

Lilah Roth

Critical Disability Studies Final Reflection

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Overall, this class was one of the favorites I have ever taken so far during my time in the Bi-Co. I have never taken a class like it before, and it inspired me to keep studying and learning about disability studies. At the beginning of the semester, I was very curious about disability studies. In my other courses, I had gotten a little taste of talking about disability and ableism in a critical setting. However, they did not go into nearly enough detail. This class felt like it finally quenched my thirst for learning and discussing much more about disability studies.

Something that I continued to think about throughout the whole semester was disability art and just things created by disabled people in general. While there is already such harsh criticism for art created by anyone, I have noticed that art created by disabled artists seems to be received in a different way. I think there can be a narrative that art, or even just anything, created by disabled people is not “good enough”. But I find these standards of what is “good enough” to be completely made up and ableist, among other things.

Some aspects of this class that I loved were the materials we were exposed to. I personally find it easier to engage with media rather than readings, so I really enjoyed being able to watch films, youtube clips, and listen to podcasts or audiobooks. I also loved the kinds of discussions we would have in class. I never felt the kind of stress that exists in most classrooms on campus. Our conversations did not feel like those that exist in traditional academic settings all of the time. They felt like fluid conversations- talking to people about topics that *really* matter in the world.

My understanding of disability has certainly expanded throughout this semester. I think it definitely brought some of my own internalized ableism to light, as I grew up in a society that taught me disabled people were bad in every way. Through this class, I learned how to view things in the world around me differently than before. I feel as if I take a magnifying glass with a critical disability studies lens with me everywhere I go. The way I watch media is completely different. The way I engage with people is different. The way I see disabled people is different. The way I see built environments in our world is different. I have been able to teach my peers and educate them on things related to disability studies, which is such a cool thing to experience. I've been able to do this before when I have taken other classes, and have educated peers on matters related to health, class, racism, gender, etc, but I have never learned enough about disability to actually apply it to the world around me. I am so appreciative that I can go through not just the rest of college, but the rest of my life, with a critical disability studies lens in my pocket.