Course Objectives: Students are challenged to study a newer field of history, and to apply diverse analytical methods in their study of American Disability history. Comparative studies and non-traditional historical sources play a central role in this course, and students will apply their research in disability studies to a reinterpretation of general American history.

Course Description: This course will address the meaning of disability in America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is a cultural study of disability, and will confront the social construction of disability, its representation and changing meaning in society. By challenging common social assumptions, and expanding social historical studies of marginalized groups, this course also refocuses the study of such major themes in history as nativism, the role of media, community histories, eugenics, gender roles, the idea of progress, and the perception of normalcy.

Course Requirements:
Film and readings review project  20%
Homework 20%
Participation 20%
FDR review 20%
Thought paper 20%

This is a seminar course. Students are expected to complete a one-page précis for each of their daily reading/viewing assignments, and present their findings to the class. You are expected to attend every class. Failure to do so will have a negative impact on your final grade.

Required texts
Longmore and Umansky, The New Disability History (NDH)
Longmore, Why I Burned My Book (WBMB)

Additional readings will be distributed in class
Recommended readings:
Bogdan, Robert. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities For Amusement And Profit.*
Ferguson Philip M. *Abandoned To Their Fate: Social Policy And Practice Toward Severely Retarded People In America, 1820-1920*
Gregory, Hugh. *FDR’s Splendid Deception.*
Haller, Mark. *Eugenics.*
Noll, Steven. *Feeble-Minded In Our Midst: Institutions For The Mentally Retarded In The South, 1900-1940.*
Norden, Martin. *Cinema of Isolation.*
Pernick, Martin. *Black Stork: Eugenics And The Death Of “Defective” Babies In American Medicine And Motion Pictures Since 1915.*
Reilly, Philip. *Surgical Solution*
Shapiro, Joseph. *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement.*
Stiker, Henri-Jacques. *A History of Disability*
Thomson, Rosemarie Garland, *Freakery*
Trent, Robert. *Inventing the Feeble Mind: A History of Mental Retardation in the United States.*
Winzer, Margaret. *From Margin to Mainstream: A History of Special Education*

**Schedule**

Week 1: **Defining Disability, meanings of disability; medical versus cultural interpretations** *(NDH) [watch “King Gimp”]*

Due

5/28: Baynton, Chap. 1 in *NDH*; Stiker, handout

5/29: Kudlick, Chap. 7 in *NDH*; Freberg, Laura Bridgman

5/30: Elizabeth Grosz, “Intolerable Ambiguity: Freak as/at the Limit,” In RGT, *Freakery, 69-81*; Nielsen, Chap. 10 in *NDH*

Week 2: Science and pseudo science; representations

Due
6/2: Brockley, Chap. 11 in NDH; Williams-Searle, Chap. 6 in NDH

6/3: Kraut, “‘Proper Precautions’: Searching for Illness on Ellis Island”; Winzer, Feebleminded OR Pernick/Reilly sections.

6/4: Individual readings on Prosthetics:

6) Stephen Mihm, “’A Limb Which Shall be Presentable in Polite Society,’” Ott al 82-99
8) Henri Stiker, A History Of Disability, chap. 6: Birth of Rehabilitation.

Week 3: Representation cntd. and activism

Due

6/9 **FDR paper DUE;** (in class) watch Best Years


6/12 Activism: *WBMB*, Chap. 4 and 5; Shaprio, ILM chapter (from *No Pity*)

6/13 Policy and Personal: Scotch, Chap. 14 in *NDH*; *WBMB*, Chap. 13; wrap up

**Final project due Friday June 20 by 4:00**