

Belonging in a Diverse Society (Psych 11N)

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| Instructor: | Greg Walton Building 420, Room 244 Phone: 650-498-4284 Email: gwalton@stanford.edu Pronouns: He/him |
| Website/Forum: | On Canvas |
| Class Meets: | Monday/Wednesday 1:30-3:00, in Building 50-52H |
| Office Hours: | By appointment. |
| Class Size: | Limited to 16, with preference to first-year students. |
| Ways Certification: | Social Inquiry |

Welcome!

One of the most important questions people ask themselves when they enter a new setting, whether a school, a workplace, or a country, is “Do I belong here?”.

This question of belonging can be particularly potent when settings are diverse—when people come to a setting from diverse backgrounds; when some groups have historically been excluded from that setting or face negative stereotypes or underrepresentation in it; or when people have different implicit cultural models that clash with a dominant context.

The fundamental question we will ask in this course is this: *How can we create diverse school, work, and other settings in which all people can genuinely and authentically belong and work toward their goals?*

In this course, we will:

- Consider the roles of group identities and social backgrounds, including race-ethnicity, social class, gender, and national origin;
- Focus on how people make sense of their belonging, especially when belonging is at risk;
- Consider the consequences of feelings of belonging, and nonbelonging, for individual and institutional outcomes;
- Learn what changes can support belonging for diverse groups.

To do so, we will learn from diverse methodologies, including qualitative methods and laboratory experiments. However, we will focus on intervention field-experiments, so we can learn what kinds of changes can matter in consequential real-world settings.

In learning about this research, you will discover more about basic psychological processes, how basic research helps clarify these processes, how they contribute in complex field settings to social problems, and how they can be altered.

Land

I recognize that Stanford sits on the ancestral land of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. This land is of great importance to the Ohlone people, and has been since time immemorial. Consistent with our

values of community and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge, honor and make visible the university's relationship to Native peoples.

Ways You Will Learn

Course Readings and Discussion

Reading, analyzing, and discussing readings are a key way you will learn. Everyone is expected to carefully read the assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss them.

All materials will be posted on Canvas.

Discussion

Because learning from each other is essential in this course, you will earn a participation grade for your contributions to class discussions.

Reflections

You will be asked to complete a 5-page reflection (~1250 words max) at four points in the class. In all these assignments, the depth and precision of your psychological analysis is key.

Reflection #1: Another Student's Experience of Belonging at Stanford

Find one student at Stanford willing to talk with you about their experience of belonging at Stanford. If the first person you talk with does not share sufficiently, please feel free to talk with another student. This person should be a sophomore, junior, or senior.

Tell your conversation partner that you'd like to talk with them about their experiences of belonging coming (perhaps virtually) to and attending Stanford, including experiences with peers, instructors, and others, in residences, classrooms, or other. Emphasize that the experiences they describe need not be objectively "large," but must have meant something important to them. Ask for "moments" and "stories." Then ask them these four questions (feel free to send these questions in advance):

- *What was a time or experience in which you felt you really belonged at Stanford? What was this time? What happened? What did it mean to you? Why did you feel like you really belonged?*
- *What was a time or experience in which you felt that maybe you did not belong at Stanford? What was this time? What happened? What did it mean to you? Why did you feel like maybe you did not belong?*
- *How has your experience of belonging at Stanford changed over time, from when you began at Stanford through the present.*
- Ask any additional follow-up questions if needed.

Be sure to take notes or record (with your interviewee's permission) the interview. Also, ask your interviewee if they would like to remain anonymous (i.e., you know their name but won't share it out).

Write up what your interviewee told you. Describe their experiences, how they understood them, what you learned from talking with them, and what more you would like to learn. *As you do so,*

consider the readings, and our course discussions, as these may serve as tools to help you understand and analyze your interviewees' experience. Make sure that you explicitly connect your interviewee's experience to the readings and themes in the class.

Due **Oct 1 at 5 pm** through Canvas

Reflection #2: A Person Who Shapes Students' Experiences at Stanford

Find a person in a position to shape students' experience at Stanford, ideally someone in a context that you think is important, that matters to you.

Although older students often play this role (e.g., RAs, leaders of student groups, etc.), for this assignment please talk with a non-undergraduate. This person could be an instructor (TA, professor), an administrator (e.g., leader of a relevant program), or a less obvious member of the Stanford community but someone who nonetheless plays an important role, such as member of the janitorial team or a dining hall staff member (see this lovely story:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/14/us/lsu-fraternity-cook-mortgage.html>).

Ask this person:

- *Describe your job and how it relates to students' experience at Stanford.*
- *How do you define belonging at Stanford for you?*
- *What challenges to belonging do you experience at Stanford or do you think that others in roles like yours experience?*
- *What challenges to belonging do you think students at Stanford experience?*
- *How do you try to support students' sense of belonging at Stanford?*
- *What obstacles or challenges do you face in trying to support students' sense of belonging?*
- *What have you learned about supporting belonging, that you wish you had known when you began your position?*
- Ask any additional follow-up questions if needed.

Be sure to take notes or record (with your interviewee's permission) the interview.

Write up what your interviewee told you. Describe why you chose the person you talked to, including why you think they are in a position to shape students' experience of belonging at Stanford, as well as their experience, how they understood it, what you learned from talking with them, what more you'd like to learn. *As you do so, consider the readings, and our course discussions, as these may serve as tools to help you understand and analyze your interviewees' experience. Make sure that you explicitly connect your interviewee's experience to the readings and themes in the class.*

Due **October 15 at 5 pm** through Canvas

Reflection #3: Analyzing a Cultural Product

Because the need to belong is so central to people, we can find narratives about belonging in all sorts of place. Sometimes the narrative is more explicit sometimes it is more implicit. For Reflection #3, your task is to pick a narrative that raises and discusses themes of belonging.

This narrative should not be a full movie or novel. I encourage you to pick a picture book or other book for kids (e.g., graphic novel), a short film, or a brief section of a longer piece. Here are some ideas to get you started. You can choose one of these (if you don't know them, google them) or pick something else:

- *The Berenstain Bears Go to School* by Stan and Jan Berenstain
- *New Kid* by Jerry Craft
- *First Day Jitters* by Julie Danneberg
- *Eight Mile* (the opening “choke”)
- *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* by Paul Goble
- *Apple Doll* by Elisa Kleven
- *Measuring Up* by Lily LaMotte
- *Purl* by Pixar (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6uuIHpFkuo>)
- *Curious George's First Day of School* by H. A. Rey
- *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Tom Goes to Kindergarten* by Margaret Wild
- *The Pigeon HAS to Go to School!* by Moe Willems
- <https://belongingbeginswithus.org/>

In your response, address: How does this narrative represent belonging? How is belonging defined or experienced? Does it change over time? If so, how? What threatens belonging and why? What are the consequences of belonging or a lack of belonging for a relevant character or a group or community as a whole?

Also address: Who is the target audience of this narrative? What does this narrative convey about belonging to this audience? Is that message psychologically helpful or not? If so, how? If not, why not and how could it be improved?

In your response, explicitly consider and cite course readings. Make sure to discuss how they connect to and potentially inform your analysis of the narrative.

Due **October 29 at 5 pm** through Canvas

Reflection #4: How can Stanford better support students' sense of belonging on campus?

Drawing on the psychological literature we have covered in this class and/or additional scholarly material, on Reflections #1 and 2, and on your own and peers' experiences, please describe:

- A population of students, an experience, or a context in which you think students question their belonging at Stanford.
- Why and how students question their belonging in this context.
- The consequences of this problem of belonging for students and Stanford.
- What Stanford does well to address this problem of belonging.
- What Stanford could do better to address this problem of belonging effectively.
- How you think this could help students thrive.

Important: Your intervention should be precisely psychological. It should directly address how people think or feel (make sense of or “construe”) something. You want to identify a circumstance in which people, or some group of people, reasonably make sense of something in ways that will threaten their belonging at Stanford. Then develop and describe a way to prevent that construal, to offer people an alternative and legitimate way of making sense of that thing that will help support their belonging. So, it should not be a kitchen-sink program. But it might be a new way to welcome people to Stanford, or to represent courses or other experiences at Stanford.

In describing this, you should say exactly *who* (person or group at Stanford) should say or communicate *what* (content of the intervention) differently *when* (optimal timing) and *why* this should support belonging (your psychological theory) among *whom* (the group or kinds of students you think will benefit). *Be sure to cite and describe the relevant psychological literature throughout your response.*

Due **November 12 at 5 pm** through Canvas

Final Presentation

Draw on your Reflection #4 to prepare a final presentation providing advice to Stanford about how to better support students’ sense of belonging on campus. Your final presentation should consist of two parts:

1. A single slide (Powerpoint, Keynote Google Slide), like a “poster presentation,” in which you address the issues from Reflection #4. This single slide should stand on its own like a "poster presentation" would. It should include all of the critical information that allows a reader to follow your argument, including how you characterize the problem, link it to past literature, and the remedy you propose. Your goal is to transfer and distill all your ideas from Reflection #3 to the poster. Be sure to include your name and contact information.
2. An oral presentation in the one of the two final class sessions in which you present this poster and talk through it.

Your slide is due **November 19 at 5 pm** through Canvas.

Note: Unless you express otherwise, your poster may be shared with Stanford administrators in an effort to help them better serve students.

Grades, Policies, and Resources

Grades and Due Dates

Grades break down as follows:

| | <i>% of Final Grade</i> | <i>Due Date</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Class Participation | 25% | Ongoing |
| Reflections (4) | 60% | Oct 1, Oct 15, Oct 29, Nov 12 |
| Final Presentation | 15% | Nov 29 or Dec 1 |

Late Policy

Without an adequate excuse, late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade point each day (a perfect assignment 1 day late receives an A-; 2 days late a B+, etc.).

Attendance

As this is a discussion-based course, students are expected to attend every class session with full engagement and attention.

Feedback

If you have any feedback or suggestions for how I or we can make this course better, please share with me at any time.

Online Repositories of Psychologically Wise Interventions

You may find it helpful as we proceed through the course to review entries for interventions you are learning about in class at either wiseinterventions.org, which summarizes more than 300 interventions drawn from Walton & Wilson (2018).

Course Schedule

A general reading tip: Read older papers first. Sometimes more recent papers refer to prior papers and, when this is the case, you'll know what they're talking about.

Note: We may revise reading assignments as class proceeds.

| | | Class and Readings |
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| Week 1: Introduction | Sept 20 | Introduction ➤ Introductions ➤ Personal reflection ➤ Course overview |
| | Sept 22 | The Many Questions of Belonging ➤ Reading: ○ Walton & Brady (2017). The many questions of belonging. |
| Week 2: Belonging and Motivation / Race and Belonging Uncertainty | Sept 27 | Belonging and Motivation ➤ Reading: ○ Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer (2012). Mere belonging: The power of social connections. |
| | Sept 29 | Race and Belonging in College 1: Belonging Uncertainty ➤ Reading: ○ Walton & Cohen (2007). A question of belonging: Race, social fit, and achievement. <i>**Due Oct 1 at 5 pm: Reflection #1**</i> |
| Week 3: Race and Belonging Uncertainty (Continued) / Class, Culture, and Belonging | Oct 4 | Race and Belonging in College 2: The Social-Belonging Intervention ➤ Reading: ○ Walton & Brady (2020). The social-belonging intervention. |
| | Oct 6 | Class, Culture, and Belonging in College 1: Family Achievement Guilt ➤ Reading: ○ Covarrubias & Fryberg (2015). Movin' on up (to college): First-generation college students' experiences with family achievement guilt. |
| Week 4: Class, Culture, and Belonging | Oct 11 | Class, Culture, and Belonging in College 2: Cultural Fit and Misfit ➤ Reading: ○ Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias (2012). Unseen disadvantage: How American universities' focus on independence undermines the academic performance of first-generation college students. |
| | Oct 13 | Class, Culture, and Belonging in College 3: Spaces ➤ Reading: ○ Trawalter, Hoffman, & Palmer (2020). Out of place: Socioeconomic status, use of public space, and belonging in higher education. <i>**Due Oct 15 at 5 pm: Reflection #2**</i> |
| Week 5: Using Identities as Assets | Oct 18 | Using Identities as Assets 1: African American Bicultural Identity ➤ Reading: ○ Brannon, Markus, & Taylor (2015). "Two souls, two thoughts," two self-schemas: Double consciousness can have positive academic consequences for African Americans. |
| | Oct 20 | Using Identities as Assets 2: Refugees' Strength and Agency ➤ Reading: ○ Bauer, Boemelburg, & Walton (2020). From weak victims to resourceful actors: Reframing refugees' stigmatized identity enhances long-term academic engagement. |
| | Oct 25 | Understanding Contexts: Psychological Affordances |

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| Week 6: Understanding and Intervening on Contexts | | <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Walton & Yeager (2020). Seed and soil: Psychological affordances in contexts help to explain where wise interventions succeed or fail. |
| | Oct 27 | <p>Understanding Contexts: Shifting Peer Norms</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Murrar, Campbell, & Brauer (2020). Exposure to peers' pro-diversity attitudes increases inclusion and reduces the achievement gap. <p>**Due Oct 29 at 5 pm: Reflection #3**</p> |
| Week 7: Intervening with Teachers | Nov 1 | <p>Intervening with Teachers: Empathic Discipline</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Okonofua, Paunesku, & Walton (2016). Brief intervention to encourage empathic discipline cuts suspension rates in half among adolescents. |
| | Nov 3 | <p>Intervening on Teacher/Student Relationships: Reentry from Juvenile Detention</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Walton, Okonofua, Remington, Hurst, Pinedo, Ospina, Weitz, Tate, & Eberhardt (2021). Lifting the bar: Orienting children and educators toward positive relationships with each other may prevent recidivism among children reentering school from juvenile detention. |
| Week 8: Gender and STEM | Nov 8 | <p>Belonging in STEM 1: Personal Interactions</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Muragishi, Aguilar, Carr, & Walton (2021). Microinclusions: Treating women as respected work partners increases a sense of fit in technology companies and quantitative performance. |
| | Nov 10 | <p>Belonging in STEM 2: Institutional Mindsets</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Canning, Muenks, Green, & Murphy (2019). STEM faculty who believe ability is fixed have larger racial achievement gaps and inspire less student motivation in their classes. <p>**Due Nov 12 at 5 pm: Reflection #4**</p> |
| Week 9: Gender and STEM (Continued) / Backlash | Nov 15 | <p>Belonging in STEM 3: Masculine Defaults</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cheryan & Markus (2020). Masculine defaults: Identifying and mitigating hidden cultural biases. |
| | Nov 17 | <p>Backlash</p> <p>➤ Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brannon, Carter, Murdock-Perriera, & Higginbotham (2018). From backlash to inclusion for all: Instituting diversity efforts to maximize benefits across group lines <p>**Due Nov 19 at 5 pm: Slide for Final Presentation**</p> |
| Week 10 | Nov 29 | <p>Final Presentations</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review posters scheduled for today |
| | Dec 1 | <p>Final Presentations</p> <p>➤ Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review posters scheduled for today |