



Introduction to Disability Studies

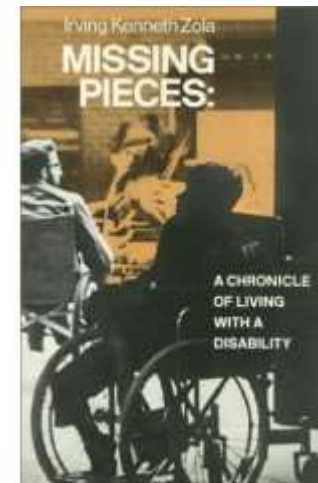
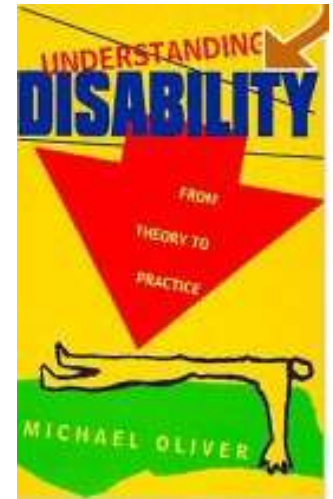
13. Juli 2006

Forschungskolloquium „Disability Studies“

Sara Vogt, Master of Science
Ph.D. Candidate in Disability Studies
University of Illinois at Chicago
DAAD-Stipendiatin (2005-2006)

Disability Studies in the US and UK

- “Founders”:
 - Michael Oliver (UK): social scientist
 - Irving K. Zola (US): medical sociologist
- Following the Disability Rights Movement in each country, a new form of academic inquiry was established *by and for* people with disabilities
- Interdisciplinary in nature
- Society for Disability Studies founded 1982
- PhD Programs: Leeds (UK) and UIC (US)

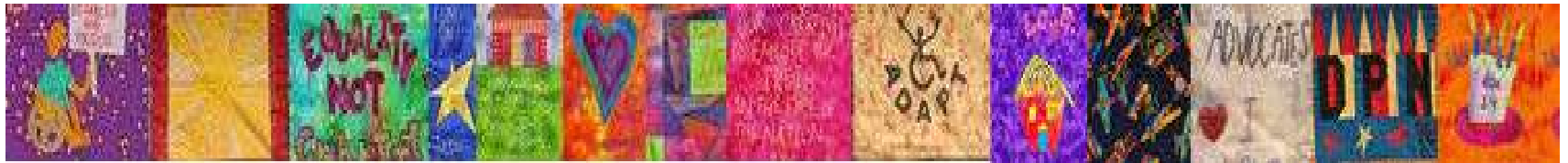


Studying Disability vs. Disability Studies

| Medical/Individual Model | Social/Minority Group Model |
|--|--|
| No difference between impairment/disability | Impairment (biological) Disability (cultural) |
| Impairment as automatically negative | Impairment neither positive nor negative, but neutral |
| Disability rooted in the individual (pathology) | Disability rooted in society (attitudinal and physical barriers) |
| Remedy: cure or rehabilitation | Remedy: social change |
| Disability as pathology, unquestioned biomedical truth | Disability as socially and historically constructed |

Common Characteristics

- Disability is regarded not as pathology, but as a result of social, cultural, and historical factors
- Challenges the view of disability as individual deficit, and aims to reduce the stigma associated with disability
- Encourages participation, if not leadership, by disabled scholars and students





Reformulating Research Questions/Problems

Literature Analysis:

- Disability as Metaphor vs. Disability as Informing Feature of Character (on par with race, gender, etc.)

Medicine:

- Search for a cure vs. Impairment-management
- Disability as problem vs. Impairment as a facet of an individual
- Setting Disability within its cultural and historical frameworks

History:

- Absence of disability as criteria vs. Recognizing impact disability has on historical analysis