

## **JNST OOOO: On Belonging**

**M/W 11:00-12:20**

**Professor Youna Kwak**

Belonging is exclusionary by nature. Belonging to a nation, a language, an ethnicity, a race, a sexuality, a gender, a family, a kinship, or a place, means explicitly and implicitly tracing exclusionary boundaries that distinguish an outside (the site of exile) from an inside (the site of belonging). These boundaries are never monolithically established but are always provisional in their various formulations. They can be self-articulated, institutionally mandated, politically sanctioned, affective, imagined, cultural, social, and personal. Therefore, in this seminar we will find it useful to think of *modes* of belonging both as expressed by individual agents and enforced by community standards. We will consider belonging both as a *desire*, associated with the Middle High German *belangen*, *to long for*, and as a *location*, associated with the Old English root for *alongside of*, *parallel to*, *going along with*, *accompanying*.

Together we will read critical theory, philosophy, and literature, look at images, art, and objects, and watch films and videos in order to analyze modes of belonging and exclusion as experienced and theorized by writers, artists, thinkers, and other ordinary people in the world for whom belonging is sometimes an affective morass and other times a situation of life and death. How do you know to whom and where you belong?

Non-exhaustive list of some guiding lights: James Baldwin, Frantz Fanon, Edmond Jabès, Adrian Piper, Amandine Gay, Chantal Akerman, Claire Denis, Lauren Berlant, Roland Barthes, Abdellah Taïa, Maryse Condé, Sarah Schulman, Sara Ahmed, Céline Sciamma, Fred Moten, Isabelle Boni-Claverie, Divya Victor, Bhanu Kapil, Myung Mi Kim.

We will produce both critical and creative work for this course that will articulate new understandings of modes of belonging.