

ARCH 4410/5410 (67902 and 67788)

Topics in Architectural History: Disability and Design

Spring 2025, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00pm–2:20pm

Online, Synchronous: Zoom Link for Disability & Design Course, Spring 2025

COURSE OVERVIEW

How To Use This Syllabus

To open the syllabus outline click on the icon with three dots and lines located on the upper left side of this Google document.

Description

This workshop brings advanced undergraduate and graduate students in the College of Design together across disciplines to work at a variety of scales that engage the capacities of all people to live, learn, work, and care for one another in environments welcoming to all. It is intended to prepare future design practitioners to make their projects accessible to people of varied abilities. Readings will focus on how to design with disabilities while still achieving other design objectives such as sustainability, cultural sensitivity, etc. Students will become knowledgeable about the latest thinking about how to design inclusively while understanding the social context in which disability and ableism are understood. Among the skills emphasized are auditing the environment for accessibility, the interaction of different abilities in the same space, working with disabilities in the context of stakeholder engagement, and critical reflection on ableist practices. The course will produce a study of barriers to accessibility in the School of Architecture in the College of Design at the University of Minnesota.

Course Accessibility

This course is intended to be welcoming to all students. You deserve the access that will make this course useful for you, and conversation about all of our access needs is wholeheartedly welcomed.

Instructor Team

Instructor: Gail Dubrow

Co-Instructor: Chelsea Wait

Co-Instructor: Laura Leppink

Contacting Instructors

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to email any of the listed instructors. When emailing instructors, you can expect a response within 24 hours during the work week. We can also follow up by phone, or by any other means that would be most convenient. Please email instructors collectively or individually to set up a digital office hours “visit.”

Zoom Etiquette

Students will be expected to be present and visible on Zoom during each class session to foster engagement in discussion. This may require locating a suitable environment, ensuring reliable internet access, and a functioning camera. Please plan to be in a quiet, well-lit, and private location.

Course Values

Equitable Participation. We intend to create an environment for equitable participation. We welcome discussion of individual access needs, and confidentiality is ensured.

Building Skills. This course is not a systematic, totally comprehensive review of disability history or sites of disability history. Instead, this course aims to give students the necessary tools and skills to understand how disability is represented, preserved, and interpreted in public spaces and cultural sites.

Knowledge to Action. Throughout this course, students will learn new information about disability history and place-making. This course aims to move beyond the gathering of information to using that information to create meaningful change.

10 Principles of Disability Justice. Throughout this course we aim to acknowledge and implement the 10 Principles of Disability Justice as outlined in “Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People” by Sins Invalid.

- These include the following: Intersectionality; Leadership of those most impacted; Anti-capitalist politics; Cross-Movement Solidarity; Recognizing Wholeness; Sustainability; Commitment to Cross-Disability Solidarity; Interdependence; Collective Access; and Collective Liberation.

COURSE STRUCTURE & CANVAS

Use the Disability & Design, Spring 2025, Course Canvas for submitting assignments as well as viewing grades and feedback.

Absences

This class will meet twice a week, so missing more than one class session can impact your grade. If you know you will have an absence, please let us know ahead of time and coordinate with your group.

Groups

Small groups will be assigned to complete coursework. [List of Groups for Disability and Design Course, Spring 2025]

Course Student Learning Objectives

Students will develop a working knowledge of the history and theory of accessible design, disability studies, and crip theory; Students will become familiar with the scholarly, activist, and professional literature on disability and design; Students will gain the capacity to critically analyze architectural and interior designs from the standpoint of people with varied abilities; Students will build skills in identifying ableist assumptions within architectural design; Students will increase their understanding of the principles of post-occupancy survey to create accessible spaces.

Approach to Learning

Evidence of independent curiosity and self-motivation; Establishing principled, non-extractive, collaborative community relationships; Generative and reciprocal collaboration with peers and partners; Documenting your thinking and work process as you develop your projects; Engaging in critical self-reflection on the work, particularly with a focus on unlearning ableist beliefs and assumptions.

GRADE BREAKDOWN & ASSESSMENT

There are three main categories of student work to be submitted this semester

1. **Attendance and Participation:** 25% of grade (Weekly Reading Worksheets will be treated as evidence of participation)

2. **Individual Presentations on History of Disability and Design Articles:** 25% of grade
3. **Semester Project Overview:** (Total: 50% of grade) [Final Presentation: 20% of the total grade; Final Submission: 30% of the total grade]

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: Course Introduction and Positionality

Tuesday, January 21, 2025	Thursday, January 23, 2025
<p>Introductions Review syllabus, schedule, and assignments Review Semester Project Overview and course accessibility Ground rules for constructive conversation Introduction and sign up for Individual Student Presentations on History of Disability and Design Articles.</p>	<p>Introduce Semester Working Groups Revisit ground rules for constructive conversation Breakout group discussion about positionality, keywords, and experiences of disability and ableism. Fill out the Week One Reading Worksheet and submit it to the Disability & Design, Spring 2025, Course Canvas by the end of the day. Your group will share the main points from your discussion with the full class.</p>

Learning Objectives

1) Gain familiarity with the structure, subject, and objectives of the course. 2) Establish and understand ground rules for constructive conversation. 3) Reflect on ideas of and connections to disability.

Weekly Materials (Due Thursday)

- [Andrea Eiding. "The Historical is Personal." Unwritten Histories. November 7, 2017. accessed January 6, 2025.](#)
- [Laura Leppink. "Discovering Our Own Bread and Roses: Connecting the Personal to the Professional in Disability Histories." in The National Park Service's Disability History Handbook \(2024, forthcoming\).](#)
- Rachel Adams Benjamin and David Serlin, editors. *Keywords for Disability Studies*. (New York City: New York University Press, 2015). Read the entries for "[Access](#)," "[Disability](#)," and "[Design](#)."
- [Rabia Belt. "Ableism." in Moving Toward Antibigotry: Collected Essays from the Center for Antiracist Research's Antibigotry Convening \(Boston: BU Center for Antiracist Research, 2022\): 39-41.](#)

Week Two: Disability Studies Basics: Language and Models of Disability

Tuesday, January 28, 2025	Thursday, January 30, 2025
<p>Instructor Presentation: Models of Disability, Language of Disability, and Disability Justice Principles [With short breakout groups to discuss models of disability.] Wrap-up content: Introduce the Final Semester Project: format and areas of focus.</p>	<p>In assigned groups, discuss concerns and contributions of disabled architects, language and models of disability, and principles of disability justice. Fill out the Week Two Reading Worksheet</p>

Learning Objectives

1) Gain familiarity with language and models of disability and principles of disability justice. 2) Become acquainted with the concerns and contributions of architects with disabilities. 3) Practice using the ground rules for constructive conversation.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- [Nancy J. Evans, Ellen M. Broido, Kirsten R. Brown, Autumn K. Wilke, "Disability Models" in *Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach*.](#) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2017). (Pay close attention to pages 56–66 and 81–90). A helpful supplement is the [overview of models of disability on Disabled World](#).
- [University of the Fraser Valley. "Ableism: Language and Microaggressions."](#) accessed January 6, 2025.
- [Sins Invalid. "Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People. A Disability Justice Primer."](#) (Berkeley: Sins Invalid, 2019).

Video Materials (Due Thursday)

- [Chris Downey, "Design with the Blind in Mind," YouTube: TED, 2013.](#)
- [Karen Braitmayer Lecture. "Designing Accessible Places" AIA of East Tennessee. Youtube. 2021](#) (watch 1:37-41:51, Q&A is optional).

Week Three: Intersectional Perspectives of Disability: Class, Sexuality, Race, and Gender

Tuesday, February 4, 2025	Thursday, February 6, 2025
Instructor Presentations: Intersectionality; Disability and Class, Sexuality, Gender, and Race Student article presentation	Short talk on "Try-it-Yourself" universal design exercise. (See Camilla Ryhl's Critique) Fill out Week Three Reading Worksheet Overview of Assignment 1: Identifying Project Scope & Key Elements Second round of breakout groups: Work on Assignment 1: Identifying Project Scope & Key Elements

Learning Objectives

1) Develop a basis for understanding how disability has shaped society. 2) Gain an understanding of how ideas about ability and disability are manifested in the built environment. 3) Understand how ableism is woven throughout architectural education.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- Rachel Adams Benjamin and David Serlin, editors. *Keywords for Disability Studies*. (New York City: New York University Press, 2015). Please read the entries for ["Activism" by Denise Nepveux](#) and ["Race" by Nirmala Ereveles](#).
- [Susan Schweik, "Introduction," in *The Ugly Laws: Disability in Public* \(New York: New York](#)
- [Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, "Making Space Accessible Is an Act of Love for Our Communities," in *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* \(Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018\): 1–3. University Press, 2009\).](#)

Week Four: Higher Education, Architecture School, and Ableism

Tuesday, February 11, 2025	Thursday, February 13, 2025
Instructor presentation on reading topics. Student Article Presentation Reporting out from Group Brainstorms on Assignment 1: Identifying Project Scope & Key Elements.	Break out groups on weekly readings: Fill out the Week Four Reading Worksheet Break out groups to work on Assignment 1: Identifying Project Scope & Key Elements. Assignment 1: Identifying Project Scope & Key Elements due at 11:59pm CST. Submit to the course Canvas.

Learning Objectives

1) Understand ableist biases in higher education, generally, and architectural education specifically. 2) Apply reflections on ableism in society and academia to semester projects in development. 3) Become familiar with key scholars in the field of disability and design.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- [Jay Dolmage. "Introduction: The Approach."](#) in *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017).
- [Jay Dolmage. "Imaginary College Students."](#) in *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017).
- [Aimi Hamraie. "Normate Template."](#) in *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).
- David Gissen, "[Introduction](#)," and "[Coda](#)," in *The Architecture of Disability: Buildings Cities, and Landscapes Beyond Access* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2023): vii– xviii and 139–142.
- [Jos Boys. "A \(Little\) Manifesto for Doing Dis/Ability Differently in Architecture."](#) *Journal of Architectural Education* 74, no. 2 (2020). (Optional)

Week Five: Ableism in the Architectural Curriculum & Education

Tuesday, February 18, 2025	Thursday, February 20, 2025
Instructor Presentation: Ableism in Architectural Curriculum & Education; Conversation on studio culture, projects, and reviews Student article presentation	Break out groups to discuss readings: Fill out the Week Five Reading Worksheet Breakout group to work on Assignment 2: Identifying Stakeholders for particular activities . Due February 25, 2025 at 11:59pm.

Learning Objectives

1) Recognize ableism in higher education broadly and in the architectural curriculum. 2) Discuss the practices of studios and reviews from the standpoint of ableism and access. 3) Brainstorm interventions into ableist barriers in architectural education.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- [Rob Imrie. "The body, disability, and Le Corbusier's conception of the radiant environment"](#) (1999), in *Disability, Space, Architecture: A Reader*, edited by Jos Boys (Routledge, 2017): 22-32.
- [David Gissen. "A Form of Impairment: Empathy and Disfigurement in Architectural Aesthetic."](#) in *The Architecture of Disability: Buildings, Cities, and Landscapes Beyond Access* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022): 73-94.
- [Jos Boys. "Disprogramming for dis/ordinary architecture"](#) (2016), in *Disability, Space, Architecture: A Reader*, edited by Jos Boys (New York: Routledge, 2017): 135-154.
- ["The Campus Environment,"](#) in *Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach*.

Resources Mentioned in Class

- Kathryn H. Anthony's books and writings: "Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Architectural Profession" (2001); [Design Juries on Trial: The Renaissance of the Design Studio](#) (1991)
- ACSA and AIAS: Studio Culture Reports: "[Toward an Evolution of Studio Culture](#)" [AIAS 2008 Report](#); "[Studio Culture: Stories and Interpretations](#)" [2016 AIAS Report](#); "[Impact of Studio Culture on Student Well-being](#)" [Rethinking The Future blog](#)

Week Six: ADA, Accessibility Guidelines, Principles, and Indexes

Tuesday, February 25, 2025	Thursday, February 27, 2025
Class Conversation: Disability Rights and the Built Environment; Assigned readings discussion; Study guide on Crip Camp documentary . Student article presentations	In breakout groups complete the Week Six: ADA Exercise . You will be creating a slideshow as a group which you will submit to Canvas.

[Assignment 2: Identifying Stakeholders for particular activities](#) due at 11:59pm CST.

Learning Objectives

- 1) Learn about the activist history that led to the passage of the ADA and connected laws and regulations.
- 2) Understand the responsibilities of architects, designers, and planners to implement the ADA.
- 3) Critically reflect on the limitations of the ADA for architectural design and planning.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- [James Lebrecht and Nicole Newnman, *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution*, Higher Ground Productions, 2020. Available on YouTube.](#) [Content note: Rated R for strong language, including sexual references.]
- [Cynthia Gorney, "Episode 308: Curb Cuts." 99% Invisible, 2021.](#) (Read or listen to the episode and review the images on the webpage).
- [Aimi Hamraie, "Barrier Work Before and After the Americans with Disabilities Act," in *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* \(University of Minnesota Press, 2017\).](#)
- [Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the "2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design" \(from the US Access Board\).](#)

Week Seven: Beyond the ADA & Perspectives from the Field

Tuesday, March 4, 2025	Thursday, March 6, 2025
<p>Instructor Presentation: Tools for broadly conceptualizing accessibility. Introduction to Assignment 3.</p> <p>Student article presentations</p> <p>Assignment 3.1: Using Assessment Tools using Ramp Vancouver assessment tool due Thursday, March 6, 2025. Bring completed assignments to class.</p>	<p>Students debrief with instructors on their completion of the RAMP Vancouver assessment tool. Then develop work to complete 3.2: Creating Your Own Assessment Tool and 3.3: Applying Your Assessment Tool.</p> <p>Breakout groups work on 3.2: Creating Your Own Assessment Tool and 3.3: Applying Your Assessment Tool.</p> <p>Assignment 3: Assessment of Barriers to Equitable Participation in Architectural Education due on March 25, 2025 at 11:59pm CST.</p>

Learning Objectives

- 1) Recognize people with disabilities as experts in the built environment.
- 2) Become familiar with creative practitioners of accessible design.
- 3) Discuss the success and limitations of applying different design principles

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

Readings in Preparation for Thursday's Discussion and Completing Week Five Worksheet:

- [The Center for Universal Design. *The Principles of Universal Design*. Asheville: North Carolina State University, 1997.](#)
- [Alexa Vaughn, "DeafScape: Applying DeafSpace to Landscape," Ground Up Journal \(Issue 7\), 2018.](#)
- [Bauman, Hansel. "DeafSpace Design Guidelines," vol. 1. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University, 2011.](#)
- [Levy, Ed and Cromwell Architects Engineers. "The Art of Blindspace Architectural Design." *AMP: Arkansas Money & Politics*, January 25, 2024.](#)
- [Mostafa, Magda. "Autism ASPECTSS* Design Index." *ASPECTSS* Architecture for Autism*, 2015.](#)
- Review before class: [Radical Access Mapping Project \(RAMP Vancouver\). "Template: Access Audit." accessed August 30, 2024.](#)

Week Eight: Off for Spring Break

Week Nine: Off for Catalyst Week

Week Ten: Semester Project Development

Tuesday, March 25, 2025	Thursday, March 27, 2025
<p>Visit from College and School Leadership and Staff Introduction to Assignment 4: Participatory Research & Stakeholder Engagement. Student article presentations Assignment 3: Assessment of Barriers to Equitable Participation in Architectural Education due on March 25, 2025 at 11:59pm CST.</p>	<p>Discussion of participatory research methods. Presentation on Digital Accessibility Practices Breakout groups to work on Assignment 4 with scheduled visits from instructors to discuss project progress.</p>

Learning Objectives

1) Gain an understanding of participatory research methods. 2) Become familiar with digital accessibility practices pertaining to presentations and materials. 3) Continue development of group projects, clarifying roles within the team, project priorities, and coordination with other groups.

Week Eleven: Historic Preservation and Disability Justice

Tuesday, April 1, 2025	Thursday, April 3, 2025
<p>Instructor Presentation: Reconciling Historic Preservation and Disability Access Student article presentations</p>	<p>Short Instructor Presentation: NPS and Shifting Perspectives on Disability & Accessibility Full-class readings discussion. Breakout groups to work on Assignment 4: Participatory Research & Stakeholder Engagement. Due at 11:59pm CST.</p>

Learning Objectives

1) Learn about the National Park Service's initiatives related to disability and cultural heritage. 2) Become familiar with past debates about the implementation of accessibility at historic properties. 3) Develop a vocabulary that integrates preservation and access issues.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- [Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, "Preservation Briefs 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible." Technical Preservation Services at the National Park Service. 1993.](#) (Read critically)
- ["Provide Accessibility For Historic Buildings," WBDG Historic Preservation Subcommittee, updated August 26, 2019.](#)
- [John Kinder, "'Lest We Forget': Disabled Veterans and the Politics of War Remembrance in the United States." in Disability Histories edited by Susan Burch and Michael Rembis \(Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 2014\): 119–135.](#)
- [Johnna Keller, "The Politics of Stairs." Sustaining Access, accessed August 30, 2024.](#)
- [Part 3, Disability History Handbook: 122–180.](#)

Week Twelve: Histories of Designing for Disability

Tuesday, April 8, 2025	Thursday, April 10, 2025
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<p>Pre-recorded Instructor Presentation: “Deaf Agency Through Architectural Design: Olof Hanson’s US Legacy”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alt Text for Slide Images_Deaf Agency Through Architectural Design Olof Hanson’s US Legacy_Disability and Design Course_Spring 2025 <p>Student article Presentations</p>	<p>Complete the Week Twelve Reading Worksheet and submit it to Canvas by the end of the day. Your group will share the main points from your discussion with the full class. Complete mid-semester evaluation.</p> <p>Breakout Groups on Assignment 5: Recommendations for Action.</p>
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Learning Objectives

1) Reflect critically on design for disability at the scales of the object, room, building, landscape, and city. 2) Think creatively about the redesign of objects you encounter in everyday life that could be made more fun and accessible. 3) Rethink how one’s understanding of American history is changed by having learned about disability history.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- [Elizabeth Guffey, “Origins of a Misfit Design: The Advent of the Modern Wheelchair –1945” in *Designing Disability: Symbols, Space, and Society* \(London: Bloomsbury, 2018\): 15–43.](#)
- [Katharine Ott, “Disability Things: Material Culture and American Disability History, 1700–2010” in *Disability Histories* edited by Susan Burch and Michael Rembis \(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014\): 119–135.](#)
- [Gail Dubrow and Laura Leppink, authors, Morgan LaCasse, designer. “Olof Hanson’s Architectural Legacy.”](#)

Week Thirteen: Architecture Design and Disability Futures

Tuesday, April 15, 2025	Thursday, April 17, 2025
<p>Instructors’ overview of readings. Class conversation on disability futures Student article presentations</p>	<p>Formatting the final report and formatting plain text documents for submission. Workday dedicated to completing Assignment 5: Recommendations for Action and further progress on final group reports. Assignment 5: Recommendations for Action due at 11:59pm CST. Submit to the course Canvas.</p>

Learning Objectives

1) Reflect on how planning for people with disabilities might address the disproportionate risks they face in crises and emergencies. 2) Apply the work of disability justice groups about how to plan for more equitable crip futures. 3) Create images of the future of architectural education that are inclusive of people with a wide array of identities and disabilities.

Weekly Materials (Due Tuesday)

- [Patty Berne and Vanessa Raditz, “To Survive Climate Catastrophe, Look to Queer and Disabled Folks,” in *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century* \(New York: Vintage Books, 2020\). 232-235.](#)
- [Rachel Jobson, “‘There are disabled people in the future’: An interview with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha.” *Briarpatch* 51, no. 5 \(2022\).](#)
- [Saba Salman, “What Would a Truly Disabled-Accessible City Look Like?” *The Guardian*, February 14, 2018.](#)

Week Fourteen: Presentation Rehearsals and Workshop

Week Fifteen: Final Presentations

Tuesday, April 22, 2025	Thursday, April 24, 2025	Tuesday, April 29, 2025	Thursday, May 1, 2025
Review digital accessibility. Rehearse Presentations	Work on presentations and final report.	Group 1 Presentation	Groups 2 and 3 Presentations

May 8, 2025: Submission of Final Group Reports & Individual Reflection Papers

Student Mid-Course Evaluations

This course evaluation includes seven open-ended questions about course impact, content, and instruction. Please provide thoughtful and honest feedback on the course thus far. Your responses will be kept confidential and used to improve the remaining portion of the semester and for future iterations of the course.

Part 1: Significance and Value of the Course to Your Degree Objectives

Has this course advanced your education and career goals? If so, in what ways?

Student 1: Yes- eye opener to different needs

Student 2: Yes, the information I have learned about disability and accessibility within this course has made me a more informed designer and overall person.

Student 3: Yes, Especially for my thesis. Designing beyond the ADA isn't something I've thought about before or ever really been taught. I think this class has set me up to be a very successful inclusive designer.

Student 4: Yes, this course has made me more aware of disability justice efforts and reframed how to think about accessibility in design.

Student 5: I definitely think it has, I definitely have more goals for educating myself on the experiences of those with disabilities and how I can, as a designer, be more accessible in the ways I create and imagine the built environment.

Student 6: Yes, it has made me more aware of the diverse range of abilities we share as a society and to design with this in mind.

Student 7: Yes, I have learned so much about design and disabilities that I will be able to take into the professional world with me. This will set me apart from others, and also allow me to design universal spaces, hopefully continuing on the track of a more accessible built environment for all.

Student 8: Yes! It challenged me to think critically about accessibility—not just as a legal requirement, but as a design opportunity to create more equitable and empowering spaces for all users.

Student 9: Yes. I feel much more confident in my ethics and code of conduct as a designer in making a better world for all, and not using rules to be the full extent of my possible impact. Learning a new mindset and thought process is truly impactful in realizing how design decisions impact people with and without disabilities, as many of us will have a disability at some point in our lives. The very human topic and relatable course material built upon research and a critical investigation of history is very impactful and builds knowledge and confidence in a career advancing way.

Student 10: This course has definitely helped with both my education and career goals. I've always been interested in these topics regarding disability justice and disability histories, and this course has exposed me to not only parts of history I've never thought about before, but also to new design philosophies that help me better understand these topics and other disabilities I won't ever experience. Overall this course has greatly enriched my experience at UMN as well as given me more inspiration for what I want to do with my own career.

How could this course be adjusted in the future to have greater impact? On your future objectives? The architectural curriculum as a whole?

Student 1: i think having more case studies of how this knowledge is helping people is a good way.

Student 2: Allow for a design assignment within the class, and students to practice designing with what they have learned.

Student 3: I struggle with group work sometimes- there is always someone who does way more. There should be a better metric to understand who is pulling the weight. Also, some people just don't speak up in class and it gets frustrating too- not sure what to do about that.

Student 4: A greater focus on architecture throughout the entirety of the course would be helpful. A background in disability history is necessary of course, but continually looking at it through the frame of architecture would be more impactful. Maybe more thorough case studies of buildings that both work and don't work well for accessibility would be helpful to discuss as a class.

Student 5: I think it would be nice if we had time to share our own design projects, either past or present, so we can apply our new knowledge to our current or past ideas.

Student 6: more guest speakers who have lived experience with disabilities and differing perspectives.

Student 7: I don't have many ideas in mind, but maybe including small exercises on designing spaces using universal design and not just learning about it. As an architecture student I find that I remember things and learn them better when I can apply them somewhere.

Student 8: For my future objectives, especially as someone interested in community engagement and sustainable design, having the chance to co-create or test design solutions with people who have lived experience of disability would be invaluable. It would better prepare me to design environments that are both equitable and responsive to diverse needs!

Student 9: Possibly by becoming required in the first year of graduate school, as a foundation to design studios, way before we learn about the ADA code.

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Student 10: Ideally I think this course would be taken by everyone, but as of now I don't have any suggestions on how it could have more impact in the future. I enjoyed when there were guest speakers, and we had the chance to have a conversation with them/ask questions, so maybe more opportunities such as those to speak with professionals in different fields surrounding architecture, design, and disability justice could be impactful.

Part 2: Course Content and Structure

How did the organization of the course syllabus, learning objectives, assignments, and class sessions affect your learning experience?

Student 2: I felt like the overall organization of the course was very easy to follow along with.

Student 3: The class was extremely organized and very easy to follow. I was never confused about what was due / needed to be done.

Student 4: Expectations overall are very clear and helpful to learning.

Student 5: I think the course syllabus, assignments, and overall arrangement of the course was really helpful in helping prevent any sort of technical confusion. Helped ease my mind with timing things.

Student 6: it was well-organized, but towards the end where we are having to simultaneously work on our group projects as well as doing readings and discussion worksheets it gets to be a lot. Especially when you have other school and work commitments to juggle as well.

Student 7: Yes, everything was very well organized which made my learning experience better.

Student 8: The organization of the course syllabus, learning objectives, assignments, and class sessions had a positive impact on my learning experience. For example, the clear structure of the syllabus helped me understand the progression of the course and how each topic built upon the previous one.

Student 9: Very clear organization of syllabus and Canvas, making it so much easier to access material and keep track of assignments and files.

Student 10: For me, the over structure and organization of this course was incredibly helpful for me and my learning style, it was easy to find each week's assignment/tasks and readings.

Reflect on what has worked well and less well in the Tuesday and Thursday sessions, with Tuesdays devoted to lectures and Thursdays to discussion and group work.

Student 1: I think the readings worked well at the beginning but started to be less effective with the pass of the weeks

Student 2: I think the consistent schedule of lecture days and discussions helped provide structure and consistency to the course.

Student 3: I liked having Tuesdays devoted to lectures and Thursdays to discussion. However, sometimes the reading worksheet discussions felt a little long (time wise) and we were usually waiting around and twiddling our thumbs by the end.

Student 4: Good organization. Discussion time often felt too long.

Student 5: I liked this structure because it helped me pace out my weeks to know what is expected of me each day.

Student 6: I think this is personal preference but I would have liked having more of a mix of lecture/discussion/work time on both days of the week as some Tuesdays just felt like a lot of lecturing and information overload, and then once I get to Thursday my brain has already moved past the information and I forget my discussion points.

Student 7: I thought that having time to work on the reading worksheets in class with our groupmates really helped me to better understand the content of the essays we were reading. Some of the readings were very dense and long, which made it difficult to follow. However, working as a group we all brought our minds together to understand the key ideas and content. I did find myself getting distracted for the Tuesday lectures just because I don't do well sitting and watching presentations for long periods of time.

Student 8: I feel the reading worksheets helped me to learn a lot and persue me to think, I feel it will be helpful if professors can jump in to group discussion and give us some inspiration sometimes(even we don't have questions it's still to talk!

Student 9: What's worked well is being able to time readings and divide work. I also think calling on students in discussions by group seems to work and help with accountability in being prepared. Possibly a change that could be made is mixing up discussion groups each week, to give a chance to hear more people's perspectives in the class.

Student 10: I enjoy how the zoom meetings were set up and the schedule they've followed, having lectures at the beginning of the week is helpful for me in processing that information, and how it is then relevant to the week's readings/material.

Our instructional goal has been to make the course universally accessible. Please comment on your perceptions of course accessibility.

Student 2: I had no problems with accessibility in this class.

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Student 3: Yes, I think the course is accessible. I didn't think much of accessibility in technology before this course, but this has opened my eyes to the changes it can make and honestly how simple it is to make things accessible.

Student 4: The course has been very accessible for me.

Student 5: Great, no comments.

Student 6: It has been one of the most accessible classes I have taken

Student 7: I believe this course is very accessible.

Student 8: I really appreciated the effort to make the course universally accessible—it was evident in both the course design and the teaching approach. Materials were presented in multiple formats (readings, slides, discussions), which helped accommodate different learning styles. The clear communication of expectations, deadlines, and assignment instructions also made it easier to stay organized and engaged!

Student 9: The course has been very accessible with perceived flexibility, which I think really helps in a learning environment.

Student 10: For me, this course has been the most accessibly formatted, organized, and instructed I've experienced at UMN. In my perspective regarding, information provided to students on multiple mediums (recording, slides, documents, etc) is essential for course accessibility. Setting common standards and expectations for students is separate that providing differently abled individuals with equitable experience.

Would any of the methods used in this course be useful to the rest of the architectural curriculum? If so, which ones?

Student 2: Course organization of assignments and time spent in class.

Student 4: Organization and clarity of expectations.

Student 5: Allowing students to proper time to really take in the media, and how you gave us more time in class when it seemed not many of us were able to get the readings done. The structuring and organization was also incredibly helpful in pacing out my time.

Student 6: I enjoyed how the syllabus was laid out and had all of the hyperlinks to worksheets and readings that we had to do for the week, it seemed more navigable than your typical class canvas page

Student 7: I could see the methods used in this course being applied to the rest of architectural curriculum. Especially in terms of discussions. I think that getting the chance to write down your ideas instead of having to speak up in front of large groups positively effects participation and allows everyone to share their ideas.

Student 8: My favorite one is the universal design

Student 9: Yes! I think every method. This is one of the most organized and engaging courses I have had here at the U of M. It has also been really interesting to learn about engagement and surveys/focus groups/interviews, and I think that this could be applied much more widely to the architectural curriculum. It drives the point home on lived experience and this is really important for studio classes as well.

Student 10: The constant referring to relevant links or documents during meetings was something that helped me stay caught up and on track with discussions and coursework.

Part 3: Instructor Assessment

In a course with three co-instructors, students have varied experiences with their teachers. Please comment on what has worked well and less well within this model of instruction. Feel free to be specific about your experiences with the different instructors.

Student 2: I really liked having three instructors! It is a really great way to showcase three different perspectives and it also allows the class to feel like an overall discussion rather than a rigid lecture.

Student 3: I liked how each instructor kind of took the reigns at different points throughout the semester / class. The three different perspectives was super helpful to fully understand a topic, especially when it was about lived experiences and disability.

Student 4: It is good to have three different perspectives to hear from and get feedback from.

Student 5: I definitely enjoyed the multiple perspectives and understanding that each instructor may be different, but there's an overlaying general consensus among them.

Student 6: I think all three instructors provided unique skillsets to the class and I enjoyed how they could all communicate effectively

Student 7: Personally, I haven't noticed much of a difference between instructors. You all did amazing in my opinion.

Student 8: I feel that having three co-instructors brought diverse perspectives that enriched the course, especially by combining theory, discussion, and design application. And I really like it! (That's another reason I picked this course!)

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Student 9: I think it seems to work really well and seems balanced to me. I have had great experiences with all instructors, and it seems like they all are open to questions and asking for help and work as a team.

Student 10: The varying and diverse perspectives of each instructor was definitely unique in the way of getting the chance to learn from three people from different backgrounds and careers. With that being said, I think it would then be beneficial for students to either be assigned a specific instructor as somewhat of a 'correspondent,' as I think that could be beneficial so some learning styles.

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Student 1: I love this class!

Student 6: Thank you for bringing this class to our curriculum!

Student 8: No, I am glad I have taken this course!

Student 9: This class has really taught me so much about advocacy, collaboration, standing up for what's right, and going above and beyond when it comes to human experience and universal and inclusive design. I truly believe it should be required or embedded into other courses. I also really appreciate being asked to read something "critically" and bring our own interpretation and reactions to the table, in developing a set of internal ideals that we will follow as designers, rather than looking to others to always tell us how we must meet certain criteria (especially when leadership and people who make regulations and rules are not living up to our expectations). Seeing the world through the stories and pieces of history that we've learned has been very influential. Thank you!

Student 10: Not that I can think of right now, thank you again for such an amazing and powerful course!

Student Submissions: Individual Reflection & Ethical Framework for Architectural Education and Practice

Each student will write a 750-1000 word reflection on how the course and activities have shaped their perspective on architectural education and practice based on the following questions: How will people with disabilities figure among the stakeholders for your future projects within and beyond architecture school? How might you use the principles of Disability Justice, Models of Disability, and Disability Key Words in your remaining classes and future practice? How will you integrate your knowledge of disability into your area of specialization, such as sustainability, history, preservation, design justice, etc.? Which readings made the most impact on the ethical standpoint you developed over the course of the semester?

Student 1

This course has greatly shifted how I think about disability in relation to architectural education and practice. I came into the semester with a broad understanding of accessibility from a code-based and universal design perspective, but I quickly realized that those frameworks are very limiting when used on their own. Accessibility isn't just about making sure a building meets requirements of the ADA – it's about how people are included or excluded by the spaces we design, and even more deeply, by the systems and values that shape the profession itself. One of the biggest takeaways for me is recognizing that people with disabilities are not just a "user group" to be designed for, but valuable stakeholders with agency, knowledge, and lived experience that should be central to design processes. Whether it's a public facing building or a smaller community-based project, people with disabilities should be involved from the beginning – not just consulted at the end to "check" accessibility. I now see that my role as a designer includes advocating for all bodies, not just in how a building is designed, but also in how I approach collaboration, research, and engagement.

I also think a lot about how this will impact the work I'm doing in my thesis project and beyond. I've always leaned toward sustainability and environmental justice in my design interests, but now I understand that disability justice is deeply connected to those initiatives as well. The principles of Disability Justice – especially interdependence, collective access, and recognizing wholeness – are values I want to carry into every project. For example, when I think about who benefits from a "sustainable" building, I now also ask: who's being left out? Are people with disabilities able to access and participate in this space? Are the systems of care, mobility, and rest actually integrated into the design, or are they treated as add-ons? The readings that had perhaps the most impact on my thinking were the several chapters from David Gissen's *The Architecture of Disability*. His rethinking of historical narratives and his challenge to traditional architectural theory made me realize how embedded ableist assumptions are in the discipline. The book made a strong case for reinvestigating architectural history through the lens of disability – not just adding disability in as a subject, but using it to critique how value, beauty, and success have been defined in architecture. That really stuck with me and changed how I want to approach research and theory moving forward.

I'm also reflecting on the culture of architecture school and how it can be inaccessible in ways that are rarely acknowledged. The all-nighters, the high-pressure reviews, the "grind culture" – all of that assumes a certain kind of body and mind. It makes it even more difficult for students with disabilities, chronic illness, neurodivergence, or even just different life circumstances to fully engage or feel like they belong in this high-pressure environment. Going forward, I want to continue pushing back against this culture (I've never believed in pulling all-nighters) and think about how I can advocate for better studio structures, more flexible deadlines, and overall a healthier culture. My group built on this by looking at what happens after school ends – focusing on the application process, workplace accessibility, and the challenges of licensure. What we found confirmed that the transition from student to professional can be just as exclusionary. Application formats are inconsistent and rarely mention accommodations and many firms don't clearly state physical requirements of the position either. The Architect Registration Exam (ARE) is already a hurdle for able-bodied individuals, but unclear testing accommodations and resources that are hard to access are barriers that makes this step to becoming a licensed architect even more difficult for those with disabilities. It made me realize how much work there still is to do – not just in designing accessible buildings, but in changing the systems and cultures that shape who gets to be architect in the first place.

Looking ahead, I want to continue integrating disability knowledge into my work – especially in my thesis project that focuses heavily on the land, indigenous knowledge, and minimizing our environmental impact and consumption. Accessibility has always been integral to this project, but now I'm also thinking about how the built form supports rest, caregiving, sensory needs, and mobility. It's not just about light footprints on the land, it's also about recognizing the full range of human experience and designing for bodies that have often been left out when it comes to wilderness experiences.

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This class granted me the opportunity to think about things I already cared about, but in a much deeper way. It also reminded me that ethics in architecture isn't just about materials or certifications – it's about people and ultimately the systems that either support or exclude them. I want my future profession to be more inclusive, not just in its outcomes but in the process – from entering school to entering the profession. That means designing with, not just for. It means keeping disability justice as a core lens, not just a checkbox. And it also demands addressing the current systems and sequence required to becoming an architect to be more equitable and inclusive of those with varying abilities.

Student 2

How will people with disabilities figure among the stakeholders for your future projects within and beyond architecture school? People with disabilities will be equally represented and considered in my design process as an able-bodied individual. In the past, during my studio projects, I have always taken a universal design approach to my projects, making sure my designs are inclusive to everybody. However, I hate to admit there were moments when I didn't have space in the design to make it fully accessible without totally reworking the project, and in those cases, I would let certain things slide. After this class, my resolve to make all my projects accessible has been renewed, and I will put in extra work to make my project fully accessible. My big challenge will be taking these principles into the working environment and making sure that even when I'm not the sole creator of projects, I let my voice be heard in favor of making sure all the projects I work on are fully inclusive and accessible.

How might you use the principles of Disability Justice, Models of Disability, and Disability Key Words in your remaining classes and future practice? I have had before this class put an emphasis on making my designs accessible to everybody. However, I had not extended that to making all my drawings and presentations fully accessible. After this class, a renewed effort will be put into not only making my buildings and designs accessible but also making sure that my drawings and presentations are equally accessible. There is little point in making a building fully accessible if, when you talk about the building through visual means or in presentation format, the people you have made it accessible for can't follow your presentation or properly engage with the drawings. Something that also comes to mind is making sure any community engagement events surrounding a new design need to be fully inclusive as well, so the disabled community can attend the events and speak on their own behalf as to how to best make the building work for them. Last summer for my job, I was at some of those community engagement events, and I definitely in hindsight, with the information from this class noticed that there were multiple inaccessible elements included in the event.

How will you integrate your knowledge of disability into your area of specialization, such as sustainability, history, preservation, design justice, etc.? Something I am very passionate about is sustainability. I took an IEQ class last semester, and what I learned from that class is that sustainability can often come at the expense of human comfort, and I find it an interesting challenge to make a design as sustainable as possible while still keeping it as comfortable for the occupants as well. Maintaining a Universal Design approach to a design that also wants to be as sustainable as possible brings another element to that challenge, and one that I look forward to implementing in my design process. Human comfort doesn't just extend to able-bodied individuals, so making the space accessible should be as important as making a space sustainable.

Which readings made the most impact on the ethical standpoint you developed over the course of the semester? The reading I did for my presentation on had the largest impact on me this semester. The reading was from Aimi Hamraie titled *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability*, and specifically the chapter "Flexible Users From the Average Body to a Range of Users." This chapter had such an impact on me because it was an endless list of primary resources and examples of how disabled people have been excluded from society. To me, I was aware of ableism and all the extra struggles disabled individuals struggle with, but this chapter really brought forth the idea of how entrenched and indoctrinated ableism is into our everyday society and our lives. And the overwhelming amount of examples of how ableism happens made me extra aware of the number of ways disabled people are discriminated against and the frequency at which it happens. The text as a whole left a powerful message in my mind that I won't soon forget.

Student 3

By engaging with the topic of disability from multiple viewpoints throughout this semester, my perspective on design and the field of architecture in respect to it has been drastically altered and developed. Coming in expecting to learn ADA compliance and building regulations, I was surprised to learn about the vast experiences with the built environment and the profession of architecture that I had never before considered. Being exposed to the diverse experiences that disabled people have had with architecture throughout history and today will inform my future work as a designer to be more universal and empathetic, paying careful attention to the different experiences that spaces may produce for different individuals. In terms of stakeholders within the profession of architecture, this is most often thought of as the "regular," able-bodied clients and users. This course has challenged that notion and encouraged me to view disabled viewers as an equally important stakeholder in any project, especially public and commercial ones. Even when working directly with able-bodied clients, and regardless of their own emphasis placed on accessibility, it is the role of the architect to advocate for the disabled. To me, this means pushing for universal design principles rather than baseline ADA compliance, and thinking of the experience of all users, rather than just myself as a user.

These goals in universality can be achieved by integrating the disability justice principles and disability key words into the conversations surrounding all stages of design, especially at the beginning. By addressing collective access, recognizing wholeness, and acknowledging the interdependence of human beings, design can be more inclusive and accessible from the very beginning. By having these conversations early in the process and having the courage to ask difficult questions to team members and peers, I hope the projects I work on will be human-centered and working towards universal design. Designing for a range of abilities rather than just the typical able-bodied user is an especially difficult task when thinking about my specific interests in adaptive reuse projects. The many barriers discussed in this class very often showcase the ways in which the design of the architecture is valued over the accessibility of all users, and this is even more prevalent when dealing with existing and perhaps historic structures, as their "preciousness" as objects is often the sole focus of the project. By keeping in mind the design justice principles and what I have learned about the experience of navigating the built environment with a disability, I will aim for my work to prioritize people over objects wherever possible and advocate for universal accessibility despite the existing conditions. This will require a much higher level of creative problem solving, but will help the profession to take a step towards universal accessibility.

Many of the readings had an impact on my ethical view of disability and accessibility in design. Early in the semester I read Daniel Blackie's chapter "Disability, Dependency, and the Family in the Early United States." This reading was formative in how I now view disability history and the roles disabled people hold. Before this reading, I had never considered how disabled people lived before the modern day. By tying their history to one I know well made me open my eyes to the many untold stories that are tied to the traditional pedagogy of history, and the wide array of experiences those with disabilities have had. It is also generally accepted that disability causes dependency, and this article debunked this and widened my perspective of the responsibilities that those with disabilities hold. I was also struck by Johnna Keller's article "The Politics of Stairs." It showcased the ways in which architecture can become inhuman when valued over those that inhabit it. If we forget about the many user experiences, architecture can become harmful

and be a barrier rather than serving its function. The stories Keller frames in this article will stick with me through my design career and inspire me to design better for all. This class reminded me as I end my architectural education to walk into the profession with a focus on the humanity of design. By designing with empathy, a willingness to listen, and a knowledge of the historic barriers that the built environment has presented to those with disabilities, I will be able to do my part in making buildings that do better and acknowledge the vast array of abilities that inhabit the spaces we design.

Student 4

Introduction Throughout this class, I've found myself thinking not only about disability in design but also about the broader systems and forces shaping architectural education and practice (how architecture is taught, who it's designed for, and what kinds of outcomes are valued). A lot of my takeaways are more personal, centered around how I experience space, how I collaborate, and how I try to inject meaning and care into my work as a student. I've come to understand that accessibility can be an expression of care and love, and that variety in the human experience is something to be valued.

Current and Future Work I don't fully know how people with disabilities will figure into my future work, especially while I'm still in school. As someone in the BDA program, I've made some tradeoffs to graduate early and feel a bit dissatisfied with the shorter studio duration. Still, I tried to build some of these ideas into my most recent studio, where I designed a library. I used varying ceiling heights and natural lighting to signal shifts in program. For example, the exhibition area has the highest ceiling and the most windows, almost all of which are north-facing, creating soft, ambient light that doesn't overwhelm the space. The floor plan is also entirely flat. I wanted to make sure that the space was pleasant from a sensory perspective and that there were qualities in the space that made it identifiable; I basically wanted it to feel like the antithesis of old Rapson. I don't want to overstate what I was able to do in my studio project this semester, but I do believe it supports further exploration into accessibility, and I intend to work more on the project over the summer with more of these considerations. I've always felt space intensely, and this hyper-sensitivity allows me to understand better what makes environments pleasant or disorienting. Sins Invalid writes in *Skin, Tooth, and Bone* that "developing relationships with people with disabilities and asking us what we need is key." It's interesting for me to think about how I can develop a relationship with this aspect of my experience, allowing it to inform and benefit my designs instead of understanding it as purely burdensome.

Studio doesn't often create space to explore this as a designer, but maybe this course could. I know it would not have been beneficial or even applicable for every student in this class. But for some of us, I think reflecting on a studio project (in progress or complete) could have been beneficial. In *Building Access*, Amy Hamraie writes, "Universal design cannot be an appendage to the academic curriculum, any more than a 'universal design' plan can be appended to an existing blueprint... It is more than a solution to 'problems,' it is an interwoven set of ideas and applications owing as much to social and political imperatives as to intellectual ones." [Amy Hamraie, "Entangled Principles: Crafting a Universal Design Methodology," in *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability*, ed. Aimi Hamraie (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 251, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1pwt79d.11>] I'd like to think that in the case of unbuilt studio work, revisiting and reframing those designs isn't retrofitting, at least in the traditional sense, since everything is unbuilt and could be drastically reconsidered. I also like this Quote from Katherine Ott as I think it shows how much design can impact the lives of disabled people, "Unlike people who are singled out because of racial, gender, and sexuality differences, people with disabilities usually require accommodation to overcome barriers to sensory, physical, or neural processing. This entails material change in addition to legal and legislative action." [Katherine Ott, "Disability Things: Material Culture and American Disability History, 1700–2010," in *Disability Histories*, ed. Susan Burch and Michael Rembis (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 120, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt6wr5rt.11>.]

Carrying Ideas Forward When it comes to how I'll carry forward ideas from the course, I think a lot of this course has helped me reframe how I understand disability, not just as something to accommodate but as something that should be considered from the start. Moving beyond ADA requirements has helped me see accessibility less as a checklist and more as a way to make a space better for everyone, not just meet a minimum standard. I do have some mixed feelings, though, regarding the medical model specifically. I recognize the importance of moving beyond the medical model, but at the same time, I've found that model beneficial. Having a diagnosis has allowed me to be taken seriously in many situations where I've needed understanding or accommodations. While the social model is really more empowering, it tends to rely on others accepting a person's account of their needs at face value, and unfortunately, that doesn't always happen. I believe that many of the difficulties I've encountered when seeking accommodations relate to my asking professors for support without providing them with documentation that proves I have a condition that warrants it. So, I find myself in a gray area, wanting a world shaped by the social model while knowing that the medical model has protected me in many situations.

Autonomy and Multi-Modality This experience is part of why I've become attached to the idea of increasing autonomy in general, especially when considering how we engage with learning and communicate understanding. The notion of multimodality is something I wish more classes actively built into their structure. Students could essentially accommodate themselves by being allowed to express understanding through forms that suit them, but again, I think there is nuance here. For this reason, I enjoyed hearing Jennifer Yoos's and Professor Wait's thoughts on this, especially when considering the value of traditional architectural pursuits like drawing and model-making, and how we can ensure this autonomy is not a loss by still encouraging students to explore different modalities, just in low-stake environments. This approach preserves autonomy while encouraging the exploration of various means of expression. I've personally adopted several modalities here that I would have never taken the time to explore on my own.

Conclusion and Ethical Development My favorite sort of development relating to my ethical standpoint this semester is my understanding that we do not have to consider accessibility in design as an obligation; we can see it and pursue it as a form of expression and a way to show care and love. Another significant development I've had as a result of this course is the ability to articulate my experience and understanding better. This shift has gone hand in hand with reframing how I think about accessibility, not as a compromise but as a strength. Accessibility doesn't mean lowering expectations; it means diversifying them and understanding that there are many ways to exist in the world (and many ways to do excellent work).

Student 5

For our project, the group of stakeholders includes aspiring architects, design clientele, and professional organizations (AIA). Within any of these categories, there are people with disabilities within and beyond architecture school to be considered. Through the principles of Disability Justice, Models of Disability, and Disability Key Words, it would be essential to follow through with future practices. With the principles, it was easy to identify what the problem was in history and case studies to make a case for how to improve different situations. While doing my own student presentation on "Three Generations of Imbeciles are Enough: The Progressive Era, 1890-1927," it was helpful to look specifically at the Models of Disability to reflect on the reading to make the conclusion that it connects to the medical and environmental models. In future practices, it would be essential to evaluate a project/case study in the early stages to identify how each follows the different principles to acknowledge the ways to look at disability and provide perspective on causes and solutions.

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As I end my undergraduate career in architecture, I am reflecting on all the different courses I have taken. I only recall Studio Three requiring ADA rooms and bathrooms. I remember that as a requirement, my partner and I tackled that part of the project very last, as it was a last-minute thought. Through taking this class, I now realize how important it is to consider people with disabilities as a forethought, not an afterthought, as people with disabilities are not a minority, but the majority. Another realization I had was when I presented my student presentation and learned about the definition of disability. Before coming into this class, I only thought of "disability" as something that happens to someone physically, specifically wheelchair users, as that was who I had in mind when adding ADA-compliant rooms and bathrooms in Studio Three. After reading the chapter by Kim E. Nielson and learning about the discrimination immigrants faced when entering the United States, I realized that the term "disability" has a broader understanding. Intersectionality is defined as how people's identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, overlap with disability, which connects heavily with the text: how immigrants were being evaluated and held to different standards based on where they came from and were denied entry into the United States. So, through that reading, I learned that sexuality, class, race, gender, and ethnicity forcibly intersect with notions of disability and quality citizenship.

Another media that had an impact on the ethical standpoint that developed over the course of the semester was the documentary on *Crip Camp*. This documentary tied in the topics that were discussed in class to a real-life example that helped me understand the topics on a smaller scale. The part that touched me the most was when the documentary showed everyone during the protest having a difficult time as people stayed overnight to protest their civil rights; it became harder on their bodies without their personal caretakers, ventilators, and catheters. I cannot imagine the hardship these people went through as an able-bodied individual, but I could see their dedication to wanting change. After seeing the history of disabled people protesting, the documentary showed Camp Jened, which is a camp for disabled people. Seeing the community of it all brought people together, and it was a safe space. Another aspect I had never considered is the cultural competence in architectural firms, but it can also be applied in schools. Through the research process for our final project, I got in contact with a deaf architect at a firm, and one aspect he wished could be accommodated better would be the inexperience of how to interact with a deaf architect, both in the firm with coworkers as well as clients. He describes the shock on people's faces as they realize they are working with a deaf architect, and he said that training could help with that. As an able-bodied individual, that is an aspect I would not have thought of if I had not reached out to understand his point of view. Even through all the student presentations, it was extremely informative as each one talked about a different period in history, but looking through the lens of disability history. Even the historic events I thought I knew a lot about, I saw them in a different light. In courses in the past, these topics were not discussed, so a lot of the information was new. I will carry these topics and principles with me in future practices, as they have made an impact on my way of thinking about "disability" as the term, and way of life.

Student 6

How will people with disabilities figure among the stakeholders for your future projects within and beyond architecture school? After studying the implications of disability and design and their relationship throughout history, I believe in the importance of considering people with disabilities as very crucial stakeholders in every project. Although there are some user groups that would specifically benefit from certain strategies of accessible design (sensory, physical, cognitive, etc.) there is nobody who should be excluded from an experience based on their abilities. This course has helped me to understand numerous examples of how inclusive and accessible design truly is better design, and how by only designing for specific types of bodies, designers eliminate many users from their consideration, making their designs often self-centric and unexpansive- this is bad design.

In addition, understanding disability as contextual and ever-evolving is extremely beneficial in shaping a design code of ethics in relation to this concept. Disability is situationally and environmentally dependent, and as designers I believe we have a code of ethics in creating spaces that can remove barriers for people to allow connection and participation across bodily and mental states. Although there may not be specific requirements laid out for a particular project, there is always an ethical question of how to make a design inclusive for all people, so an environment can do its part in removing barriers from people's lives and ability to fully participate in society and the world that we shape. I want to live in a world where we create more connection, empathy, and respect through designing space for people of all abilities. Further, people with disabilities should not only be considered in who to design for, but also as designers. I have learned the importance of lived experiences in shaping design work, and believe that people with disabilities should be consulted and involved during design decisions and during accessibility evaluations. Even though people can be empathetic and imagine experiences outside themselves, when it comes to accessibility and disability design, this is not enough. It must be paired with lived experience to ensure correct accommodation and thought process in intention. Some well-intentioned designs for access can have undesirable and harmful outcomes without verifying assumptions and consulting experts in disability - those who experience it themselves.

How might you use the principles of Disability Justice, Models of Disability, and Disability Key Words in your remaining classes and future practice? In discussing disability and accessibility in future practice, I am much more aware of how language and history is critical to talking about disability and design. I am much more equipped in my understanding of how ableism is intersectional with other forms of oppression, and how any time an architect is striving for social justice and inclusivity, designing for disability and the importance of creating accessible space is part of the conversation. Key words will make it much easier to discuss accessibility and disability in an open-minded and respectful way.

Being equipped with the knowledge of disability models is important in making design decisions and advocating for execution of certain policies in practice. Different lenses and viewpoints in looking at disability have embedded into our culture and language, and it's important to acknowledge and understand the model of disability influencing a specific decision in deciding whether or not to move forward or whether it actually aligns with something possibly good-intentioned.

How will you integrate your knowledge of disability into your area of specialization, such as sustainability, history, preservation, design justice, etc.? I have a much more comprehensive understanding after taking this course of how knowledge of disability is about so much more than following the ADA code. This is a crucial and important criteria to base design off of, but shaping a well-designed and inclusive experience needs to go much farther. In addition, realizing how sustainability has more importance for people who are disabled will shape the viewpoint I design from. Incorporating sustainability into design is about a whole ecosystem.

Which readings made the most impact on the ethical standpoint you developed over the course of the semester? The most impactful readings from this semester were *Sins Invalid*, *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People*, *A Disability Justice Primer* (Berkeley: Sins Invalid, 2019). This is because of the wisdom, expertise, and care that comes across in this writing, and the clarity in which the author delivers the importance of intersectionality and necessity of people leading the disability rights movement who are disabled. Seeing people who are disabled as leaders and empowered to make change and come together across experience is transformative and highly impactful.

Jay Dolmage, "Introduction: The Approach," in *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017). This article will remain impactful in the eye-opening arguments made illustrating the ableism built into higher education that I never had considered before this course. I will always consider this from now on, and will leave my educational experience with the ability to consider and work toward shaping more inclusive and welcoming opportunities for non-disabled and disabled people of all backgrounds to have access to higher education - especially

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architecture. And Aimi Hamraie, "Normate Template," in *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). Understanding how a human body was turned into a prescription for easy cookie cutter design templates and the harm this causes is transformative. Lastly, the *Crip Camp* film and Karen Braitmayer's presentation video made a very deep and lasting impression. Understanding the historic advocacy of people with disabilities was incredibly moving, emotional, and inspiring, as well as Karen Braitmayer's wisdom and insightfulness in sharing her story was very impactful in considering how I view accessibility and inclusivity.

Student 7

This course and all of the activities we completed really helped me build a stronger understanding of ways I can, as the architect, be better at approaching a design that promotes accessibility instead of treating it as compliance. I was able to center my knowledge more on intersectional approaches to justice by understanding that every body is confined by not only their abilities, but gender, sexuality, class, religion, and so much more, and they cannot be separated. We cannot stop a singular gear in motion, when the entire machine needs to be dismantled. There were many concepts I had heard of before, but did not fully understand the history behind them or how they could be used in the built environment. One of the disability justice models I found very familiar was the "Leadership Of Those Most Impacted" because it always made sense to me to turn to those harmed by the systems of oppression and give voice/leadership to them. By centering leadership in those impacted, we are actually able to keep ourselves grounded in the real issues for a collective resistance. One of the readings that I take quote from when thinking about my ethical standpoint is *A Disability Justice Primer* by *Sins Invalid*. It helped me gain further perspective on the contextuality of disability and the constant fluctuation of disability justice. As *Invalid* says in the book, "disability justice is contextual, it's improvised, it changes. Just because a person has privileges here, depending on the climate or the governmental office or the housing situation, it shifts." This just encourages more education for designers on how they can create a more equitable and accessible built environment.

Learning about disabled architects helped me challenge traditional design approaches by introducing these new ways of thinking about space and accessibility. It encourages me to think beyond just the barriers I have seen, and expresses how important these perspectives are in understanding the bounds of practice. Each experience and background offers an eye-opening perspective. This awareness extends beyond our performance as architects and influences all aspects of our lives. In order to properly analyze and imagine the built environment, we have a responsibility to educate ourselves and ask questions that can enlighten us on experiences of those without the same circumstance as us. Mutual care and love, when considered in contrast to the work of disability justice, really highlights the acceptance of all regardless of circumstance. There is not as much limitation, and showing love to others allows for the utmost amount of access; the most accessible access. Just having an accessible ramp, interpreters, and 36 inch doorways, doesn't automatically equal optimal love, it can still feel empty and useless. ADA compliance is bare minimum— that should not be the standard. While regulations like the ADA provide a foundation, architects must go beyond innovation to design spaces that empower all individuals. As workplace transformation accelerates, accessibility should be woven into the fabric of innovation, culture, and talent management, ensuring that the future of work is inclusive for everyone.

I've always used adaptive reuse as a basis for my projects, but now with a higher prioritization on access. Preservation projects with adaptive reuse can prioritize meaningful access while respecting historical integrity. This may involve integrating elevators or ramps in ways that are not merely code-compliant, but also elegant and dignified. Preservation also often centers community memory and history. Including disabled people in preservation decisions disrupts ableist hierarchies of value, and brings disability history to the table. Considering preserving and interpreting histories of disabled people, institutions, and accessibility technologies is essential. Architects can also push for building codes and preservation standards that prioritize equity and access as essential, not optional. For future projects, whether they be in an academic or professional setting, I now have many more tools that accommodate a wide range of bodies and minds, reducing the need for future retrofits or resource-intensive modifications. For example, ramps integrated into landscape design serve both accessibility and sustainable stormwater management. This is one of the design choices that I made in my studio final project this semester because of more careful consideration. Furthermore, disability justice requires recognizing and planning for people with limited mobility or dependence on personal vehicles. In my project this semester, I made sure to ensure accessible parking and transfer space.

Student 8

How will people with disabilities figure among the stakeholders for your future projects within and beyond architecture school? Moving forward, I will intentionally include people with disabilities as key stakeholders in all stages of my projects, both within and beyond architecture school. My recent academic and design experiences—especially my final project proposing an accessible ramp for Ralph Rapson Hall—have shown me how often accessibility is treated as an afterthought rather than a foundational element of design. This course has helped me understand that creating truly inclusive spaces requires centering the lived experiences and input of disabled people from the very beginning. Whether I'm working on sustainable architecture, urban interventions, or community spaces, I will seek out collaboration with individuals and advocacy groups who can speak to the diverse needs of disabled communities. Their insights will not only help ensure functional accessibility but also guide my work toward deeper design justice—where inclusion is not just a goal, but a practice embedded in every decision.

How might you use the principles of Disability Justice, Models of Disability, and Disability Key Words in your remaining classes and future practice? One of the most impactful lessons from this course has been the importance of language—how the words we choose shape perceptions and experiences. Learning to use Disability Key Words with intention is crucial for creating inclusive and respectful communication, not only in academic or professional settings but also in everyday life. As I complete my final semester of graduate school, I recognize that this knowledge will influence how I approach future design projects and collaborations. Understanding the principles of Disability Justice has deepened my awareness of systemic inequalities and the need to center the voices of disabled people in both classroom discussions and professional practice. I now see the importance of moving beyond the medical model of disability, which focuses on individual impairments, and instead adopting the social and cultural models that emphasize accessibility, equity, and collective responsibility. In my future architectural work, I aim to integrate these principles by challenging ableist assumptions in design, prioritizing accessibility from the earliest stages of planning, and fostering environments that are welcoming to all. This course has provided me with a critical foundation to advocate for and implement inclusive practices that go beyond compliance and contribute to true belonging.

How will you integrate your knowledge of disability into your area of specialization, such as sustainability, history, preservation, design justice, etc.? After presenting my MFP project a few days ago—where I focused on design justice by proposing a ramp that connects all floors of Ralph Rapson Hall—I feel more confident in how disability awareness can be integrated into sustainable design. Although my initial idea was to adapt living walls for the building, my early research and spatial analysis revealed significant issues with interior circulation and accessibility. This discovery shifted my focus and helped me see how inclusive design is essential to both social and environmental sustainability. This experience reinforced the idea that sustainability and disability justice are not separate goals but interdependent ones. A truly sustainable future must include equitable access for all. Moving forward, I plan to design with both environmental impact and human-centered accessibility in mind—ensuring that spaces are not only energy-efficient and resource-conscious but also inclusive, navigable, and welcoming to people of all abilities.

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Which readings made the most impact on the ethical standpoint you developed over the course of the semester? Baynton, Douglas C. "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," 17–34. Davis, Lennard J. (ed). *The Disability Studies Reader*. Oxford: Routledge, 2016.

The content of this course had a significant impact on me this semester. Many of the readings helped me understand how disability justice is deeply connected to other forms of oppression, such as racism and sexism—issues I am personally committed to challenging. One reading, in particular—the one I presented in class—stood out to me. It explored these intersections in ways I didn't expect. The author traced the root causes of systemic injustice and helped me realize how some of my current behaviors are shaped by historical and structural forces. For example, as someone who requires a visa to enter the U.S., I've always felt the pressure to dress formally for visa interviews to make a good first impression. This reading helped me understand that this instinct is not just personal—it has deeper historical and cultural roots, shaped by immigration policies and the broader marginalization of disabled people and other oppressed communities. I now believe that the most powerful readings are the ones that reveal the hidden systems behind our everyday choices and help us understand why we act the way we do—often without even realizing it.

Student 9

This class has taught me many things I will carry into my future education and future career. Most importantly, I now see people with disabilities as stakeholders in design. I will use my knowledge of the principles of Disability Justice, Models of Disability, and Disability Key Words in my practice. Additionally, I will integrate this knowledge with my passion for sustainability. Lastly, the readings in this class helped shape the ethical standpoint I have today: that architecture should not be designed around a single, "normate" experience, but instead should strive to be universally accessible, considering the diverse and intersectional needs of all individuals, recognizing that everyone's experiences and bodies are different.

The first thing I will take away from this class is that I must consider people with disabilities from the very beginning. I will consult with disabled designers and disabled individuals to understand their needs. I'll ask them questions during the design process to ensure my decisions provide equal experiences for all. For example, instead of grand staircases, I will design grand ramps with low slopes and many landings for rest. I'll include both visual and tactile design elements for wayfinding. I'll design spaces with natural light and wide hallways for those who sign while walking, and ensure visibility around corners and into rooms for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. I will design a gradient of zones for social interaction and separation to support those with mental disabilities. I will make every entrance accessible for those in wheelchairs, so they don't have to travel to the back of a building to enter. Overall, I will use universal design principles to welcome and create beautiful architecture that everyone can experience equally.

Secondly, in this class I learned about the principles of disability, disability justice, models of disability, and disability key words, and they will shape the way I design in future practices. Learning about the different models of disability shaped the way I view disability, and helped me to understand the stigma placed around disabled individuals. These models influence how we talk about, design for, and treat disabled people. I now understand that disability is not classified by a medical diagnosis or social limitation. It is shaped by how one interacts with the world, and this classification may change in different environments. I will no longer make assumptions about if someone is disabled or abled because everyone has their own unique experiences. I also now understand that disability intersects with race, gender, class, and other systems of oppression. Gaining this understanding, I will seek out varying perspectives across those identities to make design decisions about accessibility. Lastly, learning about disability key words taught me how to communicate and think more respectfully and accurately about people with disabilities. Understanding these terms will allow me to think more critically in terms of design.

Connecting disability to other areas of architecture and design. I will integrate my knowledge of disability into my passion for sustainability by designing spaces that last a long time. One definition of sustainability is "enough, for all, forever". Within this definition, accessibility is essential because accessibility for everyone ensures longevity. If someone doesn't have enough access, it is not sustainable. If it doesn't serve every race, gender, and class, it is not sustainable. Designing without considering everyone means costly changes will need to occur in the future, so it is not sustainable. Constructing universally accessible buildings is sustainable — it ensures lasting inclusivity and eliminates future modifications for accessibility. Additionally, using key sustainable design strategies can also support accessible design. For example, using natural lighting, rather than artificial lighting, reduces energy usage and allows for visibility for people with visual impairments or for those who sign. Additionally, there are many benefits to the connection of nature indoors and natural ventilation. It improves productivity and may help people with mental disabilities, while also cutting down on energy consumption. These strategies show how accessibility and sustainability go hand in hand.

Lastly, from the readings in this class, The chapter "Normate Template Knowing-Making the Architectural Inhabitant" by Aimi Hamraie is the reading that made the most impact on the ethical standpoint I developed over the semester. This reading reveals how architecture has historically been based on the body measurements of white men, creating a "normate" standard that excludes everyone else. This chapter allowed me to visualize how not only does "normal" not exist because everyone is different, but how intersectionality is embedded in the problem. The templates did not account for disabled people, but also didn't consider the different anatomy of men and women or the varying anatomy of different races. This leads me to believe that all buildings today were never truly meant for everyone. They were designed for white men and assumed everyone else should conform, which is not ethical. This reading helped me to understand these issues within design, and now my ethical standpoint is that architecture should not be modeled after one person's experience, but everyone's experiences. In a perfect world, my designs will be accessible to everyone. While that may be impossible due to the unlimited factors involved, it is still my personal goal and my goal for society. We must move away from what is considered "normal" and instead embrace the infinite stories and bodies that exist in the world.

In conclusion, this class will shape how I design, communicate, and advocate for accessibility. I've learned that we should not be doing the bare minimum of ADA standards, and that accessibility is a core design value. By centering it, I will design beautiful and sustainable work that is inclusive and just.

Student 10

With the knowledge gained from this class, a very important aspect that designers need to keep in mind is how people with disabilities and their needs are considered when designing. An example that comes to mind is learning about Olof Hanson. He was a deaf person in architecture who designed spaces curated for deaf individuals. With his first hand experience, he was able to cater his designs to be inclusive of those in the deaf community. There should be more architects and designers that are involved in the decision making to allow for spaces to be accessible to everyone. It would also be beneficial for architects with disabilities to perhaps have workshops or lectures for students studying architecture. This would allow for students to get exposure to accessible practices and get first hand knowledge from disabled architects. Another way that people with disabilities could figure among stakeholders in architecture projects is through community engagement. Even if someone wasn't an architect, if there were platforms or groups where disabled individuals could be in conversations in the early design stages, their lived experiences could directly inform the design process. Universal

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design is not only about designing spaces for people with disabilities, but designing with them. By giving them a voice in these projects, they will hopefully feel more welcomed and included.

In learning about the many Models of Disability, there were a few that stood out in terms of being useful in future practices. The environmental model places the problem of disability on the individual's physical environment. Based on circumstance, the environment can cause, define, or exacerbate their disability. For instance, curb cuts are a form of universal design. They were created for wheelchair users to be able to move up and down from street level, but they were actually beneficial for people other than wheelchair users such as people with strollers or those with visual impairments. The social model discusses how the ways in which our environments work are disabling. A person becomes disabled when normative social practices create barriers for people not in the majority. To illustrate an example that is not beneficial to disabled individuals would be a classroom with bright lights and constant noise could be overstimulating to those who are neurodivergent. When I am designing in the future, my classrooms would have sensory support, flexible seating, and a clear structure to the space. A principle of Disability Justice that can be useful to all is "intersectionality." There are many different overlapping facets of discrimination a person can face. This discrimination could be based on race, culture, religion, class, political affiliation, age, and so many more factors. Understanding what intersectionality is can help designers create more inclusive and equitable spaces that are responsive to the many different lived experiences people have.

As a person of color, design justice is a movement that is very important. Design justice puts an emphasis on centering and being led by marginalized people in the design process. It is a movement that actively works to fight oppression and the systems that perpetuate inequalities. With my knowledge of disability, I now have a better understanding of the wide variety of lived experiences. With this deeper sense of understanding, I understand the importance of lifting up disabled and marginalized voices in the design process. Their voices shouldn't be seen as an after thought, rather they should be seen as a vital source of knowledge and insight. As a student, I wouldn't consider historic preservation as one of my specialties, but it is a topic that I find very interesting. It's important to preserve historic buildings because they are defining features of a community and their history. Through this class it's been shown that preservation can come in conflict with accessible design. Traditional approaches to preservation often want to keep the integrity of the building leading to little thought for accessible design elements such as elevators, ramps, and more. In the future, if I work on a project within the realm of historic preservation, I would have accessibility be at the forefront of my design. There have been many cases of a "grand central staircase" but that is a very exclusionary design element. Instead I would propose a ramp as the main method of vertical circulation along with the addition of elevators.

One of the readings that had the most impact on my standpoint when it came to disability was from "Keywords for Disability Studies," by Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin. This reading discussed the idea of intersectionality and painted a beautiful picture of the voices of disabled individuals getting progressively stronger throughout American history. Disability movements many times had overlapping membership which created more solidarity among the group and strengthened their collective impact. Disability activists were advocating for a shift from correcting individuals to reforming society. Throughout the 1960s and early 70s, movements such as civil rights, black, and women empowerment protests were happening simultaneously, giving people with disabilities an understanding of tactics for protests. This reading stuck with me because it was a reminder that no one fights alone and there's power in numbers if change needs to happen.

Student 11

Looking back to all I learned in this class, one of the biggest things is that this class has changed how I think about architectural education and the design profession. Before this semester, I knew accessibility mattered, but I didn't fully understand how design connects to justice. Through our assignments, presentations, and group work, I've come to see disability as a political, social, and design issue. It's not just about compliance. It's about inclusion, equity, and rethinking what architecture values.

Centering Disabled Stakeholders In our group project, we studied barriers that disabled students face in entering architecture education. We found exclusion happens early—at the high school level—and continues through undergraduate and graduate school. We learned that some students never see architecture as an option because of physical, sensory, financial, or cultural barriers. I now understand that accessibility is not a technical issue—it's a pipeline and participation issue. People with disabilities must not only use buildings; but also help design them. In my future projects, I want to treat people with disabilities as one of the central stakeholders. They will not be included only at the end. They will be involved from the start. Because their lived experience reveals barriers that are easy to overlook. Their insight also brings creative potential for reimagining how spaces work.

Disability Justice, Models, and Key Words The framework of Disability Justice had a strong impact on me. I learned from Sins Invalid's ten principles, especially "leadership of those most impacted" and "collective access." These ideas taught me that access is not just an individual problem. It's a shared responsibility and it's something that we need to do together. What's more, the social model of disability helped me recognize how design can disabled people. It also pushed me to think beyond physical barriers and consider how policies, timelines, and expectations in architecture school can be exclusive.

Applying Disability Knowledge to Sustainability In my architectural design career, my main focus is sustainability and community design. I used to focus mostly on energy efficiency and materials. Now, I want to think about access and equity as part of environmental sustainability. I want to create more spaces that are both ecologically and socially inclusive such as public parks with accessible pathways and sensory-friendly design. It means community centers where everyone can enter, stay, and participate fully. I also believe that community engagement must include disabled people from the beginning. Their ideas can shape better, more inclusive places.

Personal Presentation and Semester Group Project From my individual presentation, one of the quotes in the reading left a deep impression on me: "We don't want tin cups. We want jobs." [Kim E. Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 132] This slogan captured a major shift in disability politics during the mid-20th century. Disabled people were rejecting charity. They were demanding justice. This quote reminded me that design can either reinforce charity models or support justice models, and I want to be part of the second. The reading also taught me about activism, resistance, and the power of organizing. I learned about the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) and the American Federation of the Physically Handicapped (AFPH). These organizations didn't wait for help. They built power, fought discrimination, and demanded access to work and public life. Presenting this history helped me see how deeply design is tied to social movements. It also showed me that disabled people have always been active agents of change.

In addition to what I learned from the reading, this semester's group project deepened my understanding of how systemic barriers affect access to architectural education—especially for students with disabilities. My part of the project focused on the College of Design's advising system and outreach programs. I learned that even well-intentioned structures, like academic advising, can fall short if disability disclosure is left entirely up to the student. Many students may hesitate to disclose due to stigma or uncertainty, which can prevent them from getting the support they need. This made me realize that true accessibility is about creating a culture where seeking help is normalized and safe. I also explored outreach programs like the Design Summer

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Camp and WAM Teen Architecture Workshop, which aim to introduce high school students to design. These programs already do a lot to engage young people, but they could be more intentional about including students with disabilities. By making outreach materials fully accessible, building partnerships with disability-focused schools, and connecting students with mentors who share similar experiences, we can help build a more inclusive pipeline into design education. This experience showed me that expanding access starts well before students ever enter college—and that designers can play a key role in that process.

Future Expectation All in all, this class taught me to reflect, question, and act in designing for the disability. I will bring these tools into my future design work. In my future design, I want to create buildings that are not just technically accessible, but socially welcoming. I want to support a culture where disabled students feel that architecture belongs to them. Last but not the least, I believe that disability is not a problem to solve. It's a perspective to include. It's a community to learn from, and it's a movement that architecture must stand with. I hope in the future I can use what I learned in this class in my architecture design and build process and put in more effort in helping people with disabilities to have a better life.

Student 12

This class changed the way I think about disability in architecture. Before this semester, I mostly thought about accessibility as something tied to code—like checking off requirements for ramps or door widths. I knew it was important, but I didn't think of it as something that should shape the design process from the beginning. Now I understand it as something much broader. Accessibility is a mindset. It's about who is part of the conversation, who the work is for, and what kinds of experiences are valued in both school and professional practice. One of the most important things I've taken away is that people with disabilities should be seen as active participants in design, not just people we design "for." Whether it's a public building, a home, or even a studio course layout, the more we involve people with a wide range of experiences, the better the outcomes will be. That includes not just mobility disabilities, but sensory, cognitive, and invisible ones too.

I've thought a lot about my own experience this semester. I have ADHD, and while I've learned to manage it, there are definitely parts of architecture school that make things harder. Studio culture is fast-paced, high pressure, and often not flexible in how work is expected to be shown or discussed. A lot of those structures assume a single kind of learner or worker. I've gotten used to working around that, but this class helped me realize that I shouldn't have to. There are so many ways to make design education more inclusive that don't take away from its rigor or creativity. My individual presentation focused on "Parents and Professionals: Parents' Reflections on Professionals, the Support System, and the Family in Twentieth-Century United States". I found it really eye-opening. Parents were often left out of decisions made by doctors and educators, even though they had a deep understanding of their kids' needs. It made me think about the way expertise is defined in architecture. Designers are often seen as the final voice, even though the people using the space every day have a different kind of knowledge that's just as valuable. That reading pushed me to question how decisions are made and whose experiences are treated as legitimate.

One thing that stood out in the course was our faculty interviews. Several of the professors didn't even remember taking the school's accessibility training. That says a lot about how easy it is for access to fall through the cracks unless people are really committed to it. We also saw from our student survey that accommodations are often treated inconsistently across studios. For students with disabilities, that can make things unpredictable and exhausting. These aren't huge surprises, but seeing them laid out so clearly made me realize how far we still have to go, even in environments that say they care about inclusion. We also talked a lot about studio culture, and that's something I've been thinking about in my own work. There's a lot of pressure to perform a certain way in reviews or pull all-nighters, and flexibility is rarely built in. But there are easy ways to change that—like offering different options for presentations or giving students space to ask for what they need without having to justify it. These kinds of changes would benefit everyone, not just students with documented accommodations.

This class helped me understand that accessibility isn't just about physical space. It's also about how we structure learning, how we define success, and how we treat people. In my future projects, whether in school or in practice, I want to start by asking whose needs are being considered and whose are being overlooked. I want to keep access in mind early in the process, not treat it as a detail to add later.

Student 13

This course has heavily influenced the way I think about architectural education and practice, specifically in terms of responsibility, access, and the inclusion of the built environment. I came into this class with a general awareness of accessibility and ADA requirements, but I leave with an understanding of disability as a political, social, and spatial experience. I now view disabled individuals as essential stakeholders and collaborators whose lived experience should shape how the built world is designed.

In my future projects, within school and future professional practice, I will prioritize universal design from the beginning of the design process rather than as an afterthought. This means going further than the required ADA codes but involving many perspectives and experiences early in conceptual development. Whether I go on to work in public, residential, or communal design, I can recognize that disabled individuals have unique spatial needs and offer vital insights into how environments enable or restrict spatial experiences. This class emphasized viewing disability not as a problem to be solved but as a different experience of the world that can heavily inform designs and beyond. With this, it is also important to recognize the diversity of disability. Accessible design is not a one-size-fits-all scenario, it requires considering sensory environments, neurodiversity, chronic illness, mobility, and mental challenges. With this, it is also important to recognize intersections of these experiences with race, class, gender, and age. As a designer and individual, I now feel a sense of ethical and moral responsibility to design spaces that reflect the complexity of human experience, making sure to include those at the margins.

Throughout this semester, I've learned about the Social Model of Disability, which challenges the limits of the Medical Model that views disability as an individual issue. The Social Model helped me to understand how disability is a product of barriers from the built environment rather than the differences in individuals. Disability Justice has pushed this perspective further by highlighting intersectionality, collective care, independence, and leadership of those most impacted. Going forward, I aim to challenge the accessibility assumptions that have been historically embedded into architecture, education, and design. It relies on the notion of "idealized" or "normal" rather than considering universal user models. In studio projects, I plan to question design briefs that assume able-bodied individuals by default. As well as pushing back on design processes that "accommodate" only at the end of the design process. My area of interest is historic preservation, and this course has helped me see the problems as well as possibilities between preservation and access. Often, historic preservation and accessibility are considered unaligned, especially when retrofitting older structures is considered a threat to historical architectural integrity. But I now understand that preserving the meaning and use of a space must include preserving its relevance and accessibility to a wider public. I plan to use the lens of disability to argue that preservation and access are not mutually exclusive. For example, creative design interventions can respect a building's historical integrity while making it usable for everyone. I also want to advocate for preserving and sharing disability histories like sites of activism, institutions, and other informal gathering places that have helped to shape the disability rights movement. When

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reflecting on my interest, I now question which kinds of buildings and experiences are deemed "worthy" or "important" for preservation. This course has helped me see that an ethical framework must include disabled voices.

The reading I found most memorable this semester is Bess Williamson's "Berkeley, California: An Independent Style of Access," which I gave my individual presentation on. It reframed my entire understanding of how grassroots activism can completely reshape physical infrastructures. It showed that accessibility is not just a matter of compliance but a matter of ethics and community control. This reading helped me recognize the crucial differences between top-down and bottom-up design approaches to accessibility. Before reading as mentioned above, I mostly associated accessibility with ADA compliance and institutional standards, like ramps and elevators. But the story of the Rolling Quads student group reclaiming space through their everyday infrastructures, like curb-cuts and accessible transit, revealed a new model of universal design. In their grassroots approach, disabled people are not passive recipients of accommodation, but active agents reshaping the city. This idea has stuck with me, access is not something "given" by designers or governments, but something that can and should be claimed, created, and negotiated by communities themselves.

Overall, this course has challenged me to rethink architecture not just as a technical or aesthetic pursuit but as a form of ethical practice. It has given me a vocabulary and a framework to recognize that disability is not a marginal concern but a central site for reimagining how we live together. I leave the semester committed to building a practice grounded in care, interdependence, and justice, and to designing spaces where all bodies, minds, and ways of being belong.

Student 14

This course has strongly altered my perspective on disability and accessibility in design and architecture. I already had a great interest in accessible design from my lived experiences and other courses in my education, however, I never thought about it to the extent that this course encourages. All semester, we were taught to look past just the bare minimum (like ADA compliance) to develop a better built environment for all users. I am extremely grateful for this course and feel very inspired to enter architectural practice with this knowledge.

Throughout this semester, this class helped me develop my Masters Final Project which focused on reimagining the idea of hospice in the United States. I began my design by just addressing ADA compliance but as I learned more in this course, I began to implement more inclusive design strategies in my project. I was specifically struck by the environmental model of disability, especially in the scope of my thesis project. As people age and become terminally ill it is harder to be independent and take care of themselves, especially in an able-bodied world. I attempted to provide an environment where patients could easily reflect and spend time with loved ones without having to worry about logistics and their safety. As my father was in hospice, we struggled with keeping him safe in our single family home. Although he was in a wheelchair for only 3 months of his life, it still put a lot of perspective to disability that I did not have before. I appreciated thinking about him throughout this course and what we could have done differently to make his last days more comfortable. I hope that my deeper understanding of inclusive design beyond just ADA compliance will help me when I enter the professional field. By keeping people with disabilities in mind as I develop designs for clients, I believe I can create an easier built environment for all to navigate.

In my future practice, I hope to push my colleagues and design team past ADA compliance to address the social model of disability and the human rights model of disability. By framing disability as a socially constructed phenomenon, we can deconstruct the ways in which we think about our clients. I hope to design buildings that eliminate disability for everyone that walks through its doors. Additionally, I want to develop strategies for digital accessibility and share them with my team members. By creating a more standardized approach to digital design, we can reach a greater number of people with disabilities. I am planning on working for a residential firm starting this summer, where we will work for specific single family clients. Although this does not address a large client population that may have a variety of disabilities, I think accessibility is still key. First, if I ever encounter a client with a disability I will be prepared to interact with them and design for them. Also, I learned that disabilities come in all shapes and sizes, meaning I may encounter very specific needs or wants from a disabled client. It will be very exciting to cater an environment to a very specific individual and their abilities. Despite the inaccessibility of the world around them, these individuals will be able to go home to a house that is specifically catered to their abilities.

Near the end of the semester we talked about Olaf Hanson and his design concepts in his school for the deaf. This case study specifically stuck with me because of how simple his ideas were, but they made a world of a difference for the users. These changes like wider hallways are things I would have never thought about but mean so much to the deaf community. This shows how we can easily make design changes if we just listen and attempt to understand the needs and abilities of our client groups. This again ties back to the work I will be doing after school and how I can cater designs to a client's needs to make their lives easier. Overall, I am super thankful for this course and how it taught me to think differently about disability and accessibility. Although ADA compliance wasn't a standard and disabled individuals had to fight to get this code implemented, there is still so much more to be done to make the built environment accessible.