

Minor in Disability Studies

Disability Studies (DS) is an emerging interdisciplinary field that challenges dominant societal assumptions and attitudes about disability (physical, cognitive, emotional, or sensory) by reframing disability as a social and cultural construct used to differentially categorize bodies as "disabled" or "nondisabled." The DS minor offers students a new lens for thinking about "normality" by acknowledging disability as a universal part of the human experience, rather than a deficit that must be fixed, cured, or hidden. The minor critically examines the ways in which normative ideologies and systems stigmatize, dehumanize, pathologize, and minoritize disabled people (e.g., by justifying and maintaining exclusionary and ableist practices such as institutionalization, disenfranchisement, and immigration restrictions). It also highlights the ways in which disability simultaneously functions as a source of empowerment, pride, collective identity, and community for people with disabilities.

The minor draws on a variety of disciplines, including the humanities, social sciences, education, and law. By rethinking disability through multiple disciplinary perspectives, the minor prepares students to critically engage in working towards the inclusion and emancipation of people with disabilities throughout contemporary social systems and institutions.

Undergraduate admission to Northeastern Illinois University

For more information about the minor, contact program advisor Ashley Elrod a-elrod@neiu.edu.

Why study disability?

Disability is a universal part of the human experience. It affects at least 15% of the global population and 25% of the U.S. population, in addition to the chronic illnesses and mental illnesses experienced by 60% and 20% of the U.S. population, respectively. Over the course of our lifetimes, we can expect to experience temporary or chronic disability ourselves or through our relationships with others, whether from birth or through injury, illness, or aging.

In addition to the knowledge and skills that students develop in their coursework, Disability Studies equips students with an invaluable tool for their careers and life-long learning: "a disability-studies consciousness [that] can alter the way we see" (Davis 2018). A disability-studies consciousness lends students a deeper, more nuanced insight into human social relations, institutions, and identity. They perceive that disability is far from marginal or tragic, but rather "fundamental to being human—a part of every life" (Garland-Thomson 2018). Participating in the DS minor will equip students with the tools to perceive, critically analyze, and equitably respond to disability issues that they encounter both in their own lives and in the larger society they navigate.

University Core Curriculum Requirements

General Education Distribution Area	Cr. Hrs.
Fine Arts (FA)* 2 courses, from at least two of the following areas of study: Art, CMT (Mass Media or Theatre), Music (includes Dance).	6
Humanities (HU)* 3 courses, from at least two of the following areas of study: CMT (Communication), English, Linguistics, Philosophy, Women's and Gender Studies, World Languages and Cultures, (Note: No more than two foreign language courses may be used to fulfill this requirement.)	9
Behavioral/Social Sciences (SB)* 3 courses, from at least two of the following areas of study: African & African American Studies, Anthropology, Computer Science, Economics, Geography & Environmental Studies, History, Justice Studies, Latino & Latin American Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work	9
Natural Sciences (NS and NSL)** 3 courses, from at least two of the following areas of study; one course must have a laboratory component (NSL): Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Environmental Science, Physics (Note: If an FYE ANTH that counts as Natural Science is taken, only one Biology course may be used for Natural Science).	9

Engaged Learning Experiences

Students must complete, at Northeastern, three courses designated as Engaged Learning Experiences courses. One of the Engaged Learning Experiences courses must be at the 300-level, and one Engaged Learning Experiences course must be designated as "Boundary Crossing".

Discipline Specific (ELE-DS)

These courses have pre-requisites that are specific courses within a program of study. Discipline Specific courses give students a deeper understanding of how knowledge is created and applied in their field.

Boundary Crossing (ELE-X)

These are courses that cross disciplinary boundaries and/or cross boundaries through engagements outside the classroom or University allowing students to see how knowledge gained in one field might inform other fields or other aspects of society.

Math/Quantitative Reasoning (MA)

1 Math course, that has intermediate Algebra as prerequisite OR is a course listed on the General Education Distributive Learning List of Approved Courses. Any 3 hour college level math course, beyond Intermediate Algebra, meets this requirement.

- * Majors in Fine Arts, Humanities or Social/Behavioral Sciences, may waive up to 6 credit hours of General Education requirements in the corresponding distribution area.
- ** Majors in Natural Sciences may waive up to 9 credit hours of General Education requirements in the Natural Sciences distribution area.

Students should also be aware of all other university requirements to obtain a degree - NEIU requirements (<http://catalog.neiu.edu/graduation-requirements/bachelors-degree/>)

Minor in Disability Studies (18 credit hours)
REQUIRED INTRODUCTORY COURSE (3 HOURS)

- DS 101 Introduction to Disability Studies

ELECTIVES (15 HOURS)

Select five of the following electives, with no more than 2 courses in any one program

- BLAW 384 Labor & Employment Law
- ENGL 338A Literature, The Body, and Disability Studies
- GES 303 Geography and Disability: Space, Place, and Power
- HIST 309 History of Disability
- LING 325 Language and Disability: Comparative Language Development
- PHIL 376 Philosophy of Disability: Society and Self
- SOC 305 Sociology of (Dis)ability
- SPED 272 or 372 Characteristics of Children and Youth with Exceptional Learning Needs
- SPED 323 Consultation In Special Education
- WGS 318 Fatness, Feminism, and Critical Weight Studies
- WGS 359 Queering Disability

Total Credit Hours: 18