is broken down into intervals called issues. My hope is that this early experience will enhance students' level of competence with using the library's digital holding and locating relevant and recent literature for their future academic writing.

Overall, students produced work at (or above) the level that I expected for this assignment. My one suggestion for anyone who wishes to develop their own version of the DASH would be to clarify that you want students to identify and explain one concept, term, or idea relevant to **disability and society** for the final task. The majority of the students completed the task appropriately discussing a wide range of topics from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), accessibility issues in museums, and the social construction of impairment categories. However, a small group of students chose terms or ideas that were merely words to which they had never before been exposed (e.g., adamant) but did not relate this to the content of the course. It was a learning experience for me and I have a revised version of this assignment geared up for next year.

I was so pleased with the outcome of this assignment that I developed two subsequent versions of the DASH using a similar task-based structure: one on disability resources on campus and the other on local, state, and national disability social movement organizations. All three assignments were created to enhance student success, for students who were just beginning their college careers, with a focus on skills building, clearly defined tasks, low-risk writing, and processes that foster critical thinking skills. I hope that my experience with the DASH will encourage you to develop your own version of this assignment.

**Comments? Contributions?
Please email the newsletter
editor:**

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