Introducing Disability Studies

Ronald J. Berger

“A welcome, accessible introduction to the growing field of disability studies.”
—Michelle Jarman, Disability Studies Quarterly

“Would serve well as an introduction to graduates and undergraduates interested in this field of study by offering a much-needed perspective to balance negative socially constructed opinions regarding disability.”
—Jane Crawford, International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education

“In eight beautifully written chapters, Berger succinctly incorporates theory, history, and examples from popular culture, along with quotes and personal narratives from people with disabilities, to show how and why disability is important on a social, rather than solely an individual, level... [This] is a must-have book for courses in disability studies or the sociology of disability, or for anyone interested in learning more about disability from a sociological perspective.”
—Loren Wilbers, Humanity & Society

Ronald Berger provides students with a comprehensive, accessible introduction to the key themes and controversies in disability studies. This innovative textbook:

• provides historical context, from ancient times to the present
• traces disability’s impact throughout the life course
• gives prominence to the voices of people with disabilities
• explores popular culture’s role in distorting ideas about disability
• addresses emerging ethical issues, such as the implications of genetic selection

Illustrating the profound consequences of differing conceptions of physical, sensory, and cognitive impairments, Berger provides a solid foundation for making sense of disability as a social phenomenon.

Ronald J. Berger is professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

CONTENTS

• Disability in Society.
• Explaining Disability.
• History and Law.
• The Family and Childhood.
• Adolescence and Adulthood.
• The Bodily Experience of Disability.
• Representing Disability in Literature and Film.
• The Future of Disability.

2013/271 pages
ISBN: 978-1-58826-891-4 pb $27/£24.95
Disability and Identity: Negotiating Self in a Changing Society
Rosalyn Benjamin Darling

“An important step forward.... This book is a fascinating read for anyone interested in identity theory or disability studies.”
—Christopher Johnstone, American Journal of Sociology

“A foundational work for those who wish to explore this often-misunderstood topic.... Highly recommended.”
—Choice

Rosalyn Darling offers a sweeping examination of disability identity, tracing its history and parsing the shifting forces that have shaped individual and societal understandings of ability and impairment across time.

Darling focuses on the relationship between societal views and the self-conceptions of people with mental and physical impairments. She also illuminates the impact of the disability rights movement, life course dynamics, and race and gender in creating a diversity of disability identities. Her seminal work reveals the remarkable resilience of individuals in the face of profound social and material barriers at the same time that it enhances our understanding of the construction and experience of “difference” in our changing society.

Rosalyn Benjamin Darling is professor emeritus of sociology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

CONTENTS
• Introduction.
• Stigma and Acceptance over Time.
• Societal Views on Self-Conceptions.
• Intersecting Identities Among Women and African Americans with Disabilities.
• The Disability Rights Movement and Identity Politics.
• The Diversity of Disability Orientations.
• Measuring Disability Identity and Orientation.
• Identity over the Life Course.
• Disability and Identity: Past, Present, and Future.

paperback June 2019/189 pages
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SERIOUSLY FUNNY:
Disability and the Paradoxical Power of Humor
Shawn Chandler Bingham and Sara E. Green

“[A] fresh and creative work that furthers our sociological understanding of disability, culture, arts, and social change.”
—Sandi Kawecka Nenga, American Journal of Sociology

“Readers will come away ... with a good sense of how disability humor works in today’s world, as well as greater understanding of the achievements of disability comedians and the costs of embodying disability on stage while simultaneously challenging social and cultural norms.... [T]he authors demonstrate that humor, and those who use it wisely and intentionally, have an important role to play in society’s evolving understanding of disability.”
—Daniel J. Wilson, H-Disability, H-Net Reviews

“[A] welcome and necessary book.”
—Tom Coogan, Contemporary Sociology

Exploring a paradox, Shawn Bingham and Sara Green show how humor has been used both to challenge traditional views of disability and to reinforce negative stereotypes and social inequalities.

Seriously Funny ranges from ancient Greek dramas to medieval court jesters to contemporary comedy, from stage performances to the experiences of daily life. Rich with insights into issues of identity and social stratification, it offers an eye-opening perspective on attitudes toward disability across the ages.

Shawn Chandler Bingham is associate professor of sociology and director of the Honors College at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Sara E. Green is associate professor of sociology at the University of South Florida.

CONTENTS
• The Social Significance of Disability Humor.
• Humor as Aesthetic, Analysis, and Activism.
• Disability and Humor in Historical Context.
• A Twenty-First-Century Cast of Comic Characters.
• Creating New Narratives.
• Disability Humor in a Politically Correct World.
• Using Disability Humor to Reimagine Society.
• APPENDIX: Biographical Sketches of the Comedians Interviewed.

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Disability in Society
Borderlands of Blindness
Beth Omansky

“A compelling account of the challenges faced by the legally blind in the socially constructed ‘hinterland’ between the sighted and the totally blind... Insightful and thought-provoking.”
—Michael Satter, Journal of Sociology

“Educational, enlightening and, above all, forthcoming.”
—Julie Yamanashi, International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education

“[Also] great for students planning on carrying out their own research project as it provides clear and concise arguments surrounding research methods and methodologies within disability studies.”
—Erin Pritchard, Disability & Society

A person may be legally blind, yet not “blind enough” to qualify for social services. Beth Omansky explores the lives of legally blind people to show how society responds to those who don’t fit neatly into the disabled/non-disabled binary. Probing the experience of education, rehabilitation, and work, as well as the more intimate spheres of religion, family, and romantic relationships, her frank and theoretically sophisticated portrait of the legally blind experience offers an original insight into our understanding of the social construction of disability.

Beth Omansky is an independent scholar and activist in Portland, Oregon.

CONTENTS
Introduction • An Insider Approach • Prejudice and Poverty • Living Stories: In Their Own Words • Education • The Perils of Rehabilitation • Work • Constructing Blindness • Being Blind: From the Inside Out • Identity • Intersections Along the Border • Epilogue.

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Disability in Society

CHOICE OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC BOOK

Disability and Aging: Learning from Both to Empower the Lives of Older Adults
Jeffrey S. Kahana and Eva Kahana

“The authors reveal the potential to improve the lives of older adults with disability who have often been overlooked by both gerontological and disability research... researchers interested in disability across the life course, but particularly in older ages, should consider this book a must-read.”
—Kenzie Latham-Mintus, Contemporary Sociology

“A powerful book.... The authors are successful in the difficult job of balancing the sharing of private, revealing stories about their lives while bolstering this with applicable theories and discussing pertinent policies and research that are tackling ways to advance both the aging and disability fields.” —Bronwyn Keefe, The Gerontologist

What is the lived experience of previously healthy older adults as they face disability in late life, and how is disability assimilated in their identity? How do prevailing practices facilitate—or limit—options for elders living with new disabilities?

To address these questions, Jeffrey Kahana and Eva Kahana uniquely synthesize disability and gerontological perspectives to explore both the unfolding challenges of aging and the practices and policies that can enhance the lives of older adults.

Jeffrey S. Kahana is associate professor of history and codirector of the Center on Aging and Policy at Mount Saint Mary College. Eva Kahana is Distinguished University Professor and Pierce T. and Elizabeth D. Robson Professor of the Humanities at Case Western Reserve University, where she also is director of the Elderly Care Research Center.

CONTENTS
• The World of Late-Life Disability
• Contextualizing Aging and Disability.
• Learning from Gerontology.
• A Life-Course Perspective.
• Adventurous Aging through International Travel.
• Managing the Physical Environment.
• Enhancing Care in the Nursing Home Environment.
• The Experience of Disability at the End of Life.
• Toward Better Public Policies.
• The Promise of Convergence in Gerontology and Disability Studies.

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Disability in Society

Disability and the Internet: Confronting a Digital Divide
Paul T. Jaeger

“It is with definite authority that [Jaeger] paints a complete history of how a technology that promised to make the world accessible for people with disabilities largely created new barriers to participation.”
—Rebecca G. Oxley, Government Information Quarterly

From websites to mobile devices, cyberspace has revolutionized the lived experience of disability—frequently for better, but sometimes for worse.

Paul Jaeger offers a sweeping examination of the complex and often contradictory relationships between people with disabilities and the Internet. Tracing the historical and legal evolution of the digital disability divide in the realms of education, work, social life, and culture, and also exploring avenues of policy reform and technology development, Jaeger connects individual experiences with the larger story of technology’s promise and limitations. He reveals how technology that promised to make the world accessible for people with disabilities largely created new barriers to participation.

Paul T. Jaeger is professor in the College of Information Studies and codirector of the Information Policy and Access Center at the University of Maryland.

CONTENTS
Disability in the Internet Age • The Digital Divide: Historical and Legal Issues • Barriers to Online Access: Personal, Public, and Professional Spheres • Improving Accessibility: Technology Evaluation and Policy Reform • Identity and Advocacy: Possibilities and Impacts • Toward an Inclusive Internet.

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“A timely and needed analysis of the beauty of expanding the concept of care, to include that given and received by disabled people.”
—Bethany Stevens, Disability Studies Quarterly

“A significant contribution to the critical disability studies literature, as well as qualitative research in general.”
—Victoria Kanner, Canadian Journal of Sociology

In this exploration of intimate relationships between people with physical disabilities and those without, Sarah Smith Rainey shatters the myth of sexless, burdensome partnerships.

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