

## Psych 288 – Perspectives on Belonging

Instructor: Greg Walton  
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Website/Forum: On Canvas  
Class meets: Thursdays 3-5, 420-417  
Grading: Letter grades  
Enrollment: Capped at 12 graduate students in psychology.

How do people make sense of their relationship with a community or society and how does this affect their behavior and outcomes? We will examine classic and contemporary research and theory on what belonging is; why it matters to people; how people draw inferences about their belonging in different contexts; cultural and social-group variation; and how belonging-related motivations affect diverse behaviors.

This class is based on student discussion and leadership. Please do not take this class if you will not be able to do all the readings and attend all the sessions. We expect a high level of involvement from all students. To receive credit for this class, you need to:

1. Attend all sessions, having done the readings and being ready to discuss them.
2. Lead or co-lead a session. This involves helping to moderate it, but also preparing a short opening that addresses how the readings speak to the nature and workings of belonging.  
**Please do not:**
  - \* Summarize the readings
  - \* Critique the details of a paper (we can do that in discussion)
  - \* Use PowerPoint

You could:

- \* Present background on the research
- \* Describe other papers that complement or contrast with the assigned readings

The goal is for you to bring to the table findings and perspectives your peers may not know about; therefore this should entail some research on your part.

3. Post an inquiry paper on Canvas by Feb 28. This 5-10 page paper should take off from the readings and our discussion to describe an approach to understanding belonging. Please address these questions explicitly:
  - What is belonging?
  - Why does it matter to people?
  - How do people make sense of their belonging?
  - How does it affect people's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors?

All seminar members will read and discuss your paper.

## Reading Schedule

### **Week 1 – January 10: Introduction (No reading)**

### **Week 2 – January 17: Human Cooperation; Evolutionary Foundations**

Carr & Walton (2014). Cues of working together fuel intrinsic motivation

Tomasello (2014). A Natural History of Thinking. *Pages 32-49, 76-93, 120-123, 133-148*

Student Co-Lead: Cai and Dave

### **Week 3 – January 24: Belonging as a Need**

Brewer (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time

Baumeister & Leary (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as fundamental human motivation

Williams (2009). Ostracism: A temporal need-threat model.

Student Co-Lead: Gabor

### **Week 4 – January 31: Connecting**

Boothby, Clark, & Bargh (2014). Shared experiences are amplified.

Tamir & Mitchell (2012). Disclosing information about the self is intrinsically rewarding.

Walton, Cohen, Cwir, & Spencer (2012). Mere belonging: The power of social connections.

Student Co-Lead: Dave

### **Week 5 – February 7: Stigma and Social Threat**

Goffman (1963). Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity. *Chapter 1*

Knowles, Lucas, Molden, Gardner, & Dean (2010). There's no substitute for belonging: Self-affirmation following social and nonsocial threats.

Walton & Cohen (2007). A question of belonging: Race, social fit, and achievement.

Student Co-Lead: Chris, Sai

### **Week 6 – February 14: Diversity and Fit**

Brannon & Lin (2018). "Pride and prejudice" pathways to belonging: Implications for inclusive diversity practices within mainstream institutions.

Schmader & Sedikides (2018). State authenticity as fit to environment: The implications of social identity for fit, authenticity, and self-segregation.

Walton & Brady (2017). The many questions of belonging

Student Co-Lead: Kiara

### **Week 7 – February 21: Belonging and Backlash**

Brannon, Carter, Murdock-Perriera, & Higginbotham (2018). From backlash to inclusion for all: Instituting diversity efforts to maximize benefits across group lines.

Plaut et al. (2011). “What about me?” Perceptions of exclusion and Whites’ reactions to multiculturalism.

Student Co-Lead: Gregg and Christianne

### **Week 8 – February 28: Belonging in a Socio-Ecological Context**

Allen, Brodrick, & Waters (2018). Rethinking school belonging: A socio-ecological framework

Goyer et al. (in press). Targeted identity safety interventions cause lasting reductions in discipline citations among ethnic-minority boys.

Okonofua et al. (2016). Brief intervention to encourage empathic discipline cuts suspension rates in half among adolescents.

Student Co-Lead: Rachel

### **Week 9 – March 7: Paper Discussion 1**

### **Week 10 – March 14: Paper Discussion 2**