

ENGLISH 7891 Spring 2021

Disability and the Early/Modern: Wheeling Strangers of Here and Everywhere
Thursdays 9:10-12:10 online (Zoom link on Carmen)

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Office hours: by appointment (please email me—with a couple of options—at least 72 hours in advance to set up a meeting)

Course Description

In this seminar, we shall study disability in the context of a global early modernity, with specific attention to the crossings between race, empire, and disability. We shall also study this early modernity's dialogic relationship to the present, particularly through explorations of some generative afterlives of canonical texts. Here are some of the questions we shall consider: how was disability perceived, represented, and negotiated in premodern societies? How was disability theorised in premodern societies—and particularly, for purposes of this class focused on literatures in English, how was disability theorized by premodern English authors on stage and page at the moment of inception of the British empire? What was—is—the relationship between disability and racial formation? And how do these theorisations, representations, and negotiations continue to inform current understandings of disability and its intersections with gender, race, sexuality, and nationality/citizenship?

Course Materials

- Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. Kim Hall (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007).
- Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd edn (1998; Pearson, 2007).
- Toni Morrison and Rokia Traoré, *Desdemona* (Oberon Books, 2012).
- Djanet Sears, *Harlem Duet* (Scirocco Drama, 1997).
- Lolita Chakrabarti, *Red Velvet*, 2nd edn (Bloomsbury, 2014).
- Keith Hamilton Cobb, *American Moor* (Bloomsbury, 2020).
- Databases access will be through our Library subscriptions.
- All other materials will be made available through Carmen.

Course Requirements

Students enrolling for .01 will complete all formal assignments outlined below. For students completing the course S/U, the final project will not be counted as part of the course grade. All students, regardless of whether you are taking the seminar for a grade or S/U, must complete all course requirements aside from the final project.

This advanced graduate seminar is interactive and discussion-based. Without each member's presence and active participation, it cannot work. Consistent attendance, thorough preparedness, and engaged participation are therefore required for this class. You will be expected to attend each

class session and stay for the full duration of class. (For each week's session, we shall punctuate our seminar with a 10-minute break.) If you have to be absent for a day for any reason, please clear the absence with me in advance of class. Excused absences will be accepted for documented health reasons, documented personal emergencies, and documented university activities (such as attending a conference). 2-3 unexcused absences will result in a 10-15% course grade reduction. Four or more absences (of any kind) may result in failure of the course. *If you find that you are missing multiple classes and are concerned, please come talk to me right away.*

All students will also be expected to maintain a “class reading journal”—this could just be a file/folder in your computer—where you make notes to yourself about each week's readings. The notes could be in the form of paragraphs, or simply sentences, or even just keywords/concepts that you have noted for yourself for follow-up or further reading/research. During class discussions, you will occasionally be asked to share from your journal. (The journal is meant to serve mainly as accountability to yourself for the reading you do from week to week, and to keep things sorted in your own head. I *promise*, this will be useful for the class presentations—see below.)

All written work should be formatted with a 12 point font, double spaced, and 1 inch margins, and uploaded as a PDF to Carmen by the due date.

“In the archives” discussion lead/write-up: This class aims to introduce you not only to methods and practices of scholarship, but also to primary texts that ask scholarly work. Early in the semester, you will sign up for discussion lead on one of our three “In the archives” days. You will draw the class's attention to a text or a set of texts in the archive that particularly catches your attention and explain why you find that text remarkable/generative. What is surprising—or useful—about this text? What does an examination of this text uncover/help with, either in terms of history or methodology? What gaps in current scholarship on disability might a consideration of this text fill? (20 minutes; 5-6 pages)

Critical methods presentation/essay: One goal of this class is for you to become meta-critically self-aware. This assignment asks you to examine your own critical preoccupations and investments. Based on your reading for this course, which critics have most impressed or influenced you, and why? (If you identify with none of the critics on the syllabus, explain why not.) Describe one question currently facing those who employ the method of scholarship you most identify with. What would you hope to contribute, through your own scholarship, to this critical conversation, and how might you go about it? (10 minutes; 5-6 pages)

Research project: Your primary written assignment for this course is a conference paper on a topic of your choice. It must focus on one or several of the texts we have considered in this class. Your topic must be generated out of a genuine question of interest to you, something about which you want to learn more. Your question can be primarily interpretative in nature or oriented towards history or analytical methods. Your essay must clearly articulate your methodological investments and situate your argument in the context of a broader critical conversation.

This project involves multiple steps (all due-dates are noted on the schedule).

1. One paragraph stating your initial research question and your methodological orientation
2. Critical bibliography summarizing 8-10 relevant articles, chapters, or books
3. 250-word prospectus, including your revised research question and your initial thesis
4. 20-minute conference presentation in class in the last week of term
5. Revision of your paper based on conference feedback

6. Submission of final paper (10-12 pages plus endnotes)

Note: All reading and writing assignments will be finalized after the first class meeting and discussion, where students will establish the main thrusts of their engagements. We shall never be obliged to “cover everything” and similarly, there will always be space for students to bring their own specific interests to the table.

Grading and Credit

All course requirements must be met in order to receive credit for this course. Students taking the course S/U may omit the final project, but should plan to complete all other course assignments. In addition, remember that term-long criteria such as attendance and participation will affect your final grade. If you are taking the course for a grade, the maximum number of points you can earn is 100.

A	93-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D+	67-69
B-	80-82	D	60-66

Please see OSU Faculty Rule 3335-8-21 for a qualitative description of each grade:
<https://trustees.osu.edu/bylaws-and-rules/3335-8>

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University’s Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>), and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University’s Code of Student Conduct (and this syllabus) may constitute “Academic Misconduct.”

The OSU Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University’s Code of Student Conduct is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct. Plagiarism is the representation of another’s work or ideas as one’s own. Such representation includes the unacknowledged word-for-word and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with University rules, will be reported to the appropriate departmental or University body.

Punctuality, Preparedness, and Collective Access

- Readings do not have to be printed out, but note that you *must* download them to your device if you plan to access them digitally. This is to avoid any potential problems during a class period. **I also pedagogically encourage this very, very strongly—so that you annotate each day’s reading for yourself, no matter what medium you are using.**
- If you have a tablet—outside the computer you are on—you are welcome to use it during class. Please do not conduct any business not related to this course during class time.
- You are encouraged to agree with, disagree with, and add to each others’ arguments during discussion. However, please keep in mind that not everyone understands “participation” the same way; for some, what feels like a “lively debate” could feel to others like “a terrifying ordeal.” Try to be attentive to the dynamic of the group and think about how you can support our developing ideas as a collective. Some questions to consider:
 - Do you need to listen more? For example, do you find that you tend to speak almost every time there is a pause? If so, try waiting to see if someone who is quieter will speak up after a short wait.
 - Do you need to ask questions more than make arguments? Although argument is an important part of academic exchange, so is the effort to deeply and genuinely understand what another person is saying. Ensure you are attending to both.
 - Do you need to speak out more during discussion, even if that requires a somewhat awkward form of breaking in (such as holding up a hand, or asking me privately to call on you occasionally)?
 - Do you find that we need to keep better track of ongoing questions or ideas as a group—i.e., are some getting left by the wayside? Consider adopting a strategy such as taking notes on behalf of the class. Or note down questions you’d like us to return to, and put them in our Zoom chat.
- As the semester progresses, we shall practise interdependence and collective access—responding and adjusting to one another.
- If there is something you need or would like to do during class to enhance your own access (such as drawing, stimming, knitting, standing up, stretching, etc.), do so.

Accommodations, Disabilities, and Academic Support

The Office of Student Life Disability Services (SLDS) provides services to any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability. Disabled students that have been certified by SLDS will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. SLDS is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave. Phone (614) 292-3307, VRS (video relay service) (614) 429-1334. Email slds@osu.edu. Detailed contact information and directions appear on their website: <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/about-us/contact-us/>.

I also know that everyone has different learning practices and needs. I invite you to know and articulate yours—privately, to me, if necessary—so that we may do the best we can for all of us, collectively, and for each other.

Schedule

OTHELLO

Week 1: 11-15 January

- Introduction to the course: discussion of the course syllabus and policies; your learning practices and needs; general community guidelines for this course; your specific research/interest areas in early modern studies and/or disability studies
- Toni Morrison and Rokia Traoré, *Desdemona* (Oberon Books, 2012) (you don't need to have read this beforehand, we shall read the first few pages together, aloud, in class!)
- Opening discussions:
 - Ethics and uses of training a disability lens on the early/modern
 - Interrogating the early/modern and the canon/afterlives
 - "Introducing" disability?

Week 2: 18-22 January

- Othello*
- Kim Hall, "Introduction" in the Bedford/St. Martin's edition
- Tobin Siebers, "Shakespeare Differently Disabled" in Valerie Traub, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, and Race* (Oxford UP, 2016), pp. 435-454
- Ania Loomba, "Othello and the Racial Question" in *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* (Oxford UP, 2002), pp. 91-111
- Justin Shaw, "'Rub Him About the Temples': Othello, Disability, and the Failures of Care" *Early Theatre* 22.2 (2019), pp. 171-84
- Red Bull Theater's "Exploring Othello in 2020" series, especially the first session:
<https://www.redbulltheater.com/exploring-othello-2020>

Week 3: 25-29 January

- Othello*
- Djanet Sears, *Harlem Duet* (Scirocco Drama, 1997)
- Joyce Green MacDonald, "Echoes of Harlem: Women's Memories in *Othello* and *Harlem Duet*" in *Shakespearean Adaptation, Race and Memory in the New World* (Routledge, 2020), pp. 109-133
- Nedda Mehdizadeh, "Othello in Harlem: Transforming Theater in Djanet Sears's *Harlem Duet*," *Journal of American Studies* 54.1 (2020), pp. 12-18

Week 4: 1-5 February

- Othello*
- Lolita Chakrabarti, *Red Velvet*, 2nd edn (Bloomsbury, 2014)
- Adrian Lester and Lolita Chakrabarti, *A Working Diary* (Methuen Drama, 2020), excerpt
- Keith Hamilton Cobb, *American Moor* (Bloomsbury, 2020)
- Ambereen Dadabhoj, "Wincing at Shakespeare: Looking B(l)ack at the Bard," *Journal of American Studies* 54.1 (2020), pp. 82-88
- Red Bull Theater's "Exploring Othello in 2020" series, especially the final session:
<https://www.redbulltheater.com/exploring-othello-2020>

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY; IN THE ARCHIVES

Week 5: 8-12 February

- Hartman, Saidiya, "Venus in two Acts," *Small Axe* 26 (2008), pp. 1-14
- Nirmala Erevelles, "Race" in Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin, eds, *Keywords for Disability Studies* (New York UP, 2015), <https://keywords.nyupress.org/disability-studies/essay/race/>
- Chris Bell, "Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest proposal," in Lennard Davis, ed., *The Disability Studies Reader*, 2nd edn (Routledge, 2006), pp. 275-282
- Ato Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (Columbia UP, 2007), excerpt
- Jay Dolmage, *Disabled Upon Arrival: Eugenics, Immigration, and the Construction of Race and Disability* (Ohio State UP, 2018), excerpt
- David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor" in *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (U of Michigan P, 2000), pp. 47-64
- Simone Chess, "Atypical Bodies: Constructing (ab)normalcy in the Renaissance" in Susan Anderson and Liam Haydon, eds, *A Cultural History of Disability in the Renaissance* (Bloomsbury, 2020)
- Allison P. Hobgood and David Houston Wood, "Early Modern Literature and Disability Studies" in Clare Barker and Stuart Murray, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Disability* (Cambridge UP, 2018), pp. 32-46
- Elizabeth B. Bearden, "Before Normal, There Was Natural: John Bulwer, Disability, and Natural Signing in Early Modern England and Beyond," *PMLA* 132.1 (2017), pp. 33-50
- Optional: Henri-Jacques Stiker, *A History of Disability*, trans. William Sayers (U of Michigan P, 1999), excerpt

Week 6: 15-19 February

In the archives: ballads

Here are some examples, I encourage you to browse in <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/> for more. (We shall also use some of this week's time for carry-over from last week's discussion of theory. There's a lot in Week 5!)

- "The Stout Cripple of Cornwall," <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20003/image>
- "A Ballad of Anne Askew," <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20003/image>
- "The Jovial Beggars Merry Crew," <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31350/image>
- "Stranges Case, Strangly Altered," <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/32430/image>
- "The Blind Beggar of Bednal Green," <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/32430/image>
- "The Blind eats many a Flye," <https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/32430/image>

Discussion leads

Week 7: 22-26 February

In the archives: lyric poetry

Here are some places to read from, and we may, time allowing, browse in library databases of digitized manuscripts and early modern printed books for more.

- George Herbert, from *The Temple* (1633) (access through EEBO or in a modern-day edition)
- An Collins, from *Divine Songs and Meditations* (1653) (access through EEBO)

- Hester Pulter, from her manuscript of poems, <http://pulterproject.northwestern.edu/#poems> (1640s-1660s)
- Anne Bradstreet, from *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America* (1650) (access through EEBO)
 - Browse: EEBO (through our library subscription; for printed books)
 - Browse: <https://wellcomelibrary.org/collections/browse/collections/>
 - Browse: <https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/search>
 - Browse: <https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Browse.aspx>

Discussion leads

Week 8: 1-5 March

In the archives: recipes and tracts

Here are some examples, but we may, time allowing, browse in library databases of digitized manuscripts and early modern printed books for more.

- Ambroise Paré, from *Book of Monsters and Prodigies* (1575) (see also: <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2017/07/ambroise-pares-medical-monsters/>)
- John Bulwer, from *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* (1644) (access through EEBO)
- Jane Buckhurst, cookbook, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/view/search;JSESSIONID=37cad79f-734b-4c25-b87d-e383950298a9?q=V.a.7&search=SUBMIT&QuickSearchA=QuickSearchA&sort=call_number%2Cmpsortorder1&pgs=50&res=1&cic=FOLGER%7E3%7E3 (1653)
- Susanna Packe, cookbook, https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/view/search;JSESSIONID=37cad79f-734b-4c25-b87d-e383950298a9?q=V.a.7&search=SUBMIT&QuickSearchA=QuickSearchA&sort=call_number%2Cmpsortorder1&pgs=50&res=1&cic=FOLGER%7E3%7E3 (1674)
- Elizabeth Okeover, book of recipes, <https://wellcomelibrary.org/item/b18772341#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&z=-0.0612%2C-0.0353%2C1.1224%2C0.7051> (1675-c. 1725?)
- Gitanjali G. Shahani, *Tasting Difference: Food, Race, and Cultural Encounters in Early Modern Literature* (Cornell UP, 2020), excerpt
 - Browse: EEBO (through our library subscription; for printed books)
 - Browse: https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/List_of_recipe_books
 - Browse: <https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/FOLGER~3~3>
 - Browse: <https://wellcomelibrary.org/collections/browse/collections/>
 - Browse: <https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll7/search>
 - Browse: <https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Browse.aspx>

Discussion leads

Week 9: 8-12 March

Critical methods presentations

PARADISE LOST

Week 10: 15-19 March

Paradise Lost, Books 1-3

- Reginald A. Wilburn, “Phillis Wheatley and the ‘Miracle’ of Miltonic Influence,” *Milton Studies* 58 (2017), pp. 145-165
- Reginald A. Wilburn, “Getting ‘Uppity’ with Milton; or Because My Mom Politely Asked: ‘Was Milton Racist?’” *Milton Studies* 62.2 (2020), pp. 267-279

- Daniel Shore, "Was Milton White?" *Milton Studies* 62.2 (2020), pp. 252-265
- Melissa Sanchez, "Milton's Genderqueer Christianity," *Milton Studies* 62.2 (2020), pp. 306-322
- Amrita Dhar, "Toward Blind Language: John Milton Writing, 1648-1656," *Milton Studies* 60:1-2 (2018), pp. 75-107

Week 11: 22-26 March

- Paradise Lost*, Books 4-8
- Erin Shields, *Paradise Lost* (Playwrights Canada, 2018)
- Michael Symmons Roberts, *Paradise Lost* (BBC Digital Audio, 2018)

Week 12: 29 March – 2 April

- Paradise Lost*, Books 9-12

One paragraph stating your initial research question and your methodological orientation due

Week 13: 5-9 April

- Wrap-up and catch-up/flex-time for work on final projects

Critical bibliography summarizing 6-8 relevant articles or book chapters and 250-word prospectus including your revised research question and your initial thesis due

Week 14: 12-16 April

Final project presentations

Week 15: 19-23 April

Final project submissions

Land Acknowledgment

The Ohio State University stands in the traditional lands of the Shawnee, Miami, Lenape, and Wyandotte peoples.