

2025-26 Jessie Alpaugh Senior Prize in Disability Studies

The Jessie Alpaugh Senior Prize in Disability Studies was established to recognize annually one or two graduating seniors who are enrolled in the UCLA Disability Studies major or minor and have developed an outstanding capstone project that contributes to emerging scholarship in the field and captures their intellectual passion.

The prize is named in honor of Jessie Charlotte Blackmar Alpaugh, an art history major at UC Berkeley who, during the last summer before her sudden death in 2002, worked at UCLA on an independent studies project that contributed to the foundation of UCLA's Disability Studies minor. At the age of 16, Jessie had suffered a catastrophic series of neurological illnesses that left her a quadriplegic with severe speech, hearing, and visual impairments. Despite these challenges, Jessie thrived intellectually and was admitted to UC Berkeley in 1999 as a Chancellor's Scholar. There she found a vibrant group of scholars who were engaged in developing the interdisciplinary field of disability studies. The disability world was never a "club" that Jessie wished to join—the illness that had threatened her life and left her severely disabled deeply saddened her. However, through disability studies she discovered an amazing academic community that simultaneously challenged her mind, respected her experience, and sparked in her a sustaining passion and purpose.

Jessie would be extraordinarily proud of the UCLA Disability Studies program and would be humbled to learn about the senior prize awarded in her name.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Amount:

\$6,225 (one or two awards)

Eligibility:

- Graduating senior enrolled in the Disability Studies major or minor (Fall 2025, Winter 2026, Spring 2026, and Summer 2026)
- Completed or in progress to complete the capstone requirement
 - Capstone courses are either DS 191 or DS 198/199A and 198/199B

Application Instructions:

1. In a single PDF document, include the following three items:

a) Cover page with the following information:

- Full Name
- Student ID Number
- Enrolled in DIS STD 191, DIS STD 199B or DIS STD 198B
- Please list your 191 instructor or Faculty mentor for 199B or 198B

- Internship Site

b) 500 words, 2 pages double-spaced max Capstone project abstract which must include the following points:

- **Working title**
- **Research Question or Central Focus:**
 - Should address the project's concrete objective(s) and/or specific aim(s).
- **Background and Rationale:**
 - Should address the context for your project's question/focus, the current state of research or work in this area, and the gap your project seeks to address.
- **Methodology or Approach:**
 - Should address what methods (qualitative and/or quantitative) you used to address your project's research question/central focus and assess the outcomes and/or impact of your project.
- **Preliminary Findings or Anticipated Outcomes:**
 - Should address the project's outcomes, whether preliminary and/or anticipated.
- **Impact/Contribution:**
 - Should address the significance of your work and how it advances progress in the field of disability studies.

c) 1-page, double-spaced response to the following prompt:

- Disability Studies scholars understand 'disability' as a social construction and a dominant lens through which we can understand difference in the world. How has disability studies shaped your perspective of difference? How is your capstone project related to your aspirations and how does it contribute to viable action to advance a just society?

Save the PDF in the following format:

- LastName_FirstName_Application.pdf

Ex: Frenk_Julio_Application.pdf

2. Obtain a copy of your unofficial transcript and save it in the following format:

- LastName_FirstName_Transcript.pdf

Ex: Frenk_Julio_Transcript.pdf

3. Email both files to the Jessie Alpaugh Senior Prize Committee at 2026.95xnpff9b2gfshnn@u.box.com. Your application materials will be automatically uploaded to a drive once they are received. Please do not send emails or inquires to this folder; they will not be received, and we will be unable to respond to them.

4. You will receive a confirmation email for each file when your application materials have been successfully uploaded.

Application Deadline:

Monday, May 4, 2026 at 11:59pm

The 2025 JA Senior Prize recipients will be announced during spring quarter. Winners will also be featured on the Disability Studies website (www.disabilitystudies.ucla.edu) and recognized at the Disability Studies Graduation on Saturday, June 13, 2026.