

We Are All Disabled Now: Towards a Crippled Pedagogical Future



Dr. Jennifer M. Gagnon

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Prepared for the Vantage College Speakers Series

What Has Been one of Your Biggest Challenges as an Educator during the COVID-19 Pandemic?



UBC continues to hold in-person classes during COVID-19 outbreak, calls for calm

Written by Emma Livingstone and Henry Anderson

March 11, 2020

7 min read · COVID-19

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Shortly after the World Health Organization (WHO) officially [declared the novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) a global pandemic](#) earlier today, UBC has decided to keep classes on campus but prepare contingency plans in case Canadian health authorities recommend halting large public gatherings.

Some universities in the [United States](#) such as [University of Washington](#), [Harvard](#) and [Columbia](#) are moving courses online. In Canada, [University Canada West](#) in BC and [Laurentian University](#) in Ontario have moved courses online as a precaution. The coronavirus has also impacted university travel and events. UBC



Right now there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among any UBC students, staff or faculty members. *File Shamit Rahman*

UBC faculty and staff prepare contingency plans for COVID-19 outbreak

At 5:27pm PDT a UBC Broadcast Email announced that all teaching would transition online by Monday March 16

Written by Emma Livingstone and Henry Anderson

March 13, 2020

8 min read · COVID-19

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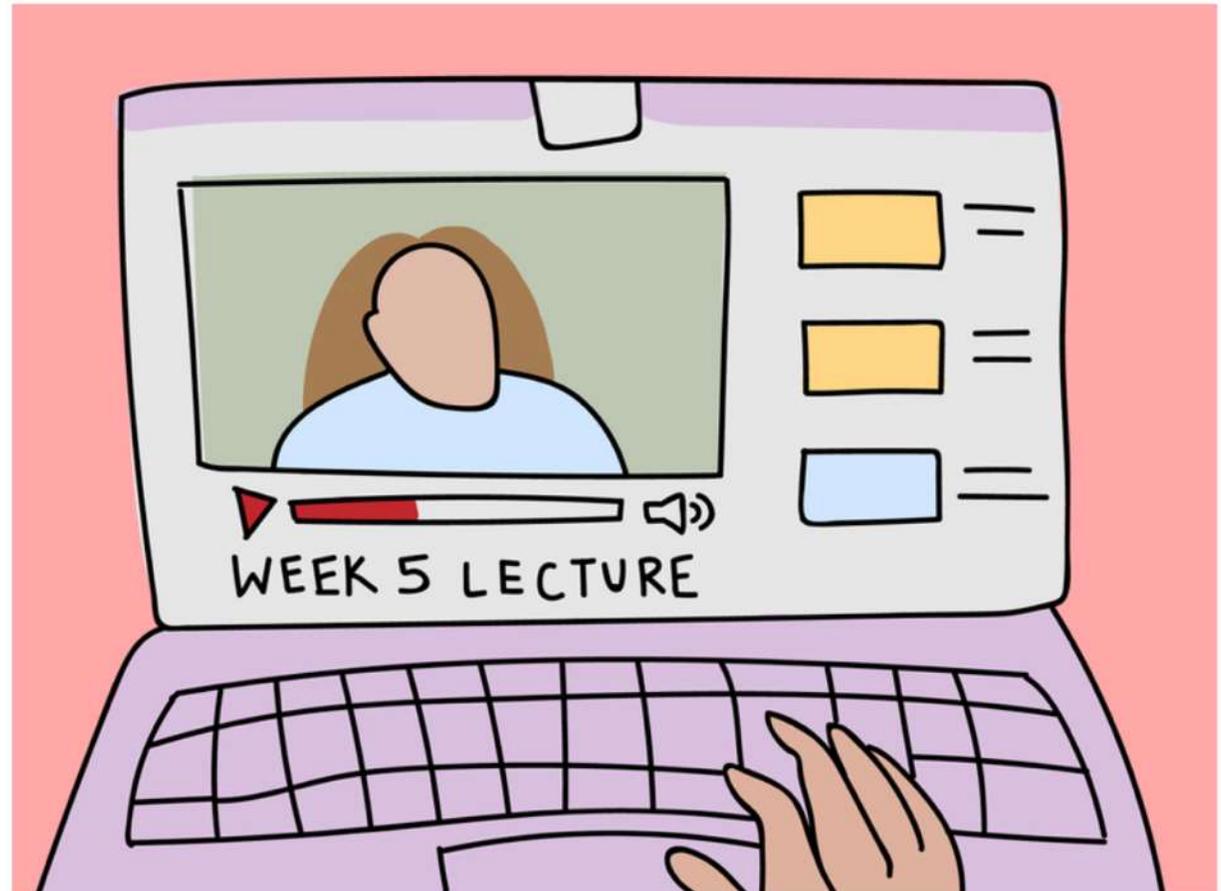
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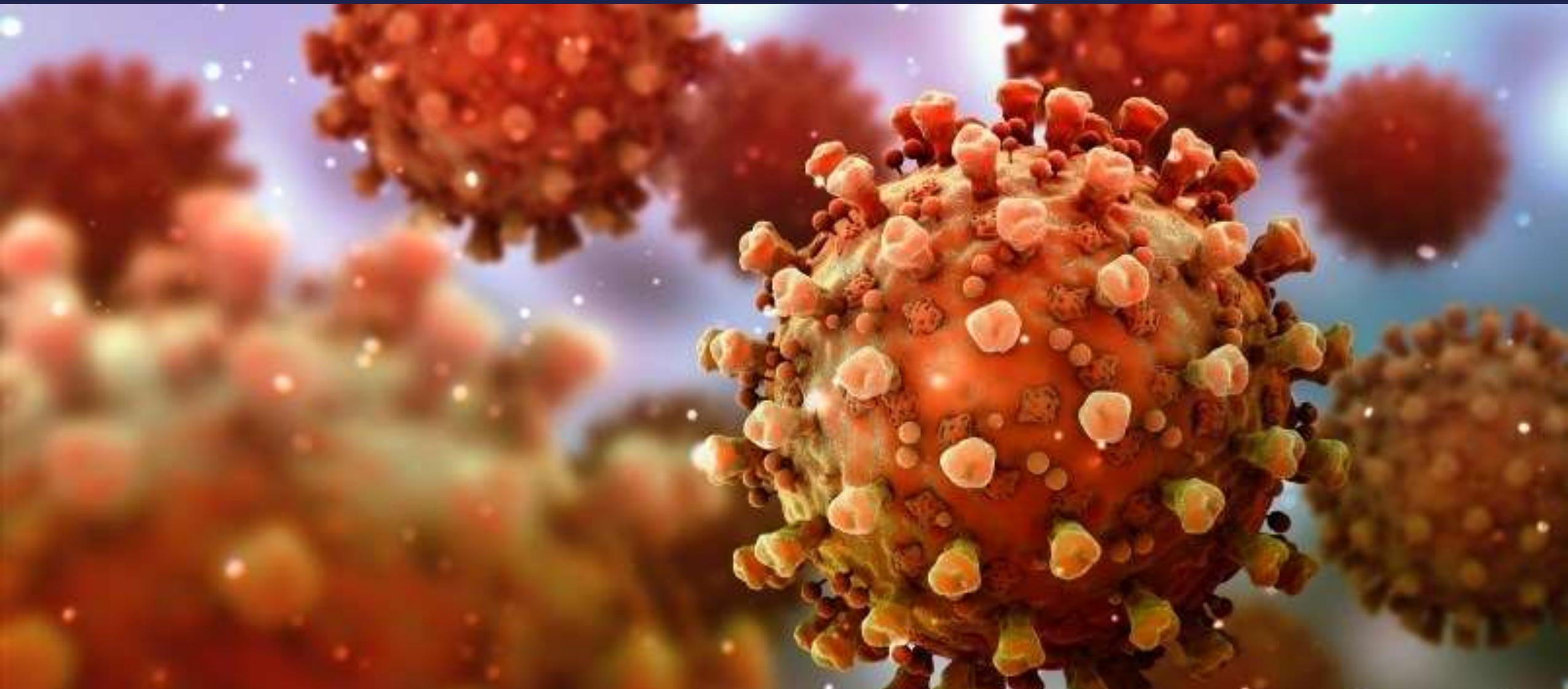
Unlike major Canadian schools like the [University of Toronto](#) and [McGill](#), UBC and other public universities in BC have yet to suspend all in-person courses to prevent the spread of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

The decision stems from recommendations from the BC Health Ministry and Provincial Public Health Official Dr. Bonnie Henry, who has maintained that risk in BC remains low and the public should remain calm.

“Our schools and our workplaces are operating safely, and we want to keep it that way,” said Henry and BC Minister of Health Adrian Dix in a [joint statement released on March 11](#).



The Day Everything Changed



We Are All Disabled Now

“it is society which disables physically impaired people.”

(Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation UPIAS)

How society reacts to and perceives impairments is the source of dis-abling, and which leads to the creation of disability as a social category.

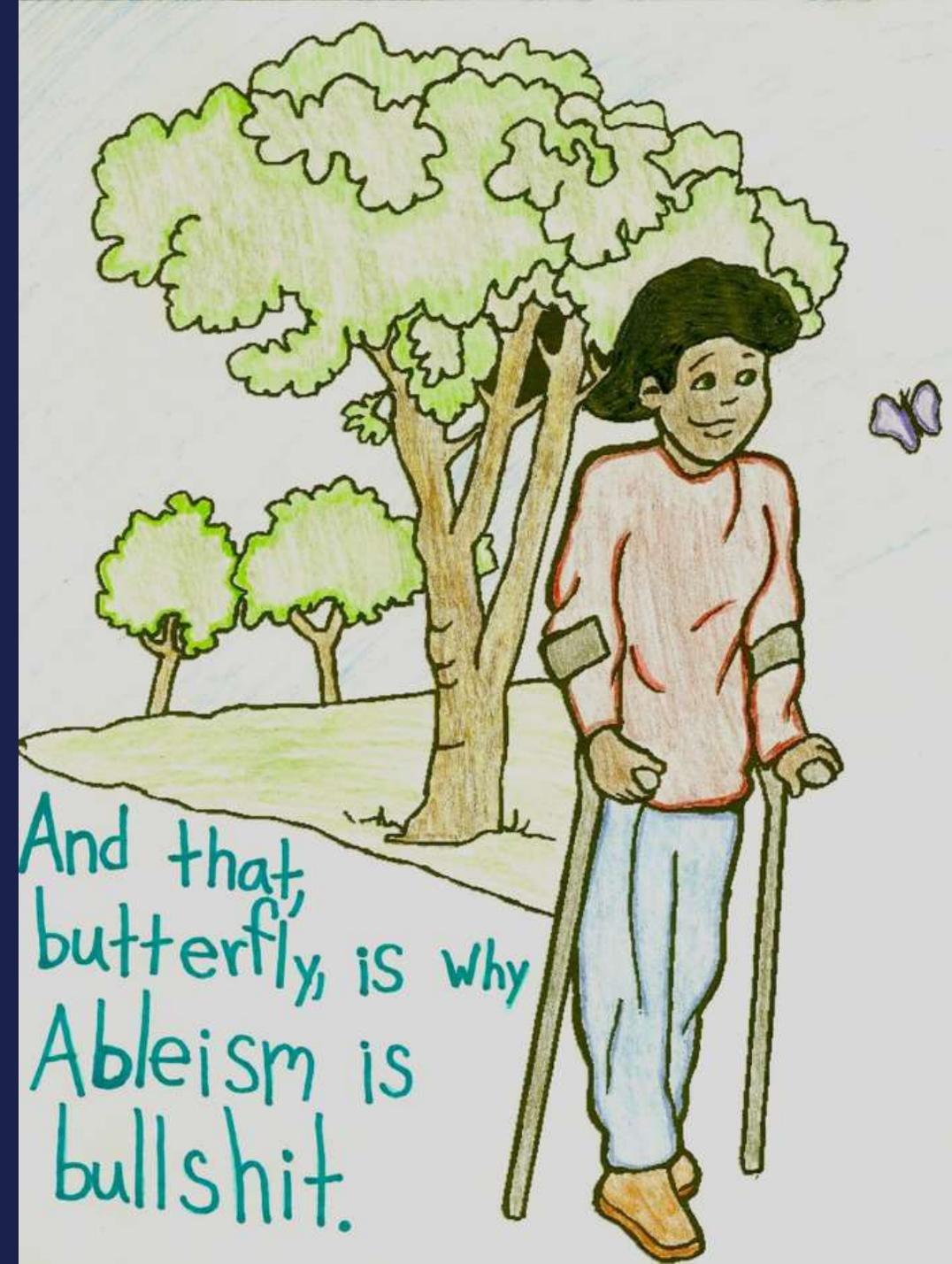




- “You aren’t disabled! You’re a professor! You couldn’t do that if you were really disabled!”
- “Your workload seems really high – You know that doesn’t seem to be supported by your medical documentation that says your impairments are ‘severe?’”
- “It can’t be that bad. You clearly aren’t impaired.”
- “No one likes a complainer”
- “That’s no excuse! At least you...”

Ableism

- Ableism believes that when there's something "wrong" with a body/mind, the only desirable outcome to that wrongness is "cure." It also believes that you can either be fixed or broken—there's nothing in between. Ableism believes that there is nothing valuable in inhabiting a body/mind that's disabled.
- Academia with its fixation on the myth of meritocracy is profoundly an ableist culture that makes the ivory tower inaccessible



The Impossibility of Crippling the University



Disabled folks represent 1 in 4 people in Canada

At UBC, 25% of all Undergraduate Students have a disability

BUT, only 3.7% of all faculty and staff at UBC identify as having a disability

COVID-19 Has
Made Education
MORE
Accessible and
Inclusive, not
less



Justice means

a Disability

Centered

response to

COVID-19

Sins Invalid



Crip Time:
An
Accessible
and
Flexible
Pedagogy

Centering Disability and Disabled Educators Enhances Learning for Everyone

- Leading and Teaching with empathy
- Centre Care and Support
- Creative solutions and new ways of doing
- Awareness and Experience navigating intersections and barriers
 - Strong advocates
 - Resilience and Perseverance





Key Questions

- What if we don't actually want to go back to "Normal" because "Normal" is ableist?
- How do we hold onto the Accessibility and Inclusion ground we have won?
- What would it mean to centre disability in our pedagogy?

An Opportunity Not to Be Missed

- Gratitude and joy that education and work culture are now accessible and inclusive for disabled bodies, but also anger, bitterness, and frustration because we are now enjoying “accommodations” that were long sought and denied as being “not feasible.”
- Fear that we will lose this access and visibility when we return to in person work.
- This is an opportunity to radically shift and rethink what education and work look like – let’s not miss this opportunity!





Won't
solve all of
our
problems!





Social Justice
Accessibility
Inclusion
Intersectionality
Visibility

Thank you!

**Any Questions?
Please feel free to chat with me or send me
an email:**

Jennifer.Gagnon@ubc.ca

**You can register for the Disability Affinity
Group either by contacting me directly or
at:**

disability.affinity@equity.ubc.ca

If you heard barking in the background, this is Ziggy! ->

