

DISABILITY STUDIES, CERTIFICATE IN (UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE)

The purpose of the certificate is to prepare undergraduate students for a complex, global world comprising an increasingly diverse society that includes people with disabilities. The focus is on engaging students in interdisciplinary experiences to help them understand contemporary disability issues, research and practices within a social, political, cultural and historical context.

Students who complete the Certificate in Disability Studies will be well-equipped to meet the skills and competencies that many employers seek. As people with disabilities enter the workforce in increasing numbers, nondisabled employees who leave college having gained first-hand knowledge of and experience with disabled individuals will be in an excellent position to understand their needs and to interact with them in a broad range of employment settings. The program will emphasize both oral and written communication to boost students' practice in those vital skills before they enter the workplace.

Learning outcomes

Upon program completion:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of disability in historical, political and cultural contexts.
2. Students will provide definitions and models of disability, including medical and social models.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of critical issues and research being debated in the field of disability studies.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship among disability culture, disability communities and rights-based struggles, including broad-based human rights.
5. Students will design and conduct a disability-specific project relevant to their major field of study based on engagement within the community.

The Certificate in Disability Studies runs concurrently with a student's major and is not a stand-alone program. Thus, the program is designed to be completed in three consecutive semesters with students taking one course per semester in conjunction with their major course work.

Interested students should submit an application to the VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities, which administers the certificate program. Students who have successfully completed 30 credit hours with a minimum GPA of 2.5 and a declared major may apply for the certificate. International students must have the minimum TOEFL score that is required by their major. Applicants will need to submit a one-page essay to disabstudies@vcu.edu that describes their interest in the program and discusses how they expect to apply the material to their program of study. Upon acceptance to the certificate program, a Change of Major form will be signed by the student and submitted to Records and Registration by the Partnership for People with Disabilities.

For more information contact disabstudies@vcu.edu.

Curriculum requirements

The nine-credit curriculum will prepare students from a broad range of disciplines to understand issues faced by people with disabilities and

their relationship to society. Students will enroll in two lecture-based courses and one course taught in a seminar format. The culminating seminar will allow each student to apply the content within the program in a unique manner to his or her major field of study.

Course	Title	Hours
IDDS 200	Disability History and Culture	3
IDDS 201	Disability, Diversity and Human Rights	3
IDDS 300	Applications of Disability Studies	3
Total Hours		9

The minimum total of credit hours required for this certificate is nine.

The sample plan of study shows classes taken in conjunction with major course work.

Year one		
Fall semester		Hours
IDDS 200	Disability History and Culture	3
Term Hours:		3
Spring semester		
IDDS 201	Disability, Diversity and Human Rights	3
Term Hours:		3
Year two		
Fall semester		
IDDS 300	Applications of Disability Studies	3
Term Hours:		3
Total Hours:		9