



The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Communication

Edited by

Michael S. Jeffress · Joy M. Cypher
Jim Ferris · Julie-Ann Scott-Pollock

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The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Communication

“The communication discipline has incredibly valuable insights to offer on the experience and enactment of disability. The four editors collected and organized *The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Communication*, offering tremendous breadth and depth of communication scholarship. The chapter authors span interpersonal, health, mediated, rhetorical, and critical approaches to understanding and living the experience of disability in human life. This volume represents excellence in current scholarship and practices and will be extremely valuable for scholars across academic disciplines, practitioners, and persons experiencing disability.”

—Dawn O. Braithwaite, *Willia Cather Professor of Communication Emerita, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA*

“Always engaging and eminently readable, the handbook includes a breadth and depth of subject matter and methodologies—ideal for the disability studies classroom. The handbook provides foundational material that contextualizes contemporary, pressing issues in the field. Most importantly, contributors never lose sight of the lived experience of disability in all its variety. I am eager to enliven and update the curriculum in my disability arts and culture courses with this exceptional collection.”

—Carrie Sandahl, PhD, *Director Program on Disability Art, Culture and Humanities, Disability and Human Development at University of Illinois Chicago, USA*

“This is an exciting collection of essays bringing together disability and communication, but the scope is much larger than the title suggests. Communication is expanded to include the varied uses of language, rhetoric, and media-driven content that is so crucial to our postmodern lives. There is something of great interest in every essay, and the book made me rethink many important ideas in disability studies. It is definitely a must-read book.”

—Lennard J. Davis, *Distinguished Professor of Liberal Arts and Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA*

“*The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Communication* expertly explores the intersection of disability and communication and illustrates the cultural power all societies have to transmit communication frameworks that have long stigmatized the experience of disability and its representations. *The Handbook* deconstructs ableist communication of past and present, as well as showing how present-day empowered disabled people have more agency to control communicative structures. *The Handbook* interrogates many of the ways humans communicate disability concepts but with contemporary sociocultural-informed research that highlights disability identity and pride, new online communication methods, and major interactions with the ableist world. Chapters cover language, identity, intersectionality, cultural artifacts, institutional structures, activism, and social policy. Specifically, topics include: microaggressions, memes, collaborative

podcasting, artificial intelligence, masking during a pandemic, accessibility in video games, Brexit, service dogs, police brutality, TikTok, Deaf children, and much more. A variety of methods are used from autoethnography to content analysis to case studies. All in all, *The Handbook* skillfully moves forward much-needed research that interweaves Disability Studies and Communication Studies into a substantial inquiry now but with the hope that new scholars in these fields will continue this critical work into the future.”

—Beth A. Haller, PhD, author, *Representing Disability in an Ableist World, Essays on Mass Media*

“The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Communication accomplishes what all handbooks should: it positions itself as the anthology you need to guide your thinking about the intersections of the central areas of study, disability and communication; it offers groundbreaking chapters that are indispensable for further research in the fields; and it does all of this in an accessible, engaging manner. For scholars in disability studies and communication studies, this anthology will be a required resource.”

—Robert McRuer, *Professor of English, George Washington University, and author of Crip Theory (2006) and Crip Time (2018)*

“This collection explores, evokes, and enmeshes the overlaps and intersections between disability and communication from a vast and impressive range of perspectives—27 chapters! Yet the book is so clearly organized, and each chapter so well-written, that the result is both encyclopedic and concise. *The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Communication* also could not feel more timely, with every chapter connecting to contemporary issues. This is a tremendous accomplishment, and an incredibly useful resource.”

—Jay Dolmage, *Professor of English, University of Waterloo, Founding Editor of the Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*

“Boasting an amazing collection of authors addressing disability from different perspectives and identities, this *Handbook* shows the importance of conceiving of disability as a complex set of professional, personal, and political relations—always meaningful and always more than we expect. Readers are provided many pathways to encounter what disability experience and representation means to communication studies and what communication means to disability studies. The array of chapters constitutes a brilliant way to nurture deeper relations to our embodied selves.”

—Tanya Titchkosky, PhD, *The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada*

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Editors

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Introduction

*Michael S. Jeffress, Joy M. Cypher, Jim Ferris,
and Julie-Ann Scott-Pollock*

DISABILITY STUDIES AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES: A COMPLICATED PURSUIT

By: The Editors

The Palgrave Handbook of Disability and Communication maps the course of two highly interdisciplinary academic disciplines. At the core of this *Handbook* is how we human beings make sense of disability as an identity and human phenomenon as we understand ourselves and others through personal introspection, daily interaction, our cultural artifacts, and our collective policies. Both disability and communication are expansive, everchanging, highly contextual, and well, complicated to study. We will briefly lay out these two highly interdisciplinary areas of intellectual inquiry before introducing the four editors of this *Handbook* and the outline of the sections and chapters.

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DISABILITY IS COMPLICATED

Disability is complicated. The range of human circumstances that in this time we call *disability* presents in a wide variety of ways, with an exponentially broad array of impacts on the lives of people labeled *disabled* as well as the lives of everyone else.

Unlike other identity markers, disability is defined medically and socially by deviation from what normal embodiment, emotional response, and cognitive processing are considered to be (Garland Thomson, 1997). When one begins to research what it means to be disabled, several questions arise that are central to the design of any project: who is drawing the lines between disabled and nondisabled people, and for what purpose? How can the researcher offer a degree of objectivity when we all are implicated—whether we are aware of it—in what we might call the ability/disability continuum?

Disability is complicated. Who is considered disabled? What conditions count as disabilities? The perceptions of the degree of impairment as well as how affected people respond affect how we interact to negotiate with disability as an identity marker. People are considered disabled by others when their presences become disruptive to social spaces. People become “disabled” when they are perceived to be unable to do what is expected of a “normal” cultural participant.

For example, requiring glasses to see is not often perceived as a disability until corrective lenses are no longer available that enable a person to read the print required of them to be independent or able to travel independently by vehicle. Before literacy became an expectation and the majority of cultural members had access to printed material, whether one could read “normative sized print” did not determine whether one had a disability. Before vehicles, being unable to pass an eye exam attesting to a preferred level of visual acuity did not constitute a disruptive disability. Furthermore, in a world in which no human had eyes, no one would be blind. Not having eyesight would simply be a part of what it meant to be human. It is only with the application of normative expectations that people are labeled disabled or nondisabled.

If an individual has a job that requires employees to arrive at an office and sit at a desk from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and they are unable to fulfill this expectation due to chronic pain, mobility, or cognitive processing, then they become characterized as disabled. Their need for an alternative schedule makes them non-standard. Within that space, their bodyminds are characterized as disabled, unable to fulfill normative expectations and in need of accommodations (Price, 2011). In a job that did not require this constant presence, however, one would potentially not be deemed disruptive and potentially not be interpreted as disabled within the workplace by their supervisor and coworkers. As many workplaces shifted to remote settings during the Covid-19 lockdown, employees who needed place and time accommodations were no longer outliers and subject to stigma, because everyone needed accommodations.

Thus, the normative “center” against which disability is contrasted is always in flux.

Disability is complicated—and inherently, intrinsically, inescapably bound up in communication. The circumstances that we describe as disability do not exist outside of the communication around normative embodiment, processing normal human interaction across contexts. Because disability is always and unavoidably a product of comparison and contrast—what is normal in this space? with these people? doing this activity?—disability as a human identity is slippery and evolves with human experience. Disability is how we define when one does not meet the expectation of what “normal” should be. Of course, none of us truly meets this ideal for normal throughout our lifetimes. Injury, illness, and aging change our bodies, our minds, our emotional responses. We are at moments fulfilling this expectation of normal, or almost fulfilling it, or becoming complete disappointments. No one fulfills all the hopes and ideals that society lays upon us—and no one fulfills them for all that long. Disability is the human consequence of that truth articulated by Heraclitus more than two millennia ago: the only constant is change. Humans are mortal, and we will all become disabled—if we live long enough.

COMMUNICATION IS COMPLICATED

Communication is complicated too. For millennia practitioners and scholars have given careful thought to communication, with the greatest attention to the crafting and delivery of messages. In the last century this began to change, with scholars recognizing a much wider variety of ways we humans communicate as well as the importance of a host of factors that affect the communication that happens.

Communication plays a central role in the creation and dissemination of the norms that are crucial to the creation of the social experience of disability. For it is only in community that norms emerge, and it is only through community—which is impossible without communication—that norms are broadcasted and enforced. This central role of communication is less than fully explicated, although this *Handbook* takes us further along that path.

In the current era, communication as an academic discipline is part of the humanities, social sciences, fine arts, and professional programs across institutions. It is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing upon English, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, theater, creative writing, marketing, public relations, and more to grapple with what it means for human beings to make meaning with one another through interactions from intrapersonal processing to mass communication.

In the early 1990s there was precious little communication studies scholarship around disability. What scholarship there was seemed largely to content itself with received notions of disability, considering disabled people as deviants from norms which were clear, proper, and desirable. This deficit orientation was entirely in keeping with what we were just learning to think of as the

medical model of disability. By this time, scholars in disability studies were articulating a competing social model of disability that explained how disability is not an objective diagnosis but a social construct in which cultural landscape and economy are created to exclude some bodies and minds; this model contends that a redesign of cultural architecture, expectations, and policy would eliminate the disparities of access, opportunity, and power that constitute disability. Over the course of the recent decades, disability studies has become interwoven into critical communication inquiry that understands the construct of disability as laden with cultural power. This cultural model of disability recognizes that disability is not inherent or natural to diagnose, treat, or manage; rather, it is created through our interactions, and subject to new understandings, meanings, and responses. The cultural perspective is a foundational understanding of communication scholars in this *Handbook*; it is situated at the intersections of gender, race, sexuality, and social class. The chapters of this volume draw upon the social and cultural models of disability and recognize how other identity markers interact in our understandings of disability and communication.

We can identify several distinct models or paradigms from which disability has been conceived, explained, and responded to. The earliest paradigm is often referred to as the moral model, which holds that the conditions considered as disabilities are indicators of moral flaws or caused by supernatural forces, for example, divine punishment or possession by demons. From this perspective, disability appears as punishment (or karma) for corruption, a test of faith, a metaphor for the debased human condition. From this perspective disability may also be considered the sign of a spiritual “gift,” for example, the blind seer or the shaman whose seizures are understood as communication with the supernatural.

The second paradigm is often referred to as the medical or individual model, which attributes disability to biophysical causes and looks at people labeled disabled as patients needing treatment so that they can be restored to normal function and a normative role in society. This paradigm focuses on limitations in functioning and appearance; disability is considered a disease that should be cured. From this perspective the problems around disability are considered to arise only from impairments in function, never recognizing pervasive social and environmental barriers that disabled people face. In this paradigm, disability is seen as an individual problem, so solutions must be sought through individual rather than collective efforts. In this paradigm, disability is not a sign of a flawed identity but rather a form of deviance that must be remediated.

In response to the stigmatizing orientation of these paradigms, activists and scholars developed what might be grouped as a sociocultural paradigm. This paradigm recognizes disability as a social and cultural construct and regards disability as a social rather than an individual issue. To consider disability a construct is to fundamentally root it in the discursive world, where it is the product of relationships, cultural values, and ongoing negotiations of what constitutes normal, and thus, by default, disability. As a result, the sociocultural

paradigm grounds disability as no longer inherent in individual bodies, but rather lived through social and enacted agreements and identities. Many variations of theorizing exist within this paradigm, including sociopolitical models that see disability as a unique minority group bound in its experience of oppression. Others focus on institutional constructs hegemonically normalized and inscribed as a means of social control and definition. Others still look at the interplay between embodied experience, performance, and discourse. What they all share in common, however, is the critical assumption that disability is negotiated and made meaningful in the world of social relation.

The sociocultural paradigm recognizes that communication is always implicated with disability. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the newer paradigms have not supplanted the earlier ones; the moral paradigm and the medical/individual paradigm are still commonly deployed, often in an unthinking reflexive way. In fact, the two earliest paradigms are still dominant in discourse—and in policy—around disability.

We come to think about disability from a variety of presuppositions and experiences; if as Shakespeare suggested, “what’s past is prologue,” it will be useful to consider what each of us has learned to think about bodies, minds, and this range of human circumstances that we call *disability*, as well as how we came to think critically about it. The four editors of this *Handbook* entered the fields of disability and communication at different times, with different backgrounds, trainings, and research questions that brought us to the intersections of these disciplines. In the following four sections each editor will disclose their locations and disciplines that merged to create this *Handbook* and explain where we see (and hope) scholarship moves from here.

JIM: CREATING THE VENUE FOR CRITICAL COMMUNICATION AND DISABILITY STUDIES

A moment in 1990 changed my life. I was following an intriguing citation I had found in a bibliography and stumbled across the only-just emergent field of disability studies. The *Journal of Social Issues* published a special issue in 1988 entitled “Moving Disability Beyond ‘Stigma,’” and I saw my experience reflected more clearly than I had ever seen before. I have been disabled since birth by what is often called a “lower limb deficiency” (note the presence of an unspoken norm here?), but it was only in that moment that I realized two crucial things: that the interpersonal weirdnesses that I had experienced most of my life really were happening (despite the best intentions of my nondisabled family to minimize or smooth things over: “No, she wasn’t staring at you.”); and that those weird encounters, which today we might call “microaggressions,” were worthy of study.

In the early 1990s, a small group of young scholars came together through our interest in communication scholarship around disability. Beth Haller, Susan Fox, and I hunted out the conference panels at conferences and shared dismay

not only at the paucity of attention that our field was giving to this powerful component of the social world but also at the narrow-minded, mechanistic, and outdated thinking that informed the scholarship. Of course, people with disabilities want to be able-bodied, the thinking seemed to be. Let's find ways to help them deal with the stigma that naturally attaches to their deviance.

It was in this environment that I tried to create a venue for cutting-edge scholarship in communication studies. In 1996 I began the petition drive that resulted in the creation of the Disability Issues Caucus (DIC) of the National Communication Association (NCA). I wanted to create a place for communication scholars in disability to come together and share their work. I wanted to encourage participation by disabled scholars in a largely inaccessible and unconsciously ableist field. And I wanted to push my communication studies colleagues to move away from the medical model and incorporate sociocultural perspectives in their work. I wanted to bring disability studies to communication studies.

Among the first people I reached out to were the most established scholars in the field who had shown an interest in disability: Teri Thompson and Dawn Braithwaite. Dawn particularly was concerned that a disability-related interest group would lead to a form of ghettoization of the work, which would make it easier for everybody else in communication studies to ignore disability-related scholarship. But I believed that creation of the group would lead not only to more scholarship but also to work that went beyond the dominant medicalized perspective that had been driving research and what little teaching there had been up to that point.

And the caucus had the effect I had sought. It led to research that moved beyond health and compliance-gaining to examine disability as a fact of humanity with profound implications for every area of concentration within the discipline. Today it is possible to find scholarship—possible if not common—that probes disability and identity, disability as rhetorical construction, the performance of disability and disability as performance, interpersonal and media questions around disability, and many of the other subdisciplines of communication studies. It has become much more common to find scholarship that recognizes disability as a useful and indeed important category of analysis like we have come to think about race, class, gender, and sexuality.

JOY: FINDING A COMMUNITY OF CONSEQUENCE

Like many others, writing and teaching have proven the means through which I navigate the thoughts and experiences of my world, and where I rediscover so many of my roots. As a child raised by a disabled mother, I learned early on the social frames through which she was viewed and upon which her value was determined. I learned my critical questioning from her and my father, and it fed my passion for justice and ethics, along with a recognition of the power and responsibility that comes from speech. But I didn't know that this passion would fuel my professional life—in part because I hadn't yet learned that the

personal and the professional are not distinct, separate modes of being. It wasn't until my first disability studies reading in a graduate seminar that I finally heard my passion and my concerns echoed in the stories and theorizing on the page. A few years later, when I walked into the 1997 business meeting of the DIC, I found my community. Academe gave me words for what I saw and felt both growing up and as a scholar, for the hegemonic frames that loomed large, yet invisible, across my experiences. From that graduate seminar, through the 25 years in the DIC, to my classrooms today where interactions with students still forge a meaningful connection over bodies, normalcy, and discourse, I have found a home in the rich world of disability studies. Thus is the warp and woof of my scholarly and personal life—the intersections of embodiment, discourse, and ethics. I teach and write about a variety of topics that inhabit these spaces, and I am inspired by the thinking of Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Michel Foucault, John Paul Sartre, and Lennard Davis when I do so. In my work, and in my person, I reside humbly where word, heart, and deed meet; and as such, I am honored to be a part of this project.

JULIE-ANN: A FOCUS ON LIVED EMBODIMENT

I did not consider myself a disability scholar when I began my PhD in 2004 at the University of Maine. It was not until 2006, when I attended my first National Communication Association Convention in San Antonio and met Jim, Joy, Bruce Henderson, and so many other communication and disability scholars that I realized that I was, in fact, a disability scholar. Of course, I had always known I was disabled, as you will read in my chapter included in this *Handbook*. I have a diagnosis of moderate, spastic cerebral palsy (CP). My body is noticeably atypical. And while, I have an obvious “CP gait” to anyone who knows anything about cerebral palsy, after six operations I am often interpreted as temporarily injured or sore and stiff from physical activity rather than having a chronic neuromuscular condition resulting from traumatic brain injury from birth. In addition to being disabled, I am also a writer, performer, and narrative researcher. I was nervous to disclose my disability as an early academic. I wanted to be known for my creative work and research, not my disabled body. Yet, my research questions continued to draw me toward embodiment, body image, and disability. As the stories I desired to hear from my research participants continued to focus on eating disorders, physical disability, memory loss, and seizures, I increasingly became aware that I am a communication studies and disability scholar, and while I stayed very close to performance studies and ethnography for my early conference presentations, I felt a pull toward the DIC at NCA. As an identity caucus we have become immersed in intersectionality and how disability is entangled in race, gender, sexuality, and class. I am grateful we are able to bring this volume together and look forward to how future additions can build on and expand the research into these complex questions.

MICHAEL: FINDING MY SCHOLARLY HOME WITHIN COMMUNICATION AND DISABILITY

I think most of us who pitch our tent in the area where the camps of disability studies and communication studies overlap do so because of our personal experience of disability and those with disabilities who have left indelible marks on our lives. Here, I will highlight five major influences for me. First, my son, Ryan, was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy at age six in 1999; nothing has impacted my desire to change the narrative of disability in society and to champion disability justice more than the 20 years I spent as Ryan's dad. Second, my youngest daughter, Meleah, was diagnosed with osteosarcoma at age 11 in 2007 and became physically disabled from related treatments and surgeries. Watching her navigate adolescence into young adulthood with visible scarring, an atypical gait, and chronic pain from the prostheses in her leg and arm, has motivated me in profound ways to conduct research and engage in advocacy. Third, my adult diagnosis of "severe ADHD" came in 2008 at age—well, that is not important—and helped put my past experiences into perspective, not the least of which were the countless microaggressions I encountered toward my neurodivergence from the time I was in primary school and well into adulthood. The fourth and fifth events are connected and need their own paragraph...or two...or, well, please just keep reading.

In 2006 I enrolled in a doctoral program in communication studies having never taken a communication studies course, per se, beyond a few public speaking classes. I took to communication studies like a fish to water. My horizons expanded as I contemplated how basically everything communicates and anything can be studied through the lens of communication. The possibilities were endless, and the implications were awe-inspiring as I considered the role of communication—in its varied forms—in shaping and perpetuating cultures. In short, I realized everything is communication, and communication is everything.

The following year, my academic pursuits took a sudden turn. In the summer of 2007 Ryan discovered the adapted sport of power soccer. He soon became part of the first team started in Virginia, and the impact on Ryan's life and mine was immediate. Call it fate or serendipitous, but that same summer, I was enrolled in an ethnography course and needed a topic for my research project. I chose power soccer.

Prior to that first research project on a sport for disabled athletes, I did not know an academic discipline of disability studies existed. My literature review quickly expanded beyond adapted sport studies. I became interested in related broader issues of embodiment, identity, intersectionality, advocacy, and social justice, and I soon checked out of the library a copy of Rosemarie Garland Thomson's (1997) classic text on *Extraordinary Bodies*, and the rest is, as they say, history.

Then in 2008, I attended my first NCA conference to present my power soccer paper and discovered the DIC, where I saw a place to belong and

develop my identity as a scholar. That first power soccer research effort grew into my dissertation, a top paper award at NCA in 2013, and my first academic book (Jeffress, 2015). I continue to be nurtured by the community of scholars within the DIC and make it my goal to offer scholarly contributions that showcase the rich interdisciplinary area for research and activism that emerges at the intersection of communication studies and disability studies. It is my hope that my role in this volume achieves that.

NOTES ON THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

First, a note on language in this volume. How we talk about disability is as complicated as disability itself. Across chapters, you will encounter scholars who choose people-first language (people with disabilities) with a commitment to seeing the person before the inescapable stigma of disability. You will see other scholars who use identity-first language (disabled people) with a commitment to embracing disability as an identity marker that should be used like any other identifier (i.e., Black man, queer person, disabled woman, etc.). Both of these choices are valid, and we do not wish to force our authors to be uniform. We allowed each author to choose their language and how to talk about disability.

Now a word on the content of this volume. Beyond the introduction you are currently reading, this *Handbook* consists of an additional 26 chapters organized into five sections: “Language and Disability,” “Identity and Intersectionalities,” “Cultural Artifacts and Disability,” “Institutional Constructs and Constraints,” and “Advocacy, Policy, and Action.” We will now briefly introduce each section and the chapters within them.

The five chapters of Section I explore important matters concerning the relationship between language and disability. In Chap. 2, Arciuli and Shakespeare discuss descriptive terms related to disability that may or may not have been considered acceptable at one time before becoming taboo. Yet, some of these “taboo words” have now been reclaimed by disability advocates as evidenced by the recent hashtag #CripTheVote. In Chap. 3, St. Pierre critiques simplistic models and systems of communication that focus on the quick and efficient flow of information. St. Pierre notes how communication systems are prone to communication accidents, which can be even more risky for dysfluent communicators, who often unintentionally communicate by accident. Next, Stones offers a timely theoretical discussion of the communication breakdowns between people of different neurotypes, the need to prioritize neurodivergent perspective, and lays out a path toward cross-neurotype communication competence. In Chap. 5, Sparrow et al give voice to the disabled participants they interviewed who provided their stories of microaggressions. The authors identify two sources for seven forms of disability microaggressions. In the final chapter of Section I, Ali offers a significant examination of the problem of compulsory able-bodiedness as it relates to communication and sexuality and

the stigma and “desexualization” that accompany the fusion of the terms disability and sexuality.

The editors of this volume affirm that disability is a core identity marker. It is as much a part of one’s identity as, for example, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and class. Furthermore, disability is a marginalized identity, and people with disabilities collectively form a major minority group. As such, Section II spans Chaps. 7–12 and contains important discussions related to disability identity and intersectionality. We begin with a theoretical essay by Cherney, who demonstrates rhetorical parallels between ableism and other forms of discrimination against marginalized identities. He notes that as identities intersect, so do the forms of discrimination, but he suggests ways we can communicate to empower and support those who live with these intersectional identities. Scott-Pollock then provides an autoethnographic account of her embodied narrative as one who identifies as both a disabled woman and athletic (or a female “fitcrip”), thereby challenging the false dichotomy between fit and disabled. Chapters 9 and 10 continue in the autoethnographic vein. Swafford provides a balance of prose and poetry as she uses a medical pain scale as a framework to construct her personal narrative of chronic pain and illness in a nonlinear fashion that in her own words, “illustrates her disjointed, nonlinear experience of disability” (a.k.a., “criptime”). Next, Spikes explores the relationship between disability, gender, race, and class through narrative vignettes of his experience of being both Black and diabetic within the cultural context of the southern United States. Chapter 11 has DeWeert and Miller-Ott reporting on their interviews with heterosexual, cisgendered, disabled women, and the first time their disability became a topic of discussion with their romantic partners. Section II ends as it began, with a theoretical essay. Grewe and Weathers use a critical rhetorical approach to problematize ways disabled identity is co-opted and weaponized by others as a means to achieve selfish ends, such as preferred parking or seating, skipping waiting in lines, traveling with pets, and avoiding pandemic mask mandates.

Section III includes Chaps. 13–17 and covers selected topics within aspects of popular culture. Goggin et al get things started by contemplating the place of disability within the development and implementation of artificial intelligence (AI), which, they argue, is undergoing a crisis of legitimacy. In similar fashion, Dumont and Bonenfant focus attention on issues of inclusion related to three popular video games. In Chap. 15, Gloviczki uses posthuman critical theory to bring together autoethnography and media analysis of *Sports Night*, a late-1990s television comedy drama about a nightly cable-tv sports program. Specifically, Gloviczki focuses on the program’s coverage of the body in two episodes that feature disability and racial violence. Chapter 16 has Preston applying his keen analysis to what has become a pervasive cultural artifact: the meme. To the point, Preston critiques the ableism and sexism in a viral meme known as, “I Can Count to Potato,” which is based on a photo of a young woman with Down syndrome. Section III ends with a presentation by Foster and Pettinicchio of their research on viral videos created by users with

disabilities on the social media platform TikTok. They suggest that platform norms make it less than democratic and inclusive—especially for disabled users; however, a select few register views in the hundreds of thousands, and even tens of millions. Sampling the top-100 most-viewed TikTok disability videos, Foster and Pettinicchio note the key themes and demonstrate ways in which the videos both challenge and reinforce stereotypes.

Chapters 18–22 comprise Section IV, which looks at broader systemic issues of discriminatory constructs and constraints entrenched in society communicatively through hegemonic notions of normalcy. Shek-Noble launches this section by presenting results from her comparative content analysis of how English-language news sources in the US and Japan covered post-disaster inaccessibilities and communication breakdowns experienced by people with disabilities in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the 2011 Tōhoku Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan. In any society, government is a primary source for enshrining and exemplifying constructs and constraints. Burdett reminds us of this point in Chap. 19 as she applies a disability studies lens to critique the ableist rhetoric of “disability humor” in the political debates surrounding Brexit and discusses the implications for those who fight for disability justice. One legal policy has recently come under debate in the US centers around questions of who should have a service animal, and when and where a service animal should be permitted. In Chap. 20, Ballard et al distinguish between the legal and social access of service animals. Each of the authors is a service dog handler and draws upon lived experiences to recount vignettes of negative social interactions that unfold three insightful themes toward making society more just for service animal users. Next, Jones et al turn our attention to a place with tremendous potential to influence society, the educational system. The authors present their chapter alternating between dominant language and plain language to present an informative case study of a public pedagogy project involving intellectually disabled students producing eight podcasts at a Canadian college. Chapter 22 features Makkawy and Moreman interrogating a context known for its cultural constructs and constraints: the organization. As scholars who specialize in organizational communication, Makkawy and Moreman make a strong case for the field to adopt a “cripistemology” that would allow the full implications of disability to be realized and introduce innovation within organizational sensemaking and the construct of organizational capacity.

Section V is home to the final five chapters of this *Handbook*, and they call readers to a space that is the goal of good scholarship that encompasses communication studies and disability studies: the need for social change to achieve accessibility, inclusion, and equity for individuals with disability, in short, disability justice. Hawkins starts the conversation in Chap. 23 with his timely essay on the problem of police brutality toward people with disabilities. He shows that it is fundamentally a (mis)communication problem that calls for better police training. Chapter 24 is Heilig’s astute review of the history of disability within the subdiscipline of technical communication. Beyond giving a helpful overview of the field, Heilig calls for reform in pedagogy and to move beyond