

Carleton University
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Sociology 5805H
Political Economy of Disability
Fall 2026

Instructor: Kelly Fritsch

Email: KellyFritsch@cunet.carleton.ca

Course meets: In person, Monday, 2:35-5:25 pm

Office Hours: By appointment in person or on Zoom

Course Description & Objectives

The Political Economy of Disability offers a critical investigation of how economic forces shape disability and accessibility within global systems of power, value, and accumulation. We will examine how welfare regimes, labour markets, austerity policies, care infrastructures, and emergent technologies distribute life chances and organize the material conditions of disabled existence. Attending to processes such as commodification, privatization, financialization, and the market logics that structure social reproduction, we will analyze how value and power circulate through institutions, policy frameworks, and global economies.

Students will engage key debates, concepts, theories, and methods that ground a political-economic approach to disability and accessibility, drawing on scholarship in critical disability studies, feminist political economy, labour studies, social movement studies, and science and technology studies. Through seminar discussion, presentations, and written work, we will probe the contradictions and limits of contemporary economic arrangements, examine how struggles for accessibility and disability justice contest them, and explore transformative pathways for building more equitable and interdependent futures.

Course Requirements and Method of Evaluation

Facilitated Discussion	40%	Choose from options
Four P's / NQA's	40%	Weekly
Key Concepts and Course Reflection	20%	Choose from options

Full details to be discussed in class and posted to Brightspace.

Course Readings

All readings for this course are available on Brightspace or through the library. Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course.