

Belonging as the First Step to Leadership

Project Overview

This project partners first-semester commuter students with a community artist in collaboration with the Cultural Alliance of York. Students explore how a sense of belonging, feeling connected, valued, and part of a community, lays the foundation for becoming a leader at York College and beyond.

Final Product

At the end of the project, students will showcase their photos to the public and local business leaders at Marketview Arts. They will engage in meaningful conversations about the connections between sense of belonging and leadership, and how they can apply the creative process to future career challenges, regardless of discipline.



Photo by Sophia Andrews



Photo by Charlie Betancourt



Photo by Tim Woodward



First-Year Seminar



**Belonging
Blueprints:
Commuter
Edition**

FYS 100
Fall 2025



Taught by
Myra Toms, M.A.



Students

Why THIS project for THESE students?

FYS100 Belonging Blueprints: Commuter Edition supports students as they explore and begin to understand the role sense of belonging plays in different aspects of their lives, both while in college and beyond. This project invites students not only to learn photography skills and the creative process, but also to think about how these skills could be used in a professional setting to solve problems.



Learning Outcomes

What skills did students develop through completing this course?

Students apply **critical thinking** to explore complex themes of belonging and leadership, drawing connections between personal experience and visual representation.

Students strengthen **communication** skills through classroom reflections, presentations, collaborative evaluation and conversations with the artist, and dialogue with community members during the public exhibition.

Students develop **career-readiness skills** such as collaboration, self-evaluation, and creative problem-solving. The creative process mirrors the steps used to solve problems in professional lives. By giving, receiving, and applying feedback, they learn the benefits of using different perspectives to improve their final product. Students analyze how photography concepts such as point of view parallel the importance of considering multiple perspectives.



Context

How does this project support the community?

The photography exhibition will be on display at Marketview Arts and is open to the public during the December First Friday celebration. Throughout the event, students will engage community members in conversations exploring how a sense of belonging serves as a foundation for developing leadership skills and becoming effective leaders both in college and in their professional lives.