



# Introduction to Disability Studies

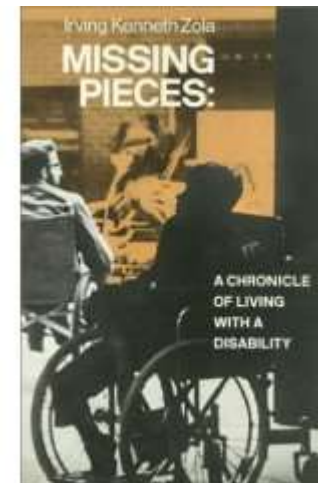
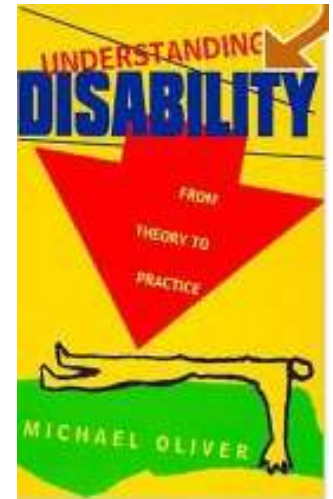
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DAAD-Stipendiatin (2005-2006)

# 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

<b>Medical/Individual Model</b>	<b>Social/Minority Group Model</b>
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