



**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
of the Faculty of Letters**

together with

**THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE, MUSIC AND FINE ARTS  
of the Faculty of Arts  
of "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați**

Invites you to

**INVISIBLE DISABILITIES**

**SECOND EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP**

**"NOT DISABLED. JUST DIFFERENTLY-ABLED"**

**26 -27 November, 2024**



*Silent struggles hide,  
Beneath smiles, unseen battles,  
Strength in shadows thrives.*

*Mind's storm, silent cries,  
Healing paths through shadows tread,  
Hope's light softly shines.*

We live in an increasingly *alienated* and *alienating* world where we put ourselves at safety from prying eyes or intrusive questions. Most often than not, we consciously choose to get lost in a vertiginous maze, the routine of what we call life and we get entrapped in *im-personal stories* of ourselves that we choose to mediate on social media channels, rarely ever minding the *other*.

We grow to think that our *normality* is the other's *normality*; we expect to share similar stories and feelings, when, in fact, little do we know about the strife or personal struggles some people, *other* people, have to overcome every day, and little do we guess about their *ab-normality* until they become *in-visible* to the whole world.

Do we consciously throw them behind this curtain of opaque invisibility? Do we instinctively keep our eyes wide shut? Or do they willingly make themselves invisible by, strangely enough, placing themselves out in the open?

The Little Prince says that "it is only with the heart that one can see rightly: what is essential is invisible to the eye". Does this mean that in our entitlement to compare *our* stories to *their* stories, in our set expectations to recognize the familiarity of our own projections, we fail to even notice the essential truth about their story or really hear a silent cry for help?

Disability is not a disease and yet, people with disabilities will often fail to feel *at ease* in their own shoes, feeling more *dis-eased* rather than disabled either by personal choice or by social behaviour. This is why, raising awareness about *invisible disabilities* is crucial for fostering understanding, empathy, and support within our communities.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for those with disabilities is not the fact that their shoes are too tight, but rather the lack of understanding or validation we, as the other, fail to show or give, forcing them, yet again, to live a life of skepticism and disbelief (neither of which belongs to them but to us), pushing them ever farther away behind the invisible curtain of isolation, frustration and reluctance to reach out ever again!

It is our belief that, living in the times that we do, raising awareness about invisible disabilities is essential for creating a more inclusive and supportive society on a small scale and world on a large scale! It is our belief that through education and by learning about the various types of invisible disabilities and their effects, we can develop a greater understanding and empathy for those who live a life of *in-visibility*.

Let this second edition of the **INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP** on disability become an awareness campaign that will eventually help dispel

myths and misconceptions about **INVISIBLE DISABILITIES**, reduce stigma and encourage more people to seek help. And let us all remember and learn of the talent, determination and unique perspectives of the people whose stories have enriched the world and served as inspiration to many.

In so doing, future participants are invited to announce their intention to take part in the event with presentations that explore the cultural and social multiplicity of *invisible disability*.

Possible papers and/or presentations associated with the topic may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **sight impairment;**
- **hearing impairment;**
- **physical disabilities** (limitations on a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina);
- **mental disabilities** (anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, mood disorders, trauma and stressor-related disorders, neuro-developmental disorders, substance related and addictive disorder);
- **cognitive disabilities** (intellectual disability; autism spectrum disorders; severe, persistent mental illness; brain injury; stroke; Alzheimer's disease and other dementias);
- **inclusion, dialogue and prospective change.**

The ultimate aim of the **WORKSHOP** is to bring together academics and specialists in the field of disability, students and/ or parents whose children deal with some sort of disability so that awareness is raised, expectations become grounded in reality and social stereotyping is overcome. Send a **250-word abstract**, **5 keywords** and a **100-word bio** to the workshop organizer, to Lidia Mihaela Necula, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, at [lidia.necula@ugal.ro](mailto:lidia.necula@ugal.ro) by September 30, 2024.