

Stigma and Belonging in a Diverse Society
Columbia University
Spring 2022
UN2660

Instructor: Prof. Michael Naft
Course Hours: TBA
Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Description: This course seeks to (1) illuminate the psychological pathways through which stigma impacts members of devalued social groups, and (2) investigate the mechanisms through which interventions at different levels of an ecological system either succeed or fail. The course broadly considers identity devaluation, discrimination, and exclusion as general processes that apply to a range of social categories and status characteristics, including sexual orientation, obesity, mental illness, racial and ethnic identity, physical disability, immigration status, and having a criminal record. Conceptualizing stigma as a multi-level construct, we will focus on both psychological and structural mechanisms through which stigma harms its targets and contributes to population-level inequalities. While the course will draw primarily on the literature in social psychology, we will also consider research and writing from other disciplines, including clinical psychology, sociology, public health, and law. Over the course of the semester, we will also consider methodological issues in psychological research, including ways in which stigma, its impacts, and intervention effects can be measured.

The course begins with an examination of ways in which stigma is conceptualized in the psychological literature and other academic disciplines. We will then explore several distinct, but often interrelated, mechanisms through which stigma operates—including individual-level psychological processes (e.g., internalized stigma, status-based rejection sensitivity), micro-level interpersonal interactions (e.g., an individual's discriminatory actions against or mistreatment of another person because of their stigmatized social identity/status characteristic), and macro-level structural mechanisms that reduce access to key resources and opportunities (e.g., laws and policies that prevent people with criminal records from being hired). We will consider research investigating the consequences of stigma-based discrimination and exclusion on cognitive functioning, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, social relationships, physical and mental health, and the distribution of resources. In the final section of the course, we will examine approaches to reducing, or cabining the negative effects of, stigma, focusing on intervention strategies at multiple levels of the ecological system.

The format of the course will include lectures, class discussions, group work, and presentations by guest speakers.

Prerequisites: An introductory course in psychology is required to enroll in the course. Students seeking an exemption from this general requirement should contact me before or during the first week of class.

Class Expectations and Requirements:

Class preparation and participation: One of our key aims is to create a collaborative learning environment where students actively share ideas, raise important questions, and engage in discussion with their peers and instructors about class topics. Strong preparation and participation will enable us to have high-level, thought-provoking discussion. We rely on each other to actively and thoughtfully contribute to class 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 regularly in class discussions can be difficult. Students who are concerned about their ability to contribute to class discussions should see me.

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; offering thoughtful critiques of the research methodology and providing suggestions for how it might be improved.

Paper: You will write a 10-12 page double-spaced paper on a topic related to the course. Detailed instructions for the paper will be provided in class and posted on Courseworks. You must submit a paper proposal (no more than one page, double-spaced), which must be approved by Prof. Naft. The proposal is due at the beginning of class on **February 8th**, and the paper is due at the beginning of class on **March 3rd**.

Midterm: There will be a written, in-class midterm exam on **March 10th**, which will cover topics and readings from the preceding class sessions. The exam will be comprised of short-answer/essay questions. More details about the exam will be provided in class and on Courseworks.

Group Project: You will be engaging in a collaborative project with a group of your classmates on a topic related to course themes/content. Group projects must be approved by Prof. Naft. The project will include a class presentation and completion of a 10-12 page double-spaced paper on your portion of the project, which will be due on the last day of class. Detailed instructions for the project will be provided in class and on Courseworks.

Grading:

10%: Class participation and preparation

15%: Paper

30%: Midterm Exam

45%: Group Project (class presentation and final paper)

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.

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 posted to Courseworks.

Part 1: Conceptualizing Stigma

Week 1 (January 18 and 20) — Introduction; Ecological Systems Model

Reading:

- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., Chapter 1.

- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. Lerner & W. Damon (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology, Vol. 1: Theoretical models of human development* (6th ed., pp. 793–828). New York: Wiley.

Week 2 (January 25 and 27) — What is Stigma? What are its Origins? How is it Measured?

Reading:

- 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.
- Phelan, J. C., Link, B. G., & Dovidio, J. F. (2008). Stigma and discrimination: One animal or two? *Social Science & Medicine*, 67, 358-367.

Week 3 (February 1 and 3) — Differences Across Dimensions of Stigma

Reading:

- 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.
- Major, B., Eliezer, D., & Rieck, H. (2012). The psychological weight of weight stigma. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 3(6), 651-658.
- Additional readings to be announced.

Part 2: Mechanisms and Consequences

Week 4 (February 8 and 10) — Introduction to the Negative Effects of Stigma

Reading:

- 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.
- Hainmueller, J., Lawrence, D., Marten, L., et al. (2017). Protecting unauthorized immigrant mothers improves their children's mental health. *Science*, 357, 1041-1044.
- Pachankis, J. E., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., & Starks, T. J. (2014). The influence of structural stigma and rejection sensitivity on young sexual minority men's daily tobacco and alcohol use. *Social Science & Medicine*, 103, 67-75.

Week 5 (February 15 and 17): Mechanisms: Individual-level Psychological Processes

Reading:

- Steele, C.M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52, 613-629.
- Mendoza-Denton, R., Downey, G., Purdie, V., J., Davis, A., & Pietrzak, J. (2002). Sensitivity to status-based rejection: Implications for African American Students' College Experience. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(4), 896-918.
- Yoshino, K. (2006). The Pressure to Cover. *New York Times Magazine*.
- Sawyer, P. J., Major, B., Casad, B. J., Townsend, S.S.M., Mendes, W. B. (2012). Discrimination and the stress response: Psychological and physiological consequences of anticipating prejudice in interpersonal interactions. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102, 1020-1026.

Week 6 (February 22 and 24) — Mechanisms: Interpersonal and Interactional 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.
- Green, D. P., McFalls, L. H., & Smith, J. K. (2001). Hate crimes: An emergent research agenda. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 479-304.
- Lilienfeld, S. O. (2017). Microaggressions: Strong claims, inadequate evidence. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(1), 138-169.

Week 7 (March 1 and 3) — Mechanisms: Structural Processes

Reading:

- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2016). Structural stigma: Research evidence and implications for psychological science. *American Psychologist*, 71(8), 742-751.
- Hansen, H., Bourgois, P., & Drucker, E. (2014). Pathologizing poverty: New forms of diagnosis, disability, and structural stigma under welfare reform. *Social Science & Medicine*, 103, 76-83.
- Lauderdale, D. S. (2006). Birth outcomes for Arabic-named women in California before and after September 11. *Demography*, 43, 185-201.
- *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003) (excerpts)
- *Romer v. Evans*, 517 U.S. 620 (1996) (excerpts)

Week 7 (March 8) — Case Study: Criminal Stigma

Guest Speaker: TBA

Reading:

- Miller, R. J. (2021). *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration*. New York: Little, Brown and Company. Chapter 3.
- Naft, M. J., & Downey, G. (2019). Rejection sensitivity as a determinant of well-being during reentry. In *Current Directions in Ostracism, Social Exclusion, and Rejection Research* (pp. 190-204). Routledge.
- Simmons, T. (2018). Transcending the Stigma of a Criminal Record: A Proposal to Reform State Bar Character and Fitness Evaluations. *Yale L&J*, 128, 759.

Week 8 (March 10) — Midterm Exam

Week 9 (March 15 and 17) — SPRING BREAK

Part 3: Stigma Reduction

Week 10 (March 22) — Stigma Coping

Readings:

- Link, B. G., Mirotznik, J., & Cullen, F. T. (1991). The effectiveness of stigma coping orientations: Can negative consequences of mental-illness labeling be avoided? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 32, 302-320.
- Thoits, P. A. (2011). Resisting the stigma of mental illness. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 74, 6-28.
- Additional readings to be announced.

Week 10 (March 24) — Group Work (Attendance Required)

Week 11 (March 29 and 31) — Reducing Stigma: Interventions (Part 1)

Readings:

- 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.
- Salles, A., Mueller, C. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2016). A values affirmation intervention to improve female residents' surgical performance. *Journal of graduate medical education*, 8(3), 378.

- Brookman, D., & Kalla, J. (2016). Durably reducing transphobia: A field experiment on door-to-door canvassing. *Science*, 352, 220-224.

Week 12 (April 5 and 7) — Reducing Stigma: Interventions (Part 2)

Readings:

- 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.
- Clair, M., Daniel, C., & Lamont, M. (2016). Destigmatization and health: cultural constructions and the long-term reduction of stigma. *Social science & medicine*, 165, 223-232.
- Evans-Lacko, S., Malcolm, E., West, K., et al. (2013). Influence of Time to Change’s social marketing interventions on stigma in England, 2009-2013. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 202, S77-S88.
- Agan, A., & Starr, S. (2018). Ban the box, criminal records, and racial discrimination: A field experiment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(1), 191-235.
- *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015) (excerpts)

Week 13 (April 12 and 14) — Reducing Stigma: Interventions (Part 3)

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.
- Solomon, A. (2012). *Far from the Tree: Parents, Children, and the Search for Identity*. New York: Scribner. Chapter 2.
- Case study: Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies in the workplace (readings to be announced)

Week 14 (April 19 and 21)

Group Presentations

Week 15 (April 26 and 28 (Final Paper Due))

Group Presentations and Wrap-Up

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 or your TA with any concerns or suggestions you may have to better address your learning needs and to improve the effectiveness of this course. We 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, including: <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.

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. You can find detailed definitions and examples in Columbia University's Guide to Academic Integrity (<http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/academicintegrity>). Any questions of academic integrity will automatically be referred to Columbia's office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. 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.