

## Interdisciplinary Disability Studies

An academic minor

### Contact

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### Representative Courses

- DIS 300 Disability: Interaction of Human Diversity and Global Environments
- DIS 400 Disability as Diversity I
- DIS 450 Disability: Population-Environment Diversity
- DIS 470 Interdisciplinary Project in Disability Studies
- DIS 480 Independent Project in Disability Studies
- DIS 490 Selected Topics in Interdisciplinary Disability Studies

### Program Description

The Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies, Maine's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service, in conjunction with faculty representatives from 14 academic departments at the University of Maine, offers a minor in interdisciplinary disability studies (IDS). The interdisciplinary disability studies curriculum provides students a means to explore disability within the larger context of diversity and to examine professional practice, scholarship and policy related to persons with disabilities.

Offered through the Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies, the minor consists of 24 credits distributed among elective courses in three categories: social change, diversity studies, and environmental context; and three core interdisciplinary courses taught by faculty with expertise in disability studies. Students declare this minor in addition to their major field of study.

The coursework provides students with an appreciation of the many factors that affect human diversity, and how their disciplines and disability studies can reciprocally inform one another.

The Interdisciplinary Disability Studies Program is internationally recognized for its progressive scholarship and activism. Faculty have been acknowledged repeatedly by national and international awards for their scholarship. Students have presented their work at competitive national and international conferences and have seen their own work in publication. This level of accomplishment is very unusual in undergraduate education. The program is innovative in its approach to teaching and learning. Students and faculty use technology such as YouTube, Second Life, podcasting, instant messaging and videochat in class attendance and activities. Summer undergraduate and graduate courses are taught using asynchronous methods.

Each semester the curriculum is changed to advance and reflect the most contemporary theory, research and praxis. The curriculum is founded on critical exchange of diverse ideas and thinking that then are translated into expanding access and participation in the full range of human activities and environments.

### Specialized Information

The interdisciplinary disability studies curricula provide varied learning resources and opportunities for students. Students may use their own or our state-of-the-art computers housed in a laboratory dedicated exclusively to those enrolled in disability studies courses. There are opportunities to work with faculty on research and to present and co-publish scholarship. Students are encouraged to work with CCIDS staff and faculty on community service projects in their areas of interest and to collaborate with national and international peers working in similar centers at other universities.

## Associated Honor Societies and Student Organizations

Ten University of Maine undergraduates were recognized in 2010 for successfully completing a 24-credit minor in interdisciplinary disability studies.

One student was the valedictorian of the University of Maine in 2005. Two of the undergraduate concentration students were featured in a *Bangor Daily News* story for their work in theater access and received the student award from the American Public Health Association for their work. Another graduate student was acknowledged with the student award from the American Public Health Association for his work in web access.

We have had international students in our courses, including a Fulbright Scholar from Russia.

## Career and Graduate Opportunities

Graduate and undergraduate students throughout the university can enhance their careers through completing the coursework in disability studies. Having expertise in disability scholarship and issues is valuable for careers in academia, professional practice careers, communications, engineering, public policy, architecture, design and business. A few examples of student opportunities from diverse disciplinary fields:

- Engineering and kinesiology students interested in crafting sporting equipment and revising sports for diverse bodies
- Design students interested in examining how product and spatial design can be used to eliminate stigma
- Business students interested in marketing to aging baby boomer populations
- Literature students interested in creative writing about embodied diversity
- Art history students examining the changes in images of bodies, beauty, and atypical appearance over the centuries
- Journalism students interested in advancing equal opportunity for disabled workers through writing in community newspapers
- Education majors interested in full participation of students with disabilities in public education
- Social work students interested in advocating for civil rights for marginalized populations, including people with atypical bodies and experiences
- Psychology majors interested in studying how diverse bodies and experiences influence clinical practice and outcomes
- English majors interested in the depiction of atypical bodies and experiences in contemporary literature
- New media students interested in studying and inventing innovative methods for web access for all types of users
- Musicians interested in studying alternative ways to perform to audiences who cannot hear
- Civil engineer majors studying methods to improve access and full use of built environments
- Computer science majors interested in crafting hardware and software for diverse users
- Communications and speech disorder students interested in examining disability as expressive and receptive diversity
- Nursing students interested in advancing equal health access for all populations

## About UMaine

The University of Maine, founded in Orono in 1865, is the state's premier public university. It is among the most comprehensive higher education institutions in the Northeast and attracts students from across the U.S. and more than 60 countries. It currently enrolls 12,000 total undergraduate and graduate students who can directly participate in groundbreaking research working with world-class scholars. Students are offered 88 bachelor's degree programs, 64 master's degree programs, 25 doctoral programs and one of the oldest and most prestigious honors programs in the U.S. The university promotes environmental stewardship on its campus, with substantial efforts aimed at conserving energy, recycling and adhering to green building standards in new construction. For more information about UMaine, go online ([umaine.edu](http://umaine.edu)). Equal opportunity information also is available online ([umaine.edu/eo](http://umaine.edu/eo)).

## How do I apply?

Visit [go.umaine.edu](http://go.umaine.edu) for an application as well as information about academics and life at UMaine.



## Academic Programs 2011–12

The latest versions of the UMaine fact sheets are online ([factsheets.umaine.edu](http://factsheets.umaine.edu)). This fact sheet is intended for informational purposes only and is subject to change.

