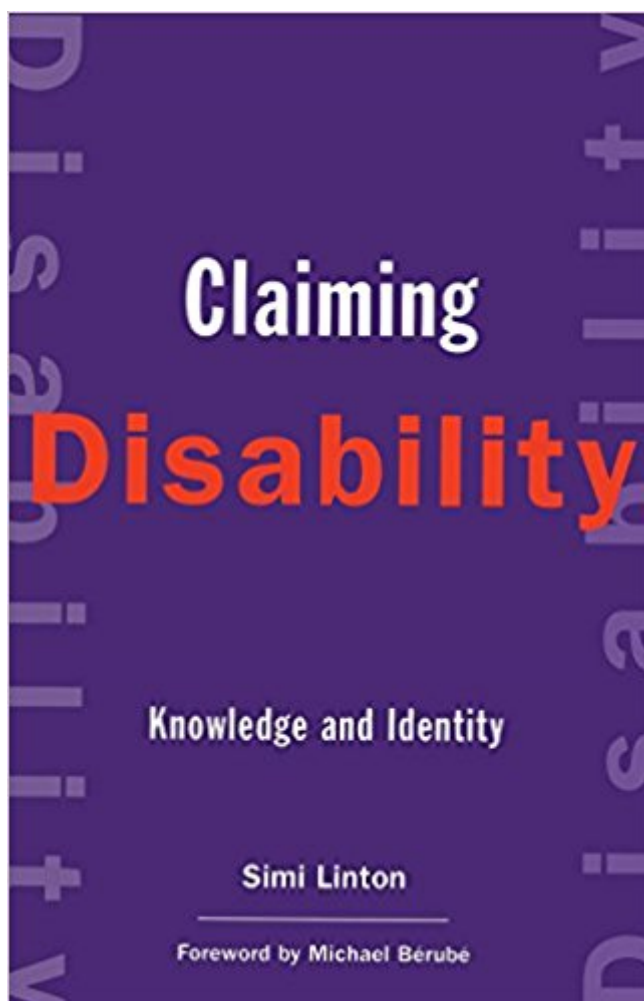


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# Claiming Disability: Knowledge And Identity (Cultural Front)



## Synopsis

From public transportation and education to adequate access to buildings, the social impact of disability has been felt everywhere since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. And a remarkable groundswell of activism and critical literature has followed in this wake. *Claiming Disability* is the first comprehensive examination of Disability Studies as a field of inquiry. Disability Studies is not simply about the variations that exist in human behavior, appearance, functioning, sensory acuity, and cognitive processing but the meaning we make of those variations. With vivid imagery and numerous examples, Simi Linton explores the divisions society creates—the normal versus the pathological, the competent citizen versus the ward of the state. Map and manifesto, *Claiming Disability* overturns medicalized versions of disability and establishes disabled people and their allies as the rightful claimants to this territory.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"*Claiming Disability* is the most comprehensive book in disability studies to come along yet. It wisely defines terms and concepts, linking them to and questioning the dominant issues in identity politics and multiculturalism, while mapping a direction for future study. A must read for anyone seriously thinking about the body and body politics in the postmodern era."-Lennard Davis, author of *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body*"Provides a broadened and enriched definition of disability, and its author unfolds a compelling way to evaluate Special Education."-Laurie R.

Lehman, Educators for Urban Minorities" Long overdue, *Claiming Disability* both carves out a new field of study, and introduces and educates readers to disability studies as a vibrant space of intellectual work. Linton weaves in and out of disciplines—queer studies, traditional educational psychology, literary criticism, critical legal studies—without a blink. Both precise and expansive, she declares and defines disability studies in ways that are systematic, theoretically engaging, and policy-relevant." -Michelle Fine, City University of New York

Simi Linton is Founder and President of Disability/Arts, an organization devoted to working with artists and cultural institutions to help shape the presentation of disability in the arts and to increase the representation of work by disabled artists. She is also Founder and Co-Director of the Disability Studies Project, a curriculum development project at Hunter College in New York.

An excellent introduction to the topic of disability studies, but not an advanced or meticulous one—readers should note its focus can veer rather specifically towards pedagogy. Although, pedagogy is an important topic in Disability Studies, especially insofar as it is a burgeoning field, the emphasis (especially in latter chapters) may be too much for some readers' interests. Furthermore, Linton's area of expertise (other than making disability studies "teachable") is psychology, and thus her work relies heavily on it and the other social sciences. She offers illuminating and relevant work in this respect, but her comments occasionally emphasize sociology and psychology, etc. to the point of excluding humanities approaches to disability studies. Nevertheless, I would certainly recommend *Claiming Disability* as an introduction to the field and a foundation to understand more about disability culture, activism, and academia.

I highly recommend Linton's work for all those who may, like myself find themselves pushing hard at the school doors of full inclusion in time and space. While a teacher may know the frustrations of not having others "get" why they are doing "it", that is inclusion, Linton's text provides a discursive analysis of those practices, frames and meanings we need to thoroughly engage if inclusion will ever succeed. Timeless, provocative and required reading.

Simi Linton is a must read.

I have to purchase it for my school. I required to take one more class before I graduate this coming May.

Claiming Disability: Making the Case for Inclusion In Alice's Restaurant, Arlo Guthrie archly reminded us that when you've got three people, you've got a movement. The disability rights movement has moved miles beyond the three-person requirement. There have been sit-ins, bus boycotts, rallies, and student strikes. Disability studies, by contrast, has been something of a stepchild of that movement and, until recently, has been largely without a coherent manifesto. Simi Linton has remedied that situation. In *Claiming Disability*, she carefully and concisely makes the case for the legitimacy of disability studies as an academic discipline. She identifies the core areas of inquiry and the domains of discourse to which disability studies should address itself, and she helps us to understand the important contributions that disability studies can make toward enriching and contextualizing our understanding and experience of disability and the disabled. In making the case for disability studies she draws parallels to black studies and women's studies to help us see the importance of empowering scholars to move beyond the narrow confines of the applied "fixit" fields of medicine, rehabilitation, remediation, and accommodation that she aptly characterizes as "not disability studies". Both in academia, and in that broader set of endeavors that we like to refer to as "the real world", Linton has important things to say about both our need to rethink disability and about the ways in which we can go about doing just that. The value of this slim volume goes beyond its important role as a powerful argument for the inclusion of disability studies in the liberal arts curriculum. Dr. Linton also provides us with a valuable tool for the analysis of disability as sociocultural phenomenon. By updating and expanding a taxonomy initially developed for the anthropological investigation of cross-cultural attitudes towards disability she has crafted a metric of considerable heuristic power. As any self-respecting 49er will quickly point out, staking a claim is only the first of many difficult steps toward finally reaping reward. Nevertheless, a foundation is being built, and *Claiming Disability* is both a tool and a benchmark. Its publication marks a coming of age for the disability rights movement and a seminal contribution to disability studies. Several recent books have advanced the cause of disability awareness (Joseph Shapiro's *No Pity* and John Hockenberry's *Moving Violations* come immediately to mind). With *Claiming Disability*, the nascent field of disability studies will be strengthened and advanced. You may have gathered by now, that I think that this is an important book. I believe that an increasingly sophisticated public awareness of disability issues and disability concerns is well served and will be furthered by *Claiming Disability*. Read it, talk about it, and pass it on! September 15, 1998

in the span of a course titled 'representing disability' i really found simi linton's work to be the most

comprehensive and inspiring literature that we covered. linton, in this text lies down not only the challenges facing the disability rights movement today, but also a road map for the future. mad props.

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