The background features a dark blue gradient with a subtle pattern of white dots. On the left side, there are several overlapping circular elements. A prominent one is a large circle with a scale around its perimeter, marked with numbers from 140 to 260 in increments of 10. Other circles are partially visible, some with dashed lines and arrows, suggesting a technical or scientific theme.

# ACCESSIBLE TEACHING: SOME PLACES TO START

DR. ROYCE BEST

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# ACCESS CHECK-IN

- I am hard-of-hearing. Thank you for your understanding and patience.
- Captions can be toggled with the CC button at the bottom of your Zoom window.
- This PowerPoint and the syllabus which I will be discussing are available upon request. If you would like to access these files now, please send Sandy a DM in the chat.
- If you would like the slides afterwards, please email me at [rbest5@jhu.edu](mailto:rbest5@jhu.edu)
- Of course, I am not able to do all things, but at this moment is there anything that I can do to make anyone feel more included or better accommodated?

THANK YOU TO JOHNS HOPKINS'S WRITING  
PROGRAM!



# HOW I BECAME INTERESTED IN ACCESSIBLE TEACHING...



# ABLEISM AND DISABLISM

- “Ableism” is a term that has seen increased usage in recent decades.
- However, I’ve noticed a trend with colleagues and students that when people use the word *ableism* they tend to actually mean *disablism*.
- *Disablism* is “a set of assumptions (conscious or unconscious) and practices that promote the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities” (Kumari Campbell)
- *Ableism*, by contrast, “instead of situating disability as bad and focusing on that stigma, *positively values able-bodiedness*” (Dolmage).

# THE DISTINCTION IS IMPORTANT FOR TWO REASONS

- Firstly, by differentiating the two terms we come to see that valuing able-bodiedness and/or assuming that others are able-bodied is much more pervasive than overt prejudice and discrimination against disabled people.

# THIS MEANS THAT OUR POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND ATTITUDES MAY BE FAR MORE ABLEIST THAN WE REALIZE

If your courses have attendance policies that automatically fail students after missing a certain number of classes...

you are sending an ableist message that your course is only meant for people who are able to physically attend and participate.

If readings for your courses are only available as scanned PDFs...

you are sending an ableist message that your course is only meant for people who can read from screens or afford to print.

◀ If you find yourself getting angry when a student falls asleep in your course...

you may be harboring an ableist attitude that your course is only meant for those with normal sleeping habits or who are otherwise fully rested.

# ABLEISM, MOREOVER, OFTEN CONTRIBUTES DIRECTLY TO DISABLISM

- Even though ableism is not the same as overt prejudice and discrimination of disabled people, it is disabled people who tend to be affected by ableism the most.
- A rigid attendance policy, for instance, may force an able-bodied student to substantially deviate from their everyday preferences, and this may have severe consequences.
- However, when a person is unable or unwilling to comply with a strict attendance policy because of their disability, making them do so not only increases the likelihood of severe consequences; it also compromises the student's human dignity.
- Thus, when we forward attitudes, policies, and practices that value able-bodiedness we are also often contributing to and affirming both ableism *and* disablism.
- But, what about accommodations?

# Accommodations

## Accommodations

Johns Hopkins University is committed to providing individuals with access to all university programs, activities, and facilities. This page outlines a number of resources to assist those with disabilities.

Please continue reading for information regarding accommodations for:

- [Students](#)
- [Faculty and Staff](#)
- [Guests and Visitors](#)

For all these groups, an accommodation is considered reasonable if it does not fundamentally alter the nature of the institution's programs and policies, and does not place undue hardship on the institution. Reasonable accommodations are distinguished from services of a personal nature (such as provision of wheelchairs, personal care assistance, etc.), which the university does not provide.

If you are a Hopkins entity in need of an ASL interpreter, captioning or transcription, please refer to: [List of Procurement approved resources for interpreting, transcribing and captioning.](#)



## Students with disabilities face discrimination on campus

By [MOLLY GAHAGEN](#) | October 28, 2021



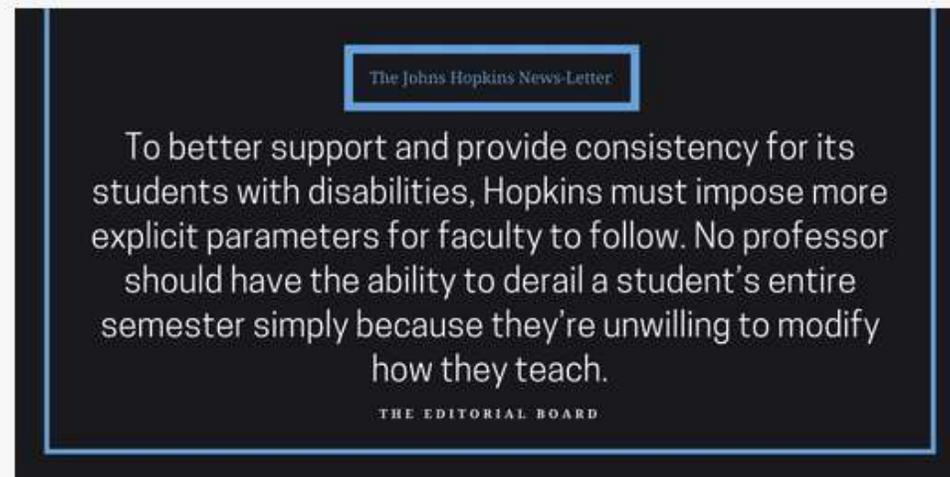
Students with disabilities at Hopkins have reported difficult experiences with Student Disability Services (SDS) and a campus culture that is not always inclusive. [Providing services](#) like assistive technology, mentoring services, and accommodation letters that are shared with instructors.

### Foundational issues with accommodations

Senior Caroline Cerilli defined two categories where issues with accommodations for students with disabilities.

## Students with disabilities deserve more from Hopkins.

By [THE EDITORIAL BOARD](#) | October 28, 2021



If you take the [University's word for it](#), Hopkins is a beacon of inclusivity. Alongside stunning views of campus, pictures meant to exemplify diversity feature prominently in the University's promotional materials. This image is too rosy. The environment surrounding disability on campus exemplifies this inconsistency.

The University is responsible for providing students and faculty with disabilities ["an inclusive and accommodating environment."](#) However, students with disabilities have reported [many problems](#) when dealing with Student Disability Services (SDS). The office, intended to be a resource for students with disabilities, often falls short of that promise.

## City when it fails

### EDITOR'S PICKS

Who calls the shots at Hopkins?

The NFL needs to take Rodgers' disregard for COVID-19 protocol seriously

How I reclaimed my sanity with H2O: Just Add Water, 24 minutes at a time

HYPER-Melt develops new technology for ovarian cancer screening

Faculty and students question the University's leadership and transparency regarding finances

Athlete of the Week: Max Chen — Men's Swimming

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### NEWS-LETTER SPECIAL EDITIONS



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MOREOVER, EVEN WHEN STUDENTS DO GET THEIR ACCOMMODATIONS APPROVED AND PUT IN PLACE, THEY DO NOT ALWAYS WORK.

And when this happens, students often report feelings of embarrassment, shame, and confusion about what to do.

# AS TEACHERS, FOCUSING ON ACCESS IS OUR BEST MEANS OF COMBATTING ABLEISM

- Access is “the power, opportunity, permission, or right to come near or into contact with someone or something” (Williamson).
- A focus on access, therefore, “is a shift away from attempts to fix or cure disability on an individual level and toward an emphasis on social or legal interventions. Access implies social potential not dependent on correcting the disabled body, but instead made possible through institutional and material change” (Williamson).
- Thus, the first thing that we teachers can do to assist students is to ensure that our own policies, practices, and attitudes are as accessible as possible in the first place.

# OUR POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND ATTITUDES ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TREAT STUDENTS HUMANELY

- “I would rather be treated humanely and have my accommodations not end up working than be treated like a bureaucratic problem where I’m actually accommodated”—anonymous student member of Advocates for Disability Awareness
- This student is describing what Mia Mingus has termed “access intimacy.”
- Access intimacy is “that elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else ‘gets’ your access needs [...] access intimacy is also the intimacy I feel with many other disabled and sick people who have an automatic understanding of access needs out of our shared similar lived experience of the many different ways ableism manifests in our lives.”
- These moments of connection are often hard to come by for students. Adjusting our practices to communicate that we value accessibility can help make them more commonplace.
- Therefore, when we strive to be more accessible, it is important to stress that access is more than just logistics: access is an invitation for a human interaction.
- Let’s take a look at the email I sent my class two-and-a-half weeks before classes began this semester...

Dear Class,

Welcome to Expository Writing: "Shakespeare's *Richard III* and Disability!" I am very excited to meet all of you and begin our exploration of academic writing through one of William Shakespeare's most fascinating plays.

While our first class will be held at 12:00 noon on Monday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, I wanted to write you all ahead of time to say hello and make sure that we are addressing accessibility as early as possible. Therefore, I will be describing the format that the syllabus and readings will take as well as what I know about our classroom in this email. If you require an alternative format to what I am describing, please let me know so that we can work something out.

Our class syllabus is a Word document that I will send about a week before our first day of class.

There is one required text for this class: William Shakespeare's *Richard III*. I recommend the Pelican edition (Penguin Books) of the play for this class, which is ISBN 978-0-14-313025-0. It is available from most online bookstores. Other readings will be posted as PDFs to Blackboard.

The course will also feature two film screenings. I will book a room ahead of time and show the film on a projector with closed-captions on. The films will also be available for streaming through the library website (more about that later).

Our class is currently being held in Krieger 170. The room is one level down from Keyser Quad and (I think) one level up from Wyman Quad. There are ramps into the building from both quads, and an elevator on the Keyser side. The room has a bunch of small desks on wheels and pretty good acoustics.

Krieger should be open during normal business hours, so try to check it out before class begins if you can. Do remember to wear a mask and bring your JHED card, though, given the recent mandate.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me with questions or concerns. I will, however, be on vacation from tomorrow until Wednesday of next week, so I may not respond to emails until then.

I am very much looking forward to meeting you all soon. I hope that you continue to have relaxing and productive summers.

# FOR ANOTHER EXAMPLE, HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR SYLLABI MORE ACCESSIBLE

- Disability should be included in your syllabi, regardless of the course (and not just as a special topics day/week).
- Strive to complete your syllabus and post it electronically, along with assigned readings, well in advance of term.  
This allows students who need to adapt these materials ample time to do so.
- If you distribute your syllabus on the first day, provide 16 pt. and 12 pt. copies.
- Consider including information about counseling and other student services.

# ACCESS STATEMENTS

- Put accessibility statements on your syllabi and read them aloud to students on the first day of class.
- Location is crucial. Moving your accessibility statement away from the bottom, where plagiarism and penalties are also exiled, communicates what you value as an instructor.
- Disability statements in syllabi often put the onus solely on the student and frame disability as a problem. To address this issue, choose language that reflects the university's mission and your own pedagogical commitment to accessible education.
- Remember that students do not always have the accommodations in place that they need when they start your class. Leave room in your statement for students to speak with you about their wider access needs and experiences.
- Let's take a look at my current Expos syllabus...

# SOME GUIDELINES FOR MAKING YOUR CLASSROOM (MORE) ACCESSIBLE (FROM WAGGONER ET AL.)

- Reach out to students when you receive an accommodation request
- Multiform everything
- Develop alternative participation strategies
- Redefine classroom expectations
- Accommodate technology
- Think private, not public – on disclosure
- Allow enough time to accommodate changes
- Model interdependence
- Understand that you will not be able to fully meet every student's style and needs

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