



Disability, Discrimination and Justice Summer Seminar

CEPDISC, Aarhus University

Dates for 3-day course: 25, 26, 27 August 2025

Course lecturer: [Miklós István Zala](#) and [Adi Goldiner](#)

ECTS: 3

This course is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions project HUMWAR, under grant agreement No. 1011067614.

Course description:

How should we understand disability and what are the responsibilities of a just society toward its disabled members? This course seeks to explore these questions from a philosophical perspective by delving into current debates in political, social, and moral philosophy and bioethics. The course will traverse topics ranging from the social construction of disability, the connection between disability and well-being, the ethics of discrimination on the basis of disability and its distinctive features, feminist perspectives on disability, epistemic injustice in relation to disability experience, and the disability challenge vis-à-vis theories of justice.

Learning objectives:

1. Have an in-depth understanding of the definition and models of disability.
2. Have an in-depth understanding of the concept of discrimination and its application in the case of disability discrimination.
3. To become familiar with concepts referred to and understand the key positions within the literature on disability studies, philosophy of disability and disability bioethics.
4. Produce critical and well-structured arguments regarding ethical, philosophical, and political issues on disability.
5. Evaluate the weakness and strengths of different positions in contemporary philosophical debates about disability.
6. Summarise arguments on these issues clearly and succinctly.



Plan for teaching and readings:

25 August 2025: What is Disability? Models and Definitions

1st session: Disability Models and Definitions

Mandatory readings:

- Silvers, A. (2010). "An essay on modeling: The social model of disability." In D. C. Ralston & J. Ho (Eds.), *Philosophical reflections on disability* (pp. 104). Philosophy and Medicine, 104. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2477-0_2 **(17 pages)**
- Scotch, R. K., & Schriener, K. (1997). "Disability as human variation: Implications for policy." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 549(1), 148–159. **(12 pages)**
- Barnes, E. (2016). *The minority body: A theory of disability* (Ch. 1). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (pp. 9-53). **(45 pages)**
- Davis, L. (2002). "The end of identity politics and the beginning of dismodernism: On disability as an unstable category." In *Bending over backwards: Disability, dismodernism and other difficult positions* (pp. 9-32). New York: NYU Press. **(24 pages)**

Recommended reading:

- Gregory, A. (2020). "Disability as inability." *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, 18(1), 23–48. **(26 pages)**

2nd session

Activity – Movie: *Sound of Metal*

3rd session: Disability Models and Definitions II.

Mandatory readings

- Swain, J., & French, S. (2000). "Towards an affirmational model of disability." *Disability & Society*, 15(4), 569–582. **(14 pages)**
- Savulescu, J., & Kahane, G. (2011). "Disability: A welfarist approach." *Clinical Ethics*, 6(1), 45–51. **(15 pages)**
- Begon, J. (2020). "Disability: A justice-based account." *Philosophical Studies*, 178(3), 935–962. **(28 pages)**



Recommended reading

- Kahane, G., & Savulescu, J. (2009). "The welfarist account of disability." In K. Brownlee & A. Cureton (Eds.), *Disability and disadvantage* (pp. 14–53). New York: Oxford University Press. **(40 pages)**

Total mandatory pages for day 1: 155

26 August 2025: Disability and Discrimination

1st session part 1: What is discrimination? What makes it wrong?

Mandatory readings:

- Altman, A. (2020). *Discrimination*. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/discrimination/> **(20 pages)**

1st session Part 2: Disability and Discrimination

Mandatory readings:

- Hahn, H. (1996). Antidiscrimination laws and social research on disability: The minority group perspective. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 14(1), 41–59. **(19 pages)**
- Brown, J. M. (2021). What makes disability discrimination wrong? *Law and Philosophy*, 40(1), 1–31. **(31 pages)**
- Aas, S., & Wasserman, D. (2017). Discrimination and disability. In K. Lippert-Rasmussen (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Ethics of Discrimination* (pp. 231–42). New York: Routledge. **(12 pages)**

Recommended readings:

- Goldiner, A. (2022). Moral accommodations: Tolerating impairment-related misconduct under the Americans with Disabilities Act. *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, 54(1), 171–242, **Read only: 206–242 (36 pages)**

2nd session

- Activity: *discussing legal cases on the definition of disability in the context of antidiscrimination law.*



3rd session: Disability, Health Care Rationing, and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mandatory readings:

- Scully, J. L. (2020). Disability, disablism, and COVID-19 pandemic triage. *Bioethical Inquiry* 17(4), 601–605. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-020-10005-y> **(5 pages)**
- Godfrey, E. (2020, April 3). Americans with disabilities are terrified. *The Atlantic*. **(6 pages)**
- Bognar, G. (2020). Cost-effectiveness analysis and disability discrimination. In A. Cureton & D. Wasserman (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Disability* (pp. 652–668). New York: Oxford University Press. **(17 pages)**
- Amundson, R. (2022). Disability, ideology, and quality of life: A bias in biomedical ethics. In J. M. Reynolds & C. Wieseler (Eds.), *The Disability Bioethics Reader* (pp. 137–146). New York: Routledge. **(10 pages)**

Recommended readings:

- Hellman, D., & Nicholson, K. (2021). Rationing and disability: The civil rights and wrongs of state triage protocols. *Washington and Lee Law Review*, 78(4), 1207–1287. **(Read only pages 1–11, 41–68. 39 pages)**

Total mandatory pages for day 2: 156

27 August 2025: Disability and Justice

1st session: Disability, Well-being, and Social Justice

Mandatory readings:

- Macbryde Johnson, M. H. (2003, February 16). Unspeakable conversations. *The New York Times*. **(13 pages)**
- Wasserman, D., & Asch, A. (2014). Understanding the relationship between disability and well-being. In J. Bickenbach, F. Felder, & B. Schmitz (Eds.), *Disability and the good human life* (pp. 139–167). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **(29 pages)**
- Anderson, E. S. (1999). What is the point of equality? *Ethics*, 109(2), 287–337. **(Read only pages 302–307, 312–321, 331–336. 22 pages)**
- Barclay, L. (2010). Disability, respect, and justice. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 27(2), 154–171. **(18 pages)**
- Wolff, J. (2009). Cognitive disability in a society of equals. *Metaphilosophy*, 40(3–4), 402–415. **(14 pages)**



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- Wendell, S. (1989). Toward a feminist theory of disability. *Hypatia*, 4(2), 104–124. **(21 pages)**

Recommended readings:

- Nussbaum, M. (2006). Disability and the social contract. In *Frontiers of justice: Disability, nationality, species membership* (Ch. 2, pp. 96–154). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. **(59 pages)**
- Kittay, E. (2019). Dependency and disability. In *Learning from my daughter* (Ch. 6, pp. 143–163). Oxford: Oxford University Press. **(21 pages)**

2nd session: Disability and Sexuality

Mandatory readings:

- Shakespear, T. (2022). Disability and sexuality. In B. D. Earp, C. Chambers, & L. Watson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Sex and Sexuality* (pp. 271–285). Routledge. **(15 pages)**
- Zola, I. K. (1982). Four steps on the road to invalidity: The denial of sexuality, anger, vulnerability, and potentiality. In *Missing pieces: A chronicle of living with a disability* (Ch. 11, pp. 212–237). Philadelphia: Temple University Press. **(8 pages)**

3rd session: Disability and Epistemic Injustice

Mandatory readings:

- Barnes, E. (2016). *The minority body* (Ch. 4: "Taking their word for it," pp. 119–143). Oxford: Oxford University Press. **(24 pages)**
- Wieseler, C. (2020). Epistemic oppression and ableism in bioethics. *Hypatia*, 35(4), 714–732. **(18 pages)**

Total mandatory pages for day 3: 182

Total mandatory pages for all three days: 493



Description of examination (3 ECTS credits):

A reflection paper (of at least 1500 words) providing a detailed overview of what the participant has learned over the 3-day course (whether it is about a particular topic or broad insight,) identifying which arguments or debates they have found most significant for their research moving forward, and describing new questions or areas of inquiry that have arisen from their study.

Schedule 25-27 August 2025

Day 1: 25 August 2025

Location: Aarhus University
Department of Political Science
Bartholins Allé 7, building TBD room TBD
8000 Aarhus C

10:00-12:00 Disability Models and Definitions

12:00-13:00 Lunch – buffet to grab in the kitchen in building 1330

13:00-14:30 Watching the movie *Sound of Metal*

14:30-15:00 Tea and coffee break

15:00-16:30 Disability Models and Definitions II

18:30-21:30 Dinner at Restaurant Det Glade Vanvid, Panden (entrance to the left)

Location: Pakkervej 2
8000 Aarhus C
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[View on map](#)



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Day 2: 26 August 2025

Location: Aarhus University
Department of Political Science
Bartholins Allé 7, building TBD room TBD
8000 Aarhus C

10:00-12:00 What is Discrimination? What Makes it Wrong? How Should We Understand Disability Discrimination?

12:00-13:00 Lunch – buffet to grab in the kitchen in building 1330

13:00-14:30 Discussion and activities

14:30-15:00 Tea and coffee break

15:00-16:30 Disability, Health Care Rationing, and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Day 3: 27 August 2025

Location: Aarhus University
Department of Political Science
Bartholins Allé 7, building TBD room TBD
8000 Aarhus C

10:00-12:00 Disability and Justice

12:00-13:00 Lunch – buffet to grab in the kitchen in building 1330

13:00-14:30 Disability and Sexuality

14:30-15:00 Tea and coffee break

15:00-16:30 Disability and Epistemic Injustice

16:30- Thank you and goodbye



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