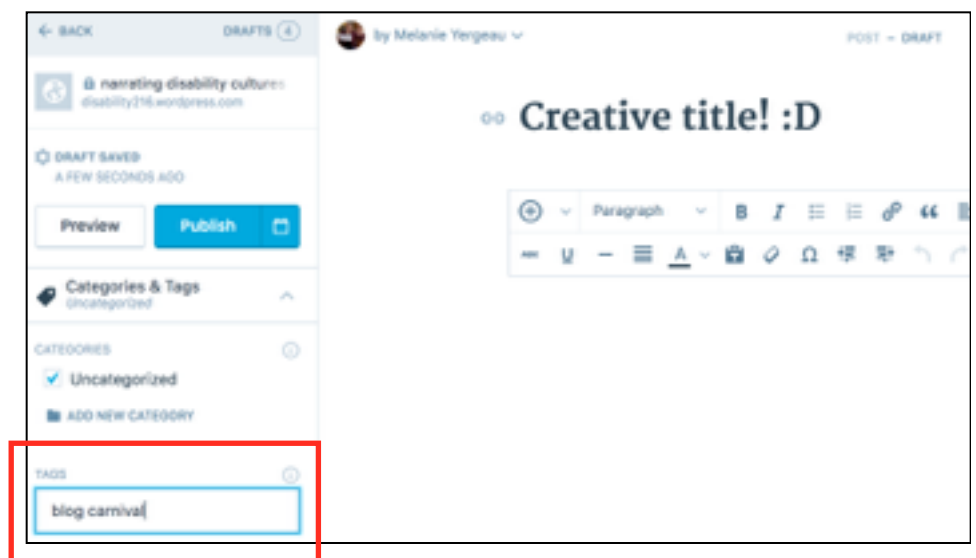# disability blog carnival

750-1000 words + visual map // 20%

A blog carnival involves writing short analyses of several blog entries pertaining to a shared theme, and we'll be doing just that. For this assignment, you will need to choose a theme related to disability – perhaps intersecting identities, or media representations, or in/visibility, or education, or human rights abuses, or parenting, or – the potential themes and topics are endless, really. Once you've chosen a theme, you'll need to find **6 to 8 blog entries** (preferably written by at least 4 different authors) that somehow connect to your theme.

You can choose whichever blog entries you'd like to analyze, no matter how long or short—but if you're not sure where to start, check out the blog resource links on Canvas. Your task will be to summarize each entry very briefly (read: no more than a couple sentences) and then show us how these entries relate to your theme. In a word, what you'll be writing here is a **synthesis**, which is a kind of analysis that explores how different texts of given theme or topic interrelate. That is, your job is to take us through the meaty parts of these blog entries and share with us your own analysis of this topic. So, you should examine not only what the bloggers themselves are saying, but how those bloggers' claims impact, connect, or depart from the larger argument you wish to make about your theme. As you work on this project, you may choose to write your analysis separate from your summaries (e.g., as an introductory or concluding section that ties everything together), or you may choose to organize your paper around individual blog posts/bloggers.

We'll devote class time on 2/13 and 2/15 to this project, discussing your findings as well as blog-related issues. You'll submit your final blog carnival as post to our class blog. Please give your blog carnival a creative title and **tag your blog post with the phrase *blog carnival*.** This will help us to sort between blog carnival assignments vs. reading responses more easily.

Finally, you'll also include one more piece in your carnival project: a **visual map** that represents what you've learned about this topic, as well as **a brief description** of your visual representation. Be creative! You can use PowerPoint or Photoshop, or even create a collage or drawing. I'll share some sample maps with you in the coming class periods. (Please note: Even though you will be posting this assignment to your blog, this project does *not* count toward your regular blog post assignments.)

Important dates

- **Monday, 2/13:** Summaries/URLs of 5-6 blog entries due by class (bring digital copy)
- **Wednesday, 2/15:** Summaries/URLs of 5-6 blog entries due by class (bring digital copy)
- **Wednesday, 2/22:** Final blog carnival due on your personal blog by class time. We are not meeting during this class period, as I will be away at a conference. I will, however, be reading your posts from afar, and I'd like you to use our class time to comment on at least three of your peers' blog carnivals.

Map resources

- Wordle (word cloud generator): http://www.wordle.net/create
- Creative Commons (fair-use images): http://creativecommons.org/
- Strip generator (comic panels): http://stripgenerator.com/
- GraphJam (graph/chart generator): http://memebase.cheezburger.com/graphjam

Criteria for evaluation

- Evidence of critical thinking. In other words, your ability to make strong claims about how certain aspects of the texts function. Remember that a claim is not *just* a summary of plot or of a blogger's intention; a claim stems from an idea you have about how these texts "work."

- Development of a specific analytical thesis. A thesis should not be a restating of the events of the texts, or the bloggers' reasons for making it, nor should it present an obvious claim. A thesis should fit within a few sentences. In the case of a blog carnival, a thesis might not occur until the latter half of the essay.

- How well are your claims supported? Is your evidence selective and coherent, or random and unconnected? Does it progress logically and smoothly with appropriate transitions that indicate connections between ideas? Are you using course concepts to support your claims?

- Is the writing persuasive and engaging? Does it make use of analytical language? Avoid non-analytical language, such as good, bad, agree/disagree, for example. This can be more difficult to accomplish in a blog carnival because you will be examining opinionated pieces. Instead of merely dis/agreeing, think across *all* of your chosen blog posts. What do they seem to be articulating, as a coherent unit? Where are you noticing gaps? How might something we've read or discussed in class provide a lens for interpreting these blogs posts or your chosen theme?

- Does your carnival essay "open up" your subject? Does it complicate an audience's understanding of disability and your theme?

- Overall attention to the form of the carnival essay, including the skill of the introduction and conclusion.

- Your essay should make appropriate use of sentence structure, word choice, grammar, spelling, and punctuation that enables rather than hinders clear and effective communication.