**Seminar on Stigma and Belonging**

**PSYCUN3611**

**Columbia University**

**Fall 2023**

Instructor: Professor Michael Naft

Course Hours: TBD

Location: TBD

Office Hours: By appointment

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**Course Description:**

A substantial portion of the U.S. population, and millions of people throughout the world, are targeted for discrimination, rejection, and exclusion because of a devalued identity, attribute, condition, or status characteristic. This course seeks to illuminate the pathways through which stigma adversely impacts people’s lives. Conceptualizing stigma as a multilevel construct, we will examine both psychological and structural mechanisms through which stigma harms its targets and contributes to population-level inequalities. While our investigation will focus primarily on research from social psychology, the course will consider work from several disciplines, including clinical psychology, sociology, neuroscience, public health, and law.

The course begins with an examination of ways in which stigma is defined and measured, and consideration of strengths and limitations of each approach. We will then explore motivations for and functions of stigma, with a focus on several prominent theoretical accounts of why humans stigmatize, discriminate, and exclude. Next we will examine ways in which stigma operates at different levels of the ecological system, including *intrapersonal* processes (e.g., social identity threat, status-based rejection sensitivity), *interpersonal* processes (e.g., a non-stigmatized individual’s discriminatory or negative treatment of a stigmatized individual during an interaction), and *structural* processes (e.g., laws, institutional policies, and cultural norms that that lead to unequal distribution of resources). Here we will examine research linking these distinct but interrelated forms of stigma to a host of negative outcomes, including increased stress exposure, impaired cognitive functioning, maladaptive emotion regulation, performance decrements in academic settings, harmful coping behaviors, and physical and mental health problems. Building off of these theoretical and empirical foundations, we will examine approaches to reducing stigma and its effects.

The format of the course will include lectures, class discussions and activities, and guest speakers.

**Role in the Curriculum:**

This seminar is designed for undergraduates majoring in Psychology and for students participating in the Psychology Post-Baccalaureate Certificate program. It fulfills the following degree requirements:

* For the Psychology major or concentration in Columbia College and in the School of General Studies, and for the Psychology Post-Baccalaureate Certificate program, this course will meet the Group 3 (Social, Personality, and Abnormal Psychology) distribution requirement.
* For Psychology Post-Baccalaureate students and for Psychology majors, it will fulfill the seminar requirement.
* For students who entered Columbia in Fall 2020 or later, this course will fulfill the Special Elective requirement.

**Class Requirements and Expectations:**

**Prerequisites:** PSYC 1001 or permission of the instructor. Note: students who have taken PSYC UN2660 Stigma and Belonging in a Diverse Society cannot take this course due to overlapping content.

**Class attendance and participation:** One of the key aims of the course is to create a collaborative learning environment where students actively share ideas, raise important questions, and engage in discussion with their peers and professor. Strong preparation and participation will enable us to have high-level, thought-provoking discussions. To ensure that everyone is accountable for thoroughly engaging with the material during class discussions, your active participation during class will contribute to your final grade. For some people, participating in class discussions can be difficult. Students who are concerned about their ability to contribute to class discussions should contact Professor Naft during the first week of class.

Effective class preparation and participation could include, among other things: Asking thoughtful or clarifying questions; connecting the week’s readings to other reading we’ve done in the course or reading you’ve done on your own or in other classes; actively listening to your classmates and responding to their ideas; and offering thoughtful critiques of the research methodology used in a study and providing suggestions for how it might be improved.

**Presentation/Leading Discussion:** Each student will be responsible for leading a discussion about an assigned reading and related topics during a class session. Detailed instructions for class presentations will be provided during the first week of class.

**Weekly response papers:** To help prepare for class discussions, you will be asked to turn in a weekly paper (500-word minimum) that engages with the reading assignments for that week. In your papers, you may, among other things, synthesize findings and ideas presented in the readings and other materials, compare and contrast relevant viewpoints, and present personal reflections on the materials. Response papers must be submitted to Courseworks by 11:00 AM the day before class. Late papers will not receive credit. Grading criteria for response papers will be provided during the first week of class.

**Short Paper:** You will write a 5-6 page paper (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, one-inch margins) on a topic to be announced in class. Papers are due on October 19th. Grades for late papers will be reduced by 10% for each day they are late. No response paper will be due the week that the short paper is due.

**Final Paper:** You will write a 12-14 page paper (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, one-inch margins) integrating and synthesizing research on topics related to the course. You must submit a written proposal for your paper (no more than two pages, double-spaced), which must be approved by Professor Naft. Proposals are due three weeks before the paper is due. Detailed instructions for the paper and proposal will be provided in class and posted on Courseworks. The Final paper is due on December 14th. Grades for late papers will be reduced by 10% for each day they are late.

**Grading:**

20%: Attendance and participation

15%: Weekly response papers

10%: Presentation/leading discussion

15%: Short paper (due on October 19th)  
40%: Final Paper (due on December 14th)

**Schedule**:

The schedule below details key themes and topics, along with assignments for each week. **This schedule, including reading assignments, is subject to change**. Any revisions to the syllabus will be announced in class and posted to Courseworks.

**Part 1: Conceptualizing Stigma**

**Week 1 — Introduction to the Course; The Fundamental Need to Belong; Ecological Systems Model**

Reading:

* Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological bulletin*, *117*(3), 497.
* Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. *Readings on the development of children*, *2*(1), 37-43.

**Week 2 — Defining and Measuring Stigma**

Reading:

* Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., Chapter 1.
* Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 363-385.
* Major, B., & O’Brien, L. T. (2005). The social psychology of stigma. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56, 393-421.

**Week 3 — Differences Across Stigmatized Groups; Dimensional Approach**

Reading:

* Levy, B.R., & Pilver, C.E. (2012). Residual stigma: Psychological distress among the formerly overweight. Social Science & Medicine, 75, 297-299.
* Pachankis, J. E., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Wang, K., Burton, C. L., Crawford, F. W., Phelan, J. C., & Link, B. G. (2018). The burden of stigma on health and well-being: A taxonomy of concealment, course, disruptiveness, aesthetics, origin, and peril across 93 stigmas. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *44*(4), 451-474.

**Week 4 — Motivations for and Functions of Stigma**

Reading:

* Jost, J.T. & Banaji, M.R. (1994). The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 33, 1-27.
* Kurzban, R., & Leary, M.R. (2001). Evolutionary origins of stigma: The functions of social exclusion. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127, 187-208.
* Phelan, J.C., Link, B.G., & Dovidio, J.F. (2008). Stigma and prejudice: One animal or two? *Social Science & Medicine*, 67, 358-367.

**Part 2: Mechanisms and Consequences**

**Week 5 — Introduction to Stigma Processes and Outcomes**

* Eberhardt, J. L., Davies, P. G., Purdie-Vaughns, V. J., & Johnson, S. L. (2006). Looking deathworthy: Perceived stereotypicality of Black defendants predicts capital-sentencing outcomes. *Psychological science*, *17*(5), 383-386.
* Hainmueller, J., Lawrence, D., Marten, L., et al. (2017). Protecting unauthorized immigrant mothers improves their children’s mental health. Science, 357, 1041-1044.
* Inzlicht, M., McKay, L., & Aronson, J. (2006). Stigma as ego depletion: How being the target of prejudice affects self-control. *Psychological Science*, 17, 262-269.

**Week 6 — Intrapersonal Processes**

Reading:

* Major, B., Eliezer, D., & Rieck, H. (2012). The psychological weight of weight stigma. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *3*(6), 651-658.
* Spencer, S. J., Steele, C. M., & Quinn, D. M. (1999). Stereotype threat and women’s math performance. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, *35*(1), 4-28.
* Yoshino, K. (2006). The Pressure to Cover. *New York Times Magazine*.

**Week 7 — Interpersonal Processes**

Reading:

* Moss-Racusin, C. A., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V.L., Graham, M. J., & Handelsman, J. (2012). Science faculty’s subtle gender biases favor male students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 109*, 16474-16479.
* Okonofua, J. A., Walton, G. M., & Eberhardt, J. L. (2016). A vicious cycle: A social-psychological account of extreme racial disparities in school discipline. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *11*(3), 381-398.
* Williams, M. T. (2020). Microaggressions: Clarification, evidence, and impact. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *15*(1), 3-26.

**Week 8 — Structural Processes**

Reading:

* Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2016). Structural stigma: Research evidence and implications for psychological science. *American Psychologist*, 71(8), 742-751.
* Lauderdale, D. S. (2006). Birth outcomes for Arabic-named women in California before and after September 11. *Demography*, 43, 185-201.
* Miller, R. J. (2021). *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration*. New York: Little, Brown and Company. Chapter 3.

**Part 3: Reducing Stigma and its Effects**

**Week 9 — Coping with Stigma**

Readings:

* Puhl, R. M., & Brownell, K. D. (2006). Confronting and coping with weight stigma: an investigation of overweight and obese adults. *Obesity*, *14*(10), 1802-1815.
* Thoits, P.A. (2011). Resisting the stigma of mental illness. Social Psychology Quarterly, 74, 6-28.
* Wang, Katie, Charles L. Burton, and John E. Pachankis. "Depression and substance use: towards the development of an emotion regulation model of stigma coping." *Substance Use & Misuse* 53, no. 5 (2018): 859-866.

**Week 10 — Interventions**

Readings:

* Cook, J.E., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Meyer, I.H., & Busch, J.T. (2013). Intervening within and across levels: A multilevel approach to stigma and public health. Social Science & Medicine, 103, 101-109.
* Pachankis, J. E., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Rendina, H. J., Safren, S. A., & Parsons, J. T. (2015). LGB-affirmative cognitive-behavioral therapy for young adult gay and bisexual men: A randomized controlled trial of a transdiagnostic minority stress approach. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, *83*(5), 875.
* Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G .L. (2011). A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students. *Science*, *331*(6023), 1447-1451.

**Week 11 — Interventions**

Readings:

* Kalla, J. L., & Broockman, D. E. (2020). Reducing exclusionary attitudes through interpersonal conversation: Evidence from three field experiments. *American Political Science Review*, *114*(2), 410-425.
* Link, B. G., & Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2016). Stigma as an unrecognized determinant of population health: Research and policy implications. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and* *Law*, 41, 653-673. (**Focus on pages 658-669.**)
* Mullainathan, S. (2016). Ban the Box? An effort to stop discrimination may actually increase it. *New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/upshot/ban-the-box-an-effort-to-stop-discrimination-may-actually-increase-it.html>)

**Week 12 — Interventions**

Readings:

* Legault, L., Gutsell, J.N., & Inzlicht, M. (2011). Ironic effects of anti-prejudice messages: How motivational interventions can reduce (but also increase) prejudice. Psychological Science, 22, 1472-1477.
* Meyer, I.H., & Bayer, R. (2013). School-based gay-affirmative interventions: First Amendment and ethical concerns. American Journal of Public Health, 103, 1764-1771.
* Hatzenbuehler, M. L., McKetta, S., Kim, R., Leung, S., Prins, S. J., & Russell, S. T. (2022). Evaluating litigation as a structural strategy for addressing bias-based bullying among youth. *JAMA pediatrics*, *176*(1), 52-58.
* Price, M. A., Weisz, J. R., McKetta, S., Hollinsaid, N. L., Lattanner, M. R., Reid, A. E., & Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2022). Meta-analysis: Are psychotherapies less effective for black youth in communities with higher levels of anti-black racism?. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *61*(6), 754-763 **(OPTIONAL)**

**Week 13 — International Perspectives**

Guest Speaker:

* To be announced

Readings:

* Pachankis, J. E., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Bränström, R., Schmidt, A. J., Berg, R. C., Jonas, K., ... & Weatherburn, P. (2021). Structural stigma and sexual minority men’s depression and suicidality: A multilevel examination of mechanisms and mobility across 48 countries. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *130*(7), 713.
* *Note*: Additional readings to be announced and posted on Courseworks.

**Week 14 — Wrap-Up**

Readings:

* Solomon, A. (2012). Far from the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity. New York: Scribner. Chapter 2.

**Course Policies**:

**Fostering an Inclusive Classroom**: Our aim is to foster a learning environment that supports a diversity of perspectives and experiences and honors your identities. Please reach out to me with any concerns or suggestions you may have to better address your learning needs and to improve the effectiveness of this course. I look forward to working together to create a classroom community built on mutual respect and inclusivity.

Students with special needs who may require classroom/test accommodations should make an appointment with me before or during the first week of class. You should also contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in Lerner Hall before the start of the course to register for these accommodations. The procedures for registering with ODS can be found at <https://health.columbia.edu/content/disability-services>, or by calling (212) 854-2388.

**Promoting Wellness**: Many of us have periods in which our mental health and well-being suffer. Please take care of yourselves—and of each other. Please prioritize your mental health and well-being and know that there are many resources available to you both within our classroom community and throughout the university. These include the following:

<https://health.columbia.edu/content/counseling-and-psychological-services>

<http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/nightline/>

<https://universitylife.columbia.edu/student-resources-directory#health>.

We are in this together. Please reach out for help if you need it, and, if you see others who are struggling, please make sure they know how to find the support they need.

**Use of Computers, Internet, and Cell Phones:** Using the internet, writing and reading emails, and texting during class can disrupt the learning of your peers, interfere with engaged and active class participation, and be a distraction to the professor and guest speakers. **Accordingly, you may not use the internet during class other than for purposes directly related to class (e.g., accessing relevant class readings). Use of cell phones during class is prohibited.**

**Ensuring Academic Integrity**: As members of this academic community, we are responsible for maintaining the highest level of personal and academic integrity, which includes presenting only our own work on assignments and exams. The semester progresses very quickly, and there is a lot of material to learn. If you find yourself in a situation—e.g., starting an assignment too late—in which it seems like the best option may be to compromise your academic integrity, please see me. Together, we can work out a solution. Plagiarism—whether intentional or inadvertent—is a serious violation of academic integrity. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and/or how to properly cite sources, please come to me and/or your TA. We are more than happy to help.