

# Diversity Terms

The following glossary is merely an introduction and an educational resource provided by The National Multicultural Institute.

## A.

**Ableism:** Discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities and/or social structures that favor able-bodied individuals.

**Accessible:** Accessible spaces and programs are made to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, and generally don't require accommodations.

**Accommodation:** An accommodation is a modification, whether in the classroom or in the workplace, that ensures that a person with a disability can participate on a "level playing field" as those without disabilities.

**Achievement Gap:** A term used to describe a persistent trend in the U.S. educational system in which white students achieve greater academic success than students of color. This term can also refer to the gap between girls' and boys' academic achievement.

**Acculturation:** The process of learning and incorporating the language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that make up a distinct culture. This concept is not to be confused with assimilation, where an individual, family, or group may give up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to that of their new host country.

### **Androgyne/Androgynous/Androgyny**

1. A person whose biological sex is not readily apparent, whether intentionally or unintentionally.
2. A person whose identity is between the two traditional genders.
3. A person who rejects gender roles entirely.

**Androgynous:** Someone who reflects an appearance that is both masculine and feminine, or who appears to be neither or both a boy and a girl.

**Affirmative Action:** Proactive measures for remedying the effect of past discrimination and ensuring the implementation of equal employment and educational opportunities. Affirmative action is undertaken only for certain protected groups of individuals: Females, Blacks, Latinos/Hispanics, Asians, American Indians, People with Disabilities, and covered veterans.

**African American:** Of or related to African Americans. The U.S. Census Bureau defines black or African American as "people having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa". It includes people who indicated their race or races as 'Black, African American, or Negro' or wrote in entries such as 'African American,' 'Afro American,' 'Nigerian,' or 'Haitian.' According to Census 2000, African Americans make up approximately 12.3% of the total U.S. population, and 12.9% including persons of mixed race.

**Ageism:** Discrimination against individuals because of their age; often based on stereotypes (e.g. senior citizens are not able to perform tasks such as driving, or that all young people are irresponsible).

**American Indian Movement (AIM):** AIM was founded in 1968 by Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt, and George Miller, three American Indian activists who brought together other activists in their communities to combat issues such as police brutality, slum housing, high unemployment, the neglect of Indian education, discrimination and the government treatment of Indian affairs and relations. The Movement also focused on the importance of protecting treaty rights and preserving the spirituality and culture of Natives peoples.

**Alaska Natives:** Aboriginal peoples of Alaska, including American Indians, Eskimo, and Aluet peoples. Eskimo people, also called Inuit, are racially distinct from American Indians and are more closely related to peoples of East Asia.

**Amerasian:** A term that refers to individuals born in Asian countries whose biological father is a U.S. citizen. The Amerasian Act of 1982 granted permission to certain Amerasian individuals to immigrate to the United States. Those who qualified had to have been born in Cambodia, Korea, Laos, Thailand, or Vietnam after December 31, 1950, and fathered by a U.S. citizen. Family members such as children, spouses or parents, and guardians of the individual were also granted entry. Amerasian is not synonymous to Asian American or Eurasian.

**American:** Of or related to the Americas (North, Central, and South America). This term is commonly misused as a synonym for U.S. citizens and residents, as well as their values, beliefs, and behaviors.

**American Indian:** Of or related to American Indians. The U.S. Census Bureau defines “American Indians” as “people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. According to Census 2000, American Indians and Alaska Natives are approximately 0.9 percent of the total U.S. population, and 1.5% including persons of more than one race.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** On July 26, 1990, President George H. W. Bush signed into law the most sweeping legislation in the history of disability rights, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), prohibiting discrimination against, and mandating equal opportunity for, persons with disabilities, in “state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.” The ADA defines a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, who has a record of such an impairment.

**Anglo or Anglo-Saxon:** Of or related to the descendants of Germanic peoples (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) who reigned in Britain until the Norman Conquest in 1066. Often refers to white English-speaking persons of European descent in England or North America, not of Hispanic or French origin.

**Anti-Semitism:** Hatred of or prejudice against Jews and Judaism. The Anti-Defamation League divides anti-Semitic incidents into two categories: “harassment, including threats and assaults directed at individuals and institutions; and vandalism, such as property damage, cemetery desecration or anti-Semitic graffiti.”

**Anti-Oppression:** Recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional and personal forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others; actively challenging the different forms of oppression. (Center of Anti-Oppressive Education).

**Apartheid:** Institutional system of racial segregation and subjugation in which whites exercise political, economic, and legal discrimination on racial/ethnic minority groups. Although racial segregation had been enforced for decades prior, the official policy of apartheid was practiced in the Republic of South Africa from 1948 until 1994, when black South Africans were first given the opportunity to partake in a democratic vote, resulting in the election of Nelson Mandela, a social activist and political leader who had been imprisoned for 27 years.

**Appreciative Inquiry:** Appreciative Inquiry is a way of thinking, seeing and acting for powerful, purposeful change. It operates on the assumptions that whatever one wants... already exists. Appreciative Inquiry generates images that affirm the forces that give life and energy.

**Arab:** Of or relating to the cultures or people that have ethnic roots in the following Arabic-speaking lands: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. "Arab" is not synonymous with "Muslim." Arabs practice many religions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and others.

**Asian:** Culture, people and customs related to the continent of Asia. Be aware of the differences in areas, such as South Asia (India, Pakistan, etc.) and East Asia (China, Japan, etc.) **Oriental** is considered offensive and should not be used as a synonym.

**Asian American:** Of or related to Asian Americans. The U.S. Census Bureau defines "Asian" as "people having origins in any of the original peoples of Asia or the Indian subcontinent. It includes people who indicated their race or races as 'Asian,' 'Indian,' 'Chinese,' 'Filipino,' 'Korean,' 'Japanese,' 'Vietnamese,' or 'Other Asian.' Asian Americans are approximately 3.6 percent of the total U.S. population, and 4.2% including persons of mixed race.

**Assimilation:** The process whereby an individual of a minority group gradually adopts characteristics of the majority culture. This adoption results in the loss of characteristics of one's native culture, such as language, culinary tastes, interpersonal communication, gender roles, and style of dress. Some individuals of immigrant communities take offense to the notion that all immigrants should "assimilate" to U.S. culture, because it implies that they must give up some of who they are to become "Americans." Instead, many immigrant communities assert the notion of biculturalism, which enables them to acculturate to the U.S. culture while maintaining characteristics of their native culture.

**Asylum:** Protection sought in another country for fear of persecution in an individual's race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.

**Advocate:** Someone who speaks up for her/himself and members of his/her identity group; e.g., a woman who lobbies for equal pay for women.

## B.

**Barrio:** The Spanish word for “neighborhood” that can also refer to a predominately Latino/Hispanic area of a neighborhood, city or town. In some contexts, “barrio” may refer to the inner-city or street culture.

**Bias:** A bias is a preference for or against something or someone whether conscious or unconscious.

**Bicultural:** Of or related to an individual who possesses the languages, values, beliefs, and behaviors of two distinct racial or ethnic groups. Bicultural individuals may also be bilingual and/or biracial.

**Bigendered/Dual Gendered:** A person who possesses and expresses a distinctly masculine persona and a distinctly feminine persona. Is comfortable in and enjoys presenting in both gender roles.

**Bigotry:** Intolerance of cultures, religions, races, ethnicities, or political beliefs that differ from one’s own.

**Bilingual:** Of or related to proficiency in two distinct languages.

**Biphobia:** The fear or hatred of homosexuality (and other non-heterosexual identities), and persons perceived to be bisexual.

**Biracial:** Of or related to more than one race. Biracial individuals may choose to identify with only one race, especially if they find that they are readily accepted by one group than another. Historically, biracial individuals who had one black parent and one white parent were considered black and were not acknowledged by the white community.

**Black:** Of or related to persons having ethnic origins in the African continent; persons belonging to the African Diaspora. Some individuals have adopted the term to represent all people around the world who are not of white European descent, although this usage is not common. “Black” is often used interchangeably with “African American” in the United States.

**Brown:** A term most often used to refer to people of Latino/Hispanic descent, or of the Latin American Diaspora (Mexico, Central and South America, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, as well as Latinos/Hispanics in the United States and Canada). Some individuals may use the word to refer to all people of color.

## C.

**Categorization:** The natural cognitive process of grouping and labeling people, things, etc. Based on their similarities. Categorization becomes problematic when the groupings become oversimplified and rigid (e.g. stereotypes).

**Caucasian:** Of or related to the Caucasus region, a geographic area between the Black and Caspian seas; a former racial classification that included indigenous persons of Europe, northern Africa, western Asia, and India, characterized by light to brown skin and straight to wavy or curly hair. In the U.S., “Caucasian” is often used interchangeably with “white.”

**Chicano/a:** A term adopted by some Mexican Americans to demonstrate pride in their heritage, born out of the national Chicano Movement that was politically aligned with the Civil Rights Movement to end racial oppression and social inequalities of Mexican Americans. Chicano pertains to the particular experience of Mexican-descended individuals living in the United States. Not all Mexican Americans identify as Chicano.

**Chicano Movement:** Mexican American individuals and organizations across the country united for the common purpose of increasing educational opportunities, workers rights for farm laborers, land allocation, and resources to Mexican American communities.

**Civil Rights Movement:** The Civil Rights Movement is known as the events that took place between 1955 and 1965 when minority groups across the United States, primarily in the South, rose up against all forms of institutional racism that perpetuated political, economic, and educational disparities within their communities. It served as the catalyst for the restructuring of institutionalized policies and practices that had legally enforced racial segregation, subjugation, and discrimination.

**Classism:** Biased attitudes and beliefs that result in, and help to justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socioeconomic grouping. “Classism” can also be expressed as public policies and institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunity.

**Coalition:** A collection of different people or groups, working toward a common goal.

**Collision:** Willing participation in the discrimination against and/or oppression of one's own group (e.g., a woman who enforces dominant body ideas through her comments and actions).

**Colorblind:** Term used to describe personal, group, and institutional policies or practices that do not consider race or ethnicity as a determining factor. The term “colorblind” de-emphasizes, or ignores, race and ethnicity, a large part of one’s identity.

**Cross-Cultural:** Relating to more than one culture. Often refers to practices that deal with more than one culture and incorporate the belief-and value-systems of the cultures involved.

**Cultural Ally:** An individual who actively supports others who experience racism and/or discrimination.

**Cultural Appropriation:** Taking and benefiting from the expression, ideas, artifacts, etc. of another culture without permission. Often done by the dominant culture. This is not cultural exchange, which requires mutual consent and respect.

**Cultural Competence:** A process of learning that leads to an ability to effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of social cultural diversity in a defined social system.

**Cultural Pluralism:** Recognition of the contribution of each group to a common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different life styles, languages and convictions. It strives to create the conditions of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society.

**Culture:** A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, and habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

**Culture of Poverty:** The concept that the conditions of poverty (e.g., unemployment, out-of-wedlock births, teen pregnancies, welfare dependency, etc.) creates within individuals and groups a socially pathological state of mind that perpetuates these same conditions and eventually increases the number of dependents on the state. A culture of poverty assumes that there is a social, pathological or cultural deficiency inherent to members of certain groups that make them prone to being poor which may make the phrase offensive.

## D.

**Daily Indignity:** Refers to the experiences of individuals and groups brought about by behaviors of members of the majority or dominant culture who may willingly or inadvertently assert their unearned privilege or power in a manner that offends, discriminates against, or subjugates another individual.

**Denial:** The refusal to acknowledge the societal privileges that are granted or denied based on an individual's identity components. Those who are in a stage of denial tend to believe, "People are people. We are all alike regardless of the color of our skin." In this way, the existence of a hierarchical system of privileges based on ethnicity or race are ignored.

**Deportation:** Forced removal of an individual who is not a citizen of the United States when that individual has been found to violate immigration law.

**Dialogue:** "Communication that creates and recreates multiple understandings" (Wink, 1977); it is bidirectional, not zero-sum and may not end in agreement; it can be emotional and uncomfortable, but is safe, respectful and has greater understanding as its goal.

**Disability:** A physical or mental condition that affects major life activities.

**Discrimination:** Unfavorable or unfair treatment towards an individual or group based on their race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, physical/mental abilities, or sexual orientation.

**Diversity:** Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, economic class, age, gender, sexual

orientation, mental and physical ability, and learning styles. A diverse group, community or organization, is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist.

**Diversity Council:** An internal organizational structure whose purpose is to support and direct an organization's diversity initiative. A diversity council can be made up of individuals who represent a cross section of the community or organization involved and are committed to the initiative. Also, instrumental in building support for a diversity initiative and implementing it successfully.

**Domestic Partner:** Either member of an unmarried, cohabiting, and same-sex couples that seeks benefits usually available only to spouses.

**Dominant Culture:** The cultural values, beliefs, and practices that are assumed to be the most common and influential within a given society.

## E.

**Emigrant:** A person who voluntarily and or legally migrates from one country to another. Emigrant and emigration refer to the country from which the migration is made. An Irishman who migrates to the U.S. is an emigrant of Ireland and an immigrant to the U.S.

**Empowerment:** When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably. (Adams, Bell and Griffin)

**ESL:** (E)nglish as a (S)econd (L)anguage. A term used to describe language learning programs in the U.S. for individuals for whom English is not their first or native language.

**Environmental Racism:** The concept that members of certain groups are deliberately located in less-desirable geographic areas or that undesirable businesses, activities are deliberately located in range of or within neighborhoods of certain groups, particularly racial minorities and the urban poor.

**Essentialism:** The practice of categorizing an entire group based on assumptions about what constitutes the "essence" of that group (e.g., assuming that women are better nurturers due to something that is innate in their being). Essentialism prevents individuals from remaining open to individual differences within groups.

**Ethnic:** Of or related to a particular race, nationality, language, religion or cultural heritage. "Ethnic" in the context of the U.S., has also come to represent concepts, characteristics or cultural values and norms that are not typical of persons of white/European ancestry.

**Ethnicity:** A social construct which divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

**Ethnocentrism:** The practice of using a particular ethnic group as a frame of reference, basis of judgment, or standard criteria from which to view the world. Ethnocentrism favors one ethnic group's cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other ethnic groups.

**Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO):** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII) prohibits employment discrimination based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

**Equity:** Fairness and justice, especially pertaining to rights and protection under the law.

**Eurocentrism:** The practice of using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups.

## F.

**Feminism:** Theory and practice that advocates for educational and occupational equity between men and women and undermines traditional cultural practices that support the subjugation of women by men and the devaluation of women's contributions to society.

**First Nations People:** Individuals who identify as those who were the first people to live on the Western Hemisphere continent. People also identified as Native Americans.

## G.

**Gay Liberation Movement:** The Gay Liberation Movement is generally understood to have begun at the start of the 1969 Stonewall riots in Greenwich Village of New York City. The catalyst for the riots was a police raid of a gay bar on Christopher Street, near the Stonewall Inn. The patrons decided to fight back and were quickly joined by others who supported "Gay Power." Word and wake of the riot rippled through the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community and some individuals came together to form the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), which was politically aligned with gay rights and the anti-imperialist struggle overseas.

**Gender:** Sexual classification based on the social construction of the categories of "men" and "women." Gender differs from one's biological sex (male or female) in that one can assume a gender that is different from one's biological sex.

**Gender Identity:** A term used to describe "a person's internal sense of being male or female."

**Gentrification:** The process whereby a given urban area or neighborhood undergoes a socioeconomic transition from a previously low-income, working class neighborhood to a middle-class or affluent neighborhood.

**Ghetto:** Term used to represent the social and physical isolation of urban blacks, or communities of color in general, as well as the dire conditions these communities endure—densely populated slums, economic hardship, and racial discrimination in the central city.



**Glass Ceiling:** Term used to describe the “unseen” barrier that prevents women and people of color from being hired or promoted beyond a certain level of responsibility, prestige, or seniority in the workplace.

**GLBT (LGBT):** acronym for “Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender.”

## H.

**Hapa:** A Hawaiian language term used to describe a person of mixed Asian or Pacific Islander racial or ethnic heritage.

**Harassment:** Unwelcome, intimidating, or hostile behavior.

**Hate Crime:** Hate crime legislation often defines a hate crime as a crime motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person.

**Hispanic:** The U.S. Census Bureau defines Hispanics as “those people who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories listed on the Census 2000 questionnaire (Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, or Cuban.

**Homophobia:** A fear of individuals who are not heterosexual. Homophobia often results in people distancing themselves from and/or psychologically/physically harming people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered. The literal meaning of the word is “fear of same.”

**Human Rights:** A set of inalienable rights, as declared by the thirty articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 that all human beings possess and are protected by law

## I.

**Identity Group:** A particular group, culture, or community with which an individual identifies or shares a sense of belonging.

**Ideology:** The way in which a given society “talks and thinks about itself.” Ideology can also be thought of as a shared belief system in which the knowledge shared is considered unquestionable “common sense,” knowledge that seems “obvious and natural” regardless of societal reality.

**Indigenous:** Originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides.

**In-group Bias:** (favoritism) the tendency for groups to "favor" themselves by rewarding group members economically, socially, psychologically, and emotionally in order to uplift one group over another.

**Intersex:** General term used for someone who is born with a variation in their anatomy, chromosomes or hormones that doesn't fit the typical definitions of female or male.

**Hermaphrodite:** An individual having the reproductive organs and many of the secondary sex characteristics of both sexes. (Not a preferred term. See: Intersex)

**Intersectionality:** A concept describing the interconnection of oppressive institutions and identities.

**Immigrant:** A person who voluntarily and/or legally re-locates to a country different from that in which he or she was born. Ex: An Irishman who migrates to the United States is an emigrant of Ireland and an immigrant to the U.S.

**Inclusion:** The intentional action of including groups in society who may otherwise be vulnerable, excluded or marginalized.

**Inclusive Language:** Words or phrases that include both women and men if applicable. Inclusive language does not assume or connote the absence of women. Ex: Use of word "police officers" instead of "policemen" or "humankind" instead of "mankind."

**Institutional Racism:** Refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for Whites an oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as People of Color. An example includes city sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of color.

**Intent vs. Impact:** This distinction is an integral part of inclusive environments: intent is what a person meant to do and impact is the effect it had on someone else. Regardless of intent, it is imperative to recognize how behaviors, language, actions, etc. affect or influence other people. An examination of what was said or done and how it was received is the focus, not necessarily what was intended.

**Internalized Racism:** Occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating groups' power.

**Inuit:** Eskimo people who are distinct form American Indians and are more closely related to peoples of East Asia.

**"Isms":** A way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group: race (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), age (ageism), religion, sexual orientation, language, etc.

## K.

**KKK:** The Ku Klux Klan was an organization originally founded in Pulaski, Tennessee in 1866 that functioned as a “secret society organized in the South after the Civil War to reassert white supremacy by means of terrorism.”

## L.

**Latino/A:** A person of Latin American descent. Hispanic refers to relation with Spain or Spanish-speaking countries. Latino is recommended, but individuals may have a preference. Spanish only refers to someone from Spain.

**LGBTQ (QIA):** Acronym for "Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (Questioning Intersex Allies.)" The description of the movement expanded from gay or lesbian to LGBTQ and some include questioning, intersex, allies, same-gender-loving, asexual, pansexual, and polyamorous. (Queers United Activists)

**Linguistic Isolation:** May be used to describe the experience of feeling confused or alienated when one is unfamiliar with the language spoken by those around them.

**Linguistic Profiling:** The practice of making assumptions or value judgments about an individual based on the way he or she speaks and/or the language he or she uses, and then discriminating against that individual because of these factors.

## M.

**Mainstream:** Refers to the dominant cultural norms of a given society. In the United States, the “mainstream” culture encompasses the language, values, beliefs, and behaviors of the white/European population.

**Marginalization:** The placement of minority groups and cultures outside mainstream society. All that varies from the norm of the mainstream is devalued and at times perceived as deviant and regressive.

**Microaggression:** Brief and commonplace verbal, nonverbal and environmental insults against someone based on their identity. They do not have to be intentional.

**Minoritize:** When underrepresented groups are made to feel "less than."

**Minority:** A small group or category within a larger demographic. For example, in 2014 only 3% of undergraduate students at the University of Missouri were Latino or Hispanic.

**Miscegenation:** The mixing of races.

**Misogyny & Trans-Misogyny:** Misogyny is a general hatred and hostility towards women. Trans-misogyny is the same hatred but targeted at trans-feminine people.

**Model Minority:** Refers to a minority ethnic, racial, or religious group whose members achieve a higher degree of success than the population average. This success is typically measured in income, education, and related factors such as low crime rate and high family stability.

**Multicultural:** Of or pertaining to more than one culture.

**Multiculturalism:** Theory and practice that promotes the peaceful coexistence of multiple races, ethnicities, and cultures in a given society, celebrating and sustaining language diversity, religious diversity, and social equity.

**Multiracial:** Representing various races or a person whose parents are of different races or ethnicities.

**Multiplicity:** The quality of having multiple, simultaneous social identities (e.g., being male and Buddhist and working class).

## **N.**

**Native American:** A member of any of the first groups of people living in North America. When in doubt, ask what identity label someone prefers (Native American, American Indian, First Nation or Indigenous person). Indian is seen as an offensive term.

**National Origin:** The political state from which an individual hails: may or may not be the same as that the person's current location or citizenship.

**Naturalization:** The U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services define naturalization as “the conferring, by any means, of citizenship upon a person after birth.

**Nuyorican:** Of or related to a person born in New York City of Puerto Rican ancestry.

## **O.**

**Oppression:** Severe exercise of power and subjugation that works to privilege one group and disadvantage another.

## **P.**

**Pacific Islander:** The term “Pacific Islander” refers to persons whose origins are of the following nations: Polynesian, Melanesia, Micronesia, or any of the Pacific Islands.

**Pan-Africanism:** Describes the theory relating to the desire to educate all peoples of African diaspora of their common plight and the connections between them. Some theorists promote linking all African countries across the continent through a common government, language, ideology, or belief.

**People or Person of Color:** Umbrella term for anyone who is non-White. **Colored** is considered offensive although some individuals still prefer it. **Ethnic** and **Urban** are also considered terms with negative undertones and are not synonymous.

**Person First Language:** Use person first language when speaking about persons with disabilities. Person first language, such as saying "Person with a Disability" rather than using expressions like "Handicapped," or "challenged," emphasizes that the person is more important than the disability.

**Person on the Autism Spectrum:** Refers to a person who identifies as having a form of autism or Asperger's. Some persons on the spectrum prefer to say "Autistic Person."

**Person with a Cognitive or Intellectual Disability:** Refers to persons with various disabilities affecting the brain. This broad category includes, for example, persons with ADHD, and persons with Dyslexia. Many of these disabilities are also referred to as "learning disabilities."

**Person with a Hearing Disability:** Refers to a person who has a disability affecting hearing. Some persons with hearing disabilities, particularly those who speak sign language, prefer the term "Deaf Person" and view their disability as a cultural identity.

**Person with a Physical Disability:** General term which refers to persons with various disabilities affecting functions of the body.

**Person with a Psychiatric Disability:** Refers to a person with a disability that involves emotional and/or psychological issues. Examples include persons with anxiety disorders and persons with depression. Use this term rather than saying that someone is "mentally ill" or has a "mental illness."

**Person with a Vision Disability:** Refers to a person with low vision or a person who is blind. Many persons who are blind see their disability as a cultural identity and thus prefer to call themselves "Blind."

**Personal Identity:** Our identities as individuals-including our personal characteristics, history, personality, name, and other characteristics that make us unique and different from other individuals.

**Prejudice VS. Discrimination:** An unfair feeling or dislike for another group is prejudice. Prejudice leads to discrimination, the unfair treatment of someone.

**Privilege:** Power and advantages benefiting a group derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups.

## Q.

**Queer:** Term used to refer to people or culture of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) community. A term once perceived as derogatory is now embraced by some members of the GLBT community.

**Quota:** A number or percentage particularly of people designated as a targeted minimum for a particular group or organization. A term often used in reference to admission to colleges and universities and organizational hiring practices.

**Questioning:** A term used to refer to an individual who is uncertain of his/her sexual orientation or identity.

## R.

**Race:** A grouping of human beings based on a shared geographic dispersion, common history, nationality, ethnicity, or genealogical lineage. Race is also defined as a grouping of human beings determined by distinct physical characteristics that are genetically transmitted.

**Racial Equity:** The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer influenced how one fares. Racial equity is one part of racial justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural message that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

**Racism:** Racism can be understood as individual and institutional practices and policies based on the belief that a particular race is superior to others. This often results in depriving certain individuals and groups of certain civil liberties, rights, and resources, hindering opportunities for social, educational, and political advancement.

**Reverse Discrimination:** A term used by opponents to affirmative action who believe that these policies are causing members of traditionally dominant groups to be discriminated against.

## S.

**Safe Space:** A space in which an individual or group may remain free of blame, ridicule and persecution, and are in no danger of coming to mental or physical harm.

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act:** Federal civil rights law which ensures that persons with disabilities have equal access to education.

**Semitic:** Of or related to the language and culture of Semites. Semitic languages are characterized as Afro-Asiatic languages that include Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic, and Aramaic.

**Sexism:** Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in sex/gender; usually by men against women.

**Sexual Harassment:** The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines sexual harassment as “a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.”

**Sexual Orientation:** Term used to refer to an individual’s sexuality and/or sexual attraction to others.

**Silencing:** The conscious or unconscious processes by which the voice or participation of particular social identities is excluded or inhibited.

**Socio-Economic Status (SES):** A place within the social hierarchy based on factors, like education, income and occupation.

**Social Identity:** It involves the way in which one characterizes oneself, the affinities one has with other people, the ways one has learned to behave in stereotyped social settings, the things one values in oneself and in the world, and the norms that one recognizes or accepts governing everyday behavior.

**Social Identity Development:** The stages or phases that a person’s group identity follows as it matures or develops.

**Social Justice:** Promoting a just society by valuing diversity and equal access for all social groups.

**Social Oppression:** “Exist when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another group for its own benefit” (Hardiman and Jackson, 1997)

**Social Self-Esteem:** The degree of positive-negative evaluation an individual holds about his/her particular situation in regards to his/her social identities.

**Social Self-View:** An individual's perception of to which social identity groups he/she belongs.

**Spotlighting:** The practice of inequitably calling attention to particular social groups in language, while leaving others as the invisible, de facto norm. For example: "black male suspect"(versus "male suspect," presumed white); "WNBA" (as opposed to "NBA," presumed male).

**Stereotype:** Blanket beliefs and expectations about members of certain groups that present an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment. They go beyond necessary and useful categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative, are based on little information, and are highly generalized.

**System of Oppression:** Conscious and unconscious, non-random, and organized harassment, discrimination , exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups.

## T.

**Title IX:** Protects people from sex-based discrimination in educational programs or activities which receive federal financial assistance.

**Tokenism:** The policy of making only a perfunctory effort or **symbolic gesture** toward the accomplishment of a goal, such as racial integration; the practice of hiring or appointing a token number of people from underrepresented groups in order to deflect criticism or comply with affirmative action rules.

**Tolerance:** Recognition and respect of values, beliefs, and behaviors that differ from one's own.

**Transgender:** This term is often used to describe persons whose gender identity "differs from conventional expectations for their physical sex." "Transgender" is a term that can be used to refer to "transsexuals, masculine women, feminine men, drag queens/kings, cross-dressers, butches, etc." Transgender persons can be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual.

**Transracial Adoption:** The adoption of a child of a race different than that of the parent or guardian.

**Transsexual:** A term used to describe a person whose gender identity differs from that of their physical/biological sex. Transsexuals can be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual.

**Two-Spirit:** A unique Native American identity embodying traits of both men and women or of another gender than assigned.

## U.

**Underrepresented:** Refers to groups of people who traditionally and currently are represented in lower proportional numbers to dominant groups (i.e. the number of women in STEMS fields, the number of minorities on campus, etc.).

**Unearned Privilege:** Privileges accorded to some individuals because they possess or demonstrate certain characteristics associated with the dominant culture in society, such as being heterosexual, white, or male. These privileges are deeply ingrained into U.S. culture.

## W.

**WASP:** The acronym translates to (W)hite (A)nglo (S)axon (P)rotestant, a term used in the United States to refer to the demographic of people who are of this ancestry.

**Welfare:** Economic assistance provided by the government to persons in need.

**Wheelchair User:** Refers to a person who uses a wheelchair for mobility. Use this term rather than saying a person is "wheelchair-bound" or confined to a wheelchair."



**White Privilege:** Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits privilege may or may not be conscious of it.

**Worldview:** The way in which an individual views the outside world, influenced by his or her beliefs, values and behaviors, and determined by his or her unique experiences.

## **X.**

**Xenophobia:** Fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners.

## **Y.**

**Yellow:** A term used to refer to people of the Asian Diaspora. Although the use of this word finds its roots as derogatory slang birthed in the era of exploration and colonialism, it has recently become more prevalent in academia and among Asian communities in the U.S. who use the word to embrace their ethnic origins and express pride in their identity.