

COMMON LANGUAGE GUIDE

Amherst College

Office of Diversity & Inclusion
Resource Center Team

About

This document was created by the Resource Center Team within the Office of Diversity & Inclusion in collaboration with various campus partners as a guide to common, shared language around identity. This project emerged out of a need to come to a common and shared understanding of language in order to foster opportunities for community building and effective communication within and across difference.

This is a list of carefully researched and thoughtfully discussed definitions for key diversity and inclusion terms. It is by no means a comprehensive list, but it is a good place for us to start. We understand that language around identity, privilege, oppression and inclusion is always changing, evolving and expanding. If there is a term that you feel should be included here, please let us know. You can email and/or call Angie Tissi-Gassoway, associate dean for diversity & inclusion, at atissi@amherst.edu or 413-542-5114.



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GENERAL TERMINOLOGY

ACCOMPlice	A term coined by Indigenous Action Network to critique the ways in which “ally” as an identity term has been deployed absent of action, accountability or risk-taking. There has been some critique of this term because of its association with criminality when many marginalized communities are viewed as already, always criminal.
ALLY	See Allyship.
ALLYSHIP	The lifelong process of building relationships with marginalized communities to which one does not belong. This is a practice of showing up, working in solidarity with, and centering the needs and voices of marginalized groups. This work should be done as directed by those communities. These efforts can be named as allyship only by the marginalized group. To be acting in allyship means that you are actively working to dismantle structures of oppression. See Accomplice for more information.
ASSIMILATION	Distancing or dropping of one’s culture, language, values, politics and/or traditions in order to advance and seek to assume the culture and characteristics of the dominant group. This often happens as a response to forms of oppression including but not limited to: xenophobia, racism, cisheteronormativity and religious oppression, among other types of oppression.
COALITION BUILDING	A form of community organizing that brings together individuals or groups interested in achieving a common goal. Justice-based coalition building is rooted in a vision of collective liberation.
COLLUSION	Thinking and acting in ways that support dominant systems of power, privilege and oppression. Both privileged and oppressed groups can collude with oppression. Example: Able-bodied people who object to strategies for making buildings accessible because of the expense.
DISCRIMINATION	Action based on prejudice. When we act on our prejudices, we are discriminating.
EXPLOITATION	The act of using people for profit or benefit. This can occur interpersonally, institutionally and systemically. Often this refers to the use of another person’s physical, emotional and intellectual labor without fair compensation, recognition or consent.
EQUALITY	Treating everyone exactly the same. An equality emphasis often ignores historical and structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harm other social groups/communities.

FRAGILITY	A state in which dominant identities experience identity-based stress as triggering and intolerable, leading to defensiveness, hostility, anger, guilt, silence and/or departure from stress-inducing situation. Some key examples of fragility include white fragility and fragile masculinity.
HEGEMONY	The imposition of dominant group ideology onto everyone in society. Hegemony makes it difficult to escape or resist “believing in” this dominant ideology; thus social control is achieved through conditioning rather than physical force or intimidation. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 184)
HORIZONTAL VIOLENCE	When marginalized communities enact structures of oppression on one another. This occurs due to hierarchies within social identity groups informed by systems of oppression. Examples of this include a gay man behaving and thinking in transphobic ways or a woman slut-shaming another woman.
INCLUSION	An intentional effort to transform the status quo by creating opportunity for those who have been historically marginalized.
INTERSECTIONALITY	A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to name the intersections of multiple, mutually reinforcing systems of oppression, power and privilege. This was first used to describe the experiences of black women in the legal system. Intersectional theorists look at how the individual experience is impacted by multiple axes of oppression and privilege. These forces compound and complicate one another.
MICROAGGRESSIONS	The verbal and nonverbal indignities and denigrating messages targeting people of historically and presently marginalized backgrounds that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative slights and insults. The accumulation and frequency of such everyday occurrences can have a negative impact on the psychological, emotional and physical well-being of the person impacted. Perpetrators are sometimes unaware that they have engaged in an exchange that demeans the recipient of the communication. Microaggressions are rooted in institutional oppression.
MYTH OF SCARCITY	Used to pit people against each other, this is the fostering of the belief that resources are limited and the blaming of members of the marginalized group for using up too much of the limited resources available.
OPPRESSION	A system for gaining, exercising and maintaining structural and institutional power for the benefit of a limited dominant group. An inequitable system where a select few hold material and social power and marginalized groups are coerced to participate in the system against their best interests. Oppression exists on the individual,

interpersonal, institutional and ideological levels. There is no such thing as reverse oppression, because oppression is rooted in institutional power.

PREJUDICE

Learned prejudgetment about members of social groups to which we don't belong. Prejudice is based on limited knowledge or experience with the group. Simplistic judgments and assumptions are made and projected onto everyone from that group.

PRIVILEGE

Social power that is systematically conferred as unearned advantage and/or learned dominance. Privilege does not occur naturally or by luck but is rooted in systems of oppression.

POWER

1. The ability to name or define.
2. The ability to decide.
3. The ability to set the rule, standard or policy.
4. The ability to change the rule, standard or policy to serve your needs, wants or desires.
5. The ability to influence decision makers to make choices in favor of your cause, issue or concern (YWCA).

Power can show up materially and immaterially, and in various domains, including: personal, social, institutional, and structural.

REVERSE OPPRESSION

There is no such thing as reverse oppression. Oppression is predicated upon access to institutional power. Marginalized communities do not have access to institutional power. For example, women can be as prejudiced as men, but women cannot be "just as sexist as men," because they do not hold political, economic and institutional power.

SOCIAL IDENTITY

A type of identity based on group membership in relation to institutional power and privilege. Social identities are often immutable, though not always. Examples of social identities include: race, gender and class. (Personal identities are not considered social identities. Personal identities might include Harry Potter enthusiast, political party member, Patriots fan or introvert.)

SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. An anti-oppression orientation to social and political organization.
2. The process and goal of addressing the root causes of institutional and structural "-isms."
3. A vision of the world where all groups of people can live (and be perceived) as fully human on all levels (personal, social, institutional and structural).
4. A vision of the world not rooted in the dominance of any one group over all others. Such a vision would include recognizing the inherent worth and connectedness of all people, animals, plants and other resources of our planet and universe. Additionally, this vision of the world would not be rooted in a scarcity model that devalues things

that are abundant (that many can have access to or can acquire) and highly values that which is scarce or rare (that very few can have access to or acquire). (YWCA)

STEREOTYPE

A belief, trait, characteristic or expectation assumed to be true about members of certain identity groups that presents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude or uncritical judgment. Stereotypes go beyond necessary and useful categorizations and generalizations in that they are typically negative and are based on very little information or inaccurate information. One possible way that stereotypes are perpetuated is by media representation (or lack thereof).

-ISMS

ABLEISM

The system of beliefs and practices that perpetuate institutional, structural and individual limitations and violences against disabled folks/people with disabilities in physical, sociopolitical and economic environments.

AGEISM

Stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age; ageism can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs.

CISSEXISM

The system of belief that cisgender individuals are the privileged class and are more natural, normal or acceptable than transgender, genderqueer, nonbinary and/or gender-nonconforming people. This belief manifests as the systematic denial of rights to trans and nonbinary people and their routine mistreatment.

CLASSISM

Differential treatment based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic assignment of worth based on social class; policies and practices set up to benefit more class-privileged people at the expense of less class-privileged people, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality and causing basic human needs to go unmet. (www.classism.org/class-definitions)

ETHNOCENTRISM

Judging another culture solely based on the standards and values of one's own culture. Also, a belief in the inherent superiority of one's own nation or ethnic group.

EUROCENTRISM

A worldview that is biased towards European thought, history, knowledge, institutions, peoples and culture, often favoring efforts of colonization and development specific to countries in the Global North while dismissing the benefits and advantages of the thought, culture and history rooted elsewhere. Often used to refer also to Western-centrism, which is inclusive of non-European countries in the Global North.

HETEROSEXISM

A pervasive system of beliefs and practices that manifest across societal/cultural, institutional and individual domains that centers and normalizes heterosexuality. Enacts violence against all other sexualities through their erasure, pathologization and invalidation. Provides various advantages to heterosexual/straight folks.

RACISM

A system of advantage and disadvantage based on the socially constructed category of “race” and the idea of white racial superiority and black racial inferiority. Specifically within the United States, racism refers to white racial prejudice and power used to advantage white people over indigenous people, black people and people of color (IBPOC) and has been made possible by the historic and present-day unequal distribution of resources. Racism is enacted on multiple levels—institutional, interpersonal, individual and ideological—and can exist both consciously and unconsciously. Unconscious or covert racism is often hidden and not recognized as racial discrimination, whereas overt racism refers to conscious attitudes and intentions to harm and discriminate against IBPOC. Both covert and overt racism are forms of violence and are rooted in the idea of white supremacy.

SEXISM

A system of oppression that privileges men and masculinity; subordinates women, girls and femmes (p. 12); and devalues practices associated with women, girls and femininity.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

ANTI-BLACKNESS

Behaviors, attitudes and practices of people and institutions that work to dehumanize black people in order to maintain white supremacy. Anti-blackness can also be internalized and might show up in black people or black communities in the form of colorism, an elevation of white culture or attempts to separate oneself from black cultural norms.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a chapter-based national organization working for the validity of black life. BLM works to (re)build the black liberation movement and is an ideological and political intervention in a world where black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of black folks' contributions to this society, black humanity and black resilience in the face of deadly oppression. BLM came as a rallying call created by three black queer women, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi and Alicia Garza, after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the murder of Florida teen Trayvon Martin. (blacklivesmatter.com)

COLORBLINDNESS

The ideology that believes the best way to end racial discrimination is through treating individuals the same, regardless of race, culture and ethnicity. This belief, however, ignores historical and structural factors that benefit white people and disadvantage indigenous, black and all other people of color. "Colorblindness" does nothing to address inequity, since it does not acknowledge the impacts of institutional and systemic racism on people of color.

COLORISM

A system of oppression that privileges those with lighter skintones and subordinates those with darker skin. This form of oppression is rooted in racism and white supremacy, privileging and upholding white standards of beauty.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT)

A theoretical framework that critically examines the intersections of race, power and the law. CRT provides counternarratives in order to challenge dominant understandings of race/racism.

Ex: When we utilize Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the context of Amherst College, we can theorize how individual acts of racism relate to larger institutional policies/procedures that perpetuate racism and oppression.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Theft and exploitative use of cultural elements—such as hairstyles, attire, symbols, language or art attire for profit and/or commodification without historical/cultural understanding or respect for their value in the original culture.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

The process in which one racial/ethnic group takes on the cultural norms and traits (language, dress, behaviors, etc.) of a dominant racial/ethnic group.

EXOTICISM

The representation of another cultural group as mysterious, exciting and radically different from one's own. This is particularly common in the context of power imbalance and results in a distorted, exaggerated or essentialized understanding of the exoticized group.

MISOGYNOIR

A term coined by black queer feminist scholar Moya Bailey to describe the specific way anti-black racism and misogyny work together to oppress black women. Similarly, transmisogynoir refers to the experiences of racialized misogyny towards black trans women. Transmisogynoir and misogynoir can be perpetuated by anyone, though it can only be experienced by black women. (catalystjournal.org/ojs/index.php/catalyst/article/view/98/200)

MULTIRACIAL/ MULTIETHNIC

A categorization used to identify people who may fall into multiple racial/ethnic groups. Also refers to working in the interest of people from more than one racial/ethnic group.

Ex: A collaboration between the different racial/ethnic affinity groups on campus (such as BSU, ACSU, La Causa, ASA, SASA and KSA) is an example of a multiracial/multiethnic force pushing towards collective liberation.

ORIENTALISM

The stereotyped perception of the Middle East, North Africa and Asia as static, exotic, primitive and essentially anti-modern. This is often found in an ethnocentric context in Western academia, politics, art, media and culture.

PERSON OF COLOR

An umbrella term for any individual belonging to a racially minoritized group. At the Multicultural Resource Center, the term "People of Color" refers to communities or groups racialized outside of whiteness, including but not limited to Latinx/o/a/e*, black, Asian, indigenous/First Nations and Pacific Islanders.

**We use Latinx/o/a/e to reference the racializing of people from Latin America/the Caribbean in the United States, though we recognize that within Latinx communities people can identify as white, black, indigenous, etc.*

POST-RACIAL IDEOLOGY

A belief that society has moved beyond race and that race/racism are no longer relevant because all of the racialized barriers have been addressed and dismantled, resulting in full and equal participation of all people in American society.

Ex: The election of Barack Obama as president of the United States marked for many the idea that America had become a post-racial society. However, statistics have shown that in the years since the 2016 presidential election, hate crimes and groups have increased. (YWCA) (ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime)

RACE

Race is a social construction (not a biological phenomenon) developed by European (white) scientists intended to rank humans based on perceived biological differences rooted in appearance, skin tone and ancestral homelands. With the intent to subjugate particular communities, race “scientists” asserted that whites/Europeans were the most evolved and blacks/Africans were the least evolved, with Asians existing in the middle. The idea of race is intricately linked with the practice of white supremacy, which continues to have damaging impacts on communities of color globally.

RACIAL BATTLE FATIGUE

A concept developed by Dr. William A. Smith that refers to the psychological and physical responses people of color may experience from living in and navigating historically and culturally white spaces and extremely racist environments. Symptoms may include high blood pressure, anxiety, frustration, shock, anger and depression.

WHITE SUPREMACY

An ideological system of power, rooted in 17th-century scientific racism, that utilizes the exploitation and oppression of black people, indigenous folks and other people of color globally in order to establish and maintain wealth, power and privilege for white people. White supremacy relies on the false belief in white dominance and the assumption of white superiority, and like any system of power, can be perpetuated unconsciously or consciously by both white people and people of color and is enacted in various contexts: institutional, interpersonal, social, cultural, political, ideological and historical.

WOMEN OF COLOR

Political term coined by, and intended to connect and build solidarity amongst, self-identified racially minoritized women. This term has undergone many variations including “people of color” “queer/trans people of color” (QTPOC), “youth of color,” and (commonly heard on campuses across the country) “students of color” and “faculty/staff of color.”

Note: The intent of these terms is not to erase the unique individual experiences of people and specific racial/ethnic groups but rather to build solidarity amongst various communities experiencing oppression under white supremacy.

Listen to Loretta Ross, co-founder and national coordinator of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, share the history of the term “women of color”:
youtube.com/watch?v=82vl34mi4Iw.

GENDER AND GENDER IDENTITY

AFAB	An abbreviation for “assigned-female-at-birth,” a term frequently used, often by the transmasculine community, as a self-descriptor. “Assigned-at-birth” serves to imply that sex is without the agency of the individual.
AGENDER	An identity for individuals who often conceptualize themselves as not aligning with gender categories, having no other words that quite fit, or not caring about the project of gender altogether.
AGGRESSIVE GIRL (AG)	Term used to describe masculine expression by women of color. Coined by lesbian communities of color specifically from New York City.
AMAB	An abbreviation for “assigned-male-at-birth,” a term frequently used, often by the transfeminine community, as a self-descriptor. “Assigned-at-birth” serves to imply that sex is without the agency of the individual.
ANDROCENTRISM	The term used to describe the centrality and superiority of men. Androcentrism is not simply the idea that men are superior to women, but a deeper premise that supports this idea: the definition of men and the experience of men as the norm or standard for human, and women and the experience of women as a deviation from that norm.
BIGENDER	Identifying as two genders, either simultaneously or varying between the two.
BINDING	A method of reducing or flattening the appearance of one’s chest,
BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM	The idea that all human behavior is innate, determined by biology. Biological determinism has been used to oppress marginalized groups (e.g. as a justification for slavery, the displacement and genocide of native populations, and denying women’s suffrage) using biased science. It has been associated with scientific racism, eugenics and the maintenance of strict gender roles.
BOI	Term first coined to describe masculine-presenting queer black women whose gender presentation can be more fluid and/or androgynous than completely masculine. Purposefully coined to be different from “stud”/“AG” (p. 20/p. 10) because of the rigid conformity to masculinity in those communities.

BUTCH	An identity term often used by queer women, particularly by lesbians, who express themselves in masculine ways. Some consider butch to be its own gender identity. While an identity term to some, it can be used as a pejorative.
CISGENDER	An identity term for individuals whose gender identity matches their birth-assigned sex. Cisgender people receive benefits that trans and nonbinary people don't have.
CISHETERO-NORMATIVITY	A pervasive system of belief that centers, and naturalizes, heterosexuality and a binary system of assigned sex and gender where there are two rigid, distinct ways of being: assigned-male-at-birth masculine man and assigned-female-at-birth feminine woman.
CISSEXISM	The system of oppression that values and privileges cisgender people, upholds the gender binary and marginalizes, oppresses and makes invisible the lives and experiences of transgender and nonbinary people.
COMING OUT	The process by which queer and trans folks recognize, accept, typically appreciate and often celebrate their sexual orientation, sexuality or gender identity/expression. Coming out is different across communities and cultures. There is no right or wrong way to be a queer or trans person, and coming out is not a possibility for everyone.
CONSENT	A mutual agreement between people to engage in sexual behavior together. It should be continuous and sober. Consent can't be implied, and consent for one behavior is not consent for all behaviors. Having agreed to do something previously does not mean that a person gives consent in the present. Consent can be given in words and actions, but it's important to remember that nonverbal signals can be misinterpreted, and the clearest way to know that you have consent is to make sure that you ask.
DEADNAME	The previously given name of a person who has decided to change their name in order to better align with their gender identity.
DRAG KING	A person who enacts masculinity for the pleasure and entertainment of others in the act of performance.
DRAG PERFORMER	A person who enacts gender for the pleasure and entertainment of others in the act of performance. There are often tensions between the drag community and various trans communities that largely stem from the mainstream public's tendency to conflate trans identities with drag performances.
DRAG QUEEN	A person who enacts femininity for the pleasure and entertainment of others in the act of performance.

FEMINISM

As defined by author and activist bell hooks, feminism is “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression.” It is a belief in and desire for equality between all genders. It encompasses social, political and economic justice. See Intersectionality (p. 3) and Womanism (p. 22).

FEMININITY

A set of attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with girls and women (wiki). Performing femininity in a culturally established way is expected of people assigned female at birth.

FEMINIZATION

The process of associating people and things with the stereotypically feminine. For example, certain professions such as elementary school education, nursing, and assistant/secretarial positions are feminized. This is a covert way that sexism is deployed.

FEMME

An identity term often used to by queer women who express themselves in feminine ways. Some consider “femme” to be its own gender identity. While an identity term to some, it can be used as a pejorative, specifically in the gay/queer men’s community.

**FRAGILE
MASCULINITY**

A state of requiring affirmation of one’s masculinity and manhood in order to feel power and dominance. Rooted in sexism, heterosexism and misogyny, fragile masculinity is the fear of being associated with femininity and queerness, or any traits that oppose those which are socially constructed as masculine. For example, men being hesitant to cry is an example of fragile masculinity.

**FTM
(FEMALE TO MALE)**

Abbreviation for “Female-to-Male.” A term referring to people who identify as men who were assigned female at birth. Some trans men reject this term because they have always been male, regardless of sex assignment.

GAFF

Compressive underwear used to make tucking (p. 22) easier that is designed for trans women and transfeminine people.

GENDER

Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society deems as masculine or feminine. This social construct is often linked to and confused with sex assigned at birth (see p.19 for definition). Many, if not all, people display traits associated with more than one gender.

**GENDER
ATTRIBUTION**

The act of presuming someone else’s gender with or without knowledge of that person’s gender identity. In Western culture, these assumptions are rooted in our cultural understanding of gender as a binary system and how gender is socialized. Guessing at a person’s gender pronouns is one example of gender attribution.

GENDER AFFIRMATION SURGERIES

Surgical procedures that some trans folks pursue that create congruence between one's body and one's gender identity. These procedures may include "top surgery" (breast augmentation or removal) and "bottom surgery" (altering genitals). For female-to-male transsexuals, GAS can involve a bilateral mastectomy (chest reconstruction), panhysterectomy (removal of the ovaries and uterus), and sometimes a phalloplasty (construction of a penis) and scrotoplasty (formation of a scrotum) or a metoidioplasty (restructuring the clitoris). For male-to-female transsexuals, GAS consists of optional surgical breast implants and vaginoplasty (construction of a vagina). Additional surgeries might include a trachea shave (reducing the size of the Adam's apple), bone restructuring to feminize facial features, and hair transplants. Sometimes GAS is referred to as "gender confirming surgery" to recognize that one's gender does not change—it is only being made visible to others. Historically, gender affirmation surgery has been referred to as sex reassignment surgery. Please do not use the term "sex change." It is important to note that not all transgender people pursue gender affirmation surgeries; the choice not to pursue them can be due to cost, safety or a feeling that surgery is not a part of their gender journey.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Violent acts that are motivated by a person's gender, specifically against those who hold or are perceived to hold marginalized gender identities (e.g. women and girls, transgender people, nonbinary folks, etc.). Gender-based violence is rooted in and amplified by institutional sexism, misogyny, cissexism, transphobia and queerphobia. This violence can play out on both institutional levels (e.g. restrictions to reproductive health care) and interpersonal levels (e.g. partner abuse).

GENDER BINARY

A socially constructed gender system in which gender is classified into two distinct and opposite categories. These gender categories are both narrowly defined and disconnected from one another. They are strictly enforced through rigid gender roles and expectations. Further, there is a hierarchy inherent to the classification, in which one gender, men/boys/masculinity, has access to power and privilege and the other, women/girls/femininity, is marginalized and oppressed. These classifications are seen as immutable; those assigned male at birth should identify as men and embody masculinity, and those assigned female at birth should identify as women and embody femininity. This binary system excludes nonbinary, genderqueer and gender-nonconforming individuals. All people are harmed by the gender binary system, but your place within the system determines the degree and quality of harm. The gender binary is weaponized through conquest, colonization and continued occupation of indigenous people's lands. The gender binary system is inherently violent and foregrounds all gender-based oppression.

GENDER DYSPHORIA	Discomfort and/or distress that varies in intensity, duration and interval for an individual extending from the disjuncture between their conceptualization of their gender and the way their body is. Serves as a medical term and diagnosis in the American Psychological Association's (APA) <i>Diagnostics and Statistical Manual</i> (DSM-5), which contributes to the stigmatization of transgender identities as a mental disorder. Clinically speaking, gender dysphoria is present when a person experiences significant distress related to their gender. The concept of dysphoria, rather than the diagnosis, is employed frequently by the trans/non-binary community to name their experience. No one views gender dysphoria as a mental health diagnosis.
GENDER ESSENTIALISM	Gender essentialism is related to both biologism and biological determinism. It is rooted in the notion of a universal experience of womanhood that often fails to address the intersections of race, class, and sexuality. Also, see Naturalization (p. 17).
GENDER EXPRESSION	The way that someone expresses their gender, either consciously or unconsciously. This encompasses everything that communicates our gender to others: clothing, hairstyles, body language, mannerisms, how we speak, how we play and our social interactions and roles. Most people have some blend of masculine and feminine qualities that constitute their gender expression, and this expression can also vary depending on the social context. There is not always a direct translation between gender identity and gender expression.
GENDER FLUID	An identity or umbrella term for people whose gender expression is variable across time and space.
GENDER IDENTITY	Language a person claims based on their internal understanding of their gender. Also, one's innate and personal experience of gender. This may or may not align with one's gender expression or gender attribution.
GENDER-INCLUSIVE	A term used to describe language and spaces that validate the existence and experiences of all gender identities and expressions, especially marginalized gender identities.
GENDER MARKERS	The identification of your gender on legal documents, often conflated with sex.
GENDER-NONCONFORMING	An identity term for a person who does not conform to cisgender normative constructs of gender and binary gender roles. This can also be used as an umbrella term to represent gender identity and expression.

GENDER PAY GAP

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) defines the gender pay gap as a comparison of women's and men's median earnings. Median earnings are typical, not average, earnings. Looking at the salaries of all women and men working full-time, the median is the number in the middle of the group. This definition does not take into account the ways that gender identity and race, in particular, impact women's earnings. Further, trans women are not accounted for in most analyses of the pay gap.

GENDER ROLES

A set of social and behavioral norms that are considered appropriate for particular genders. They almost always adhere to the gender binary when viewed in Western culture.

GENDERQUEER

A gender identity term for people who conceptualize their gender as existing outside of, not included within or beyond, the gender binary. There is a certain political sensibility to genderqueer as an identity. Please see Queer Theory p. 19 for more.

HARD FEMME

An identity term, often for queer women. This is a political identity, in addition to sexual/gender identity—hard femmes are feminists. Hard femmes tend to dress feminine of center. They express strength and celebrate femininity, while challenging the gender binary and the “butch-femme” paradigm. They express themselves beyond reductive dichotomies. Hard femmes stand up against internalized misogyny and remind us that femininity and strength can be synonymous.

HEALTHY MASCULINITY

An aspirational concept that poses the question: “What does masculinity look like if it’s done at no one’s expense?” People who embody healthy masculinity work in solidarity with marginalized gender identities to end gender-based oppression. They have an understanding of how their masculinity is impactful, and do the work of healing, undoing and preventing harm.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Describes the ways in which masculinity is pervasive, ever-present, systematic and inextricably tied to power and control. Proposes how and why men maintain social dominance over women, girls, femmes and any folks whose gender identities are deemed to be outside of the enterprise of masculinity.

HERMAPHRODITE

An outdated term for an intersex person or a person with an intersex condition. While some in the intersex community may reclaim/self-describe with the term, it is considered offensive and should not be used by those outside the community. See Intersex.

HERSTORY

A second-wave feminist effort to provide a more inclusive historical accounting that centers the experiences of women and their importance in the shared temporal narrative of events.

HETEROPATRIARCHY	See Patriarchy.
HIGH FEMME	A femme person who expresses their gender in ultra-feminine ways. Usually, but not exclusively, this refers to a queer woman.
HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY	Also known as HRT, a hormone therapy taken by some trans folks to alter the hormonal composition of the body. Some people will choose to undergo a gender-affirmation surgery in conjunction with HRT and some will not.
INTERNALIZED SEXISM/MISOGYNY	Due to its pervasiveness in our U.S. societal systems and cultures, people often internalize sexism and misogyny through cycles of socialization that occur constantly throughout life. This internalization happens as a way of making meaning of experiences and trying to conform to societal norms. Most people, including many people with oppressed gender identities, contribute to the perpetuation of everyday manifestations of sexism and misogyny through their thinking, words and actions. The end result of this internalized oppression is often the self-policing of thoughts and actions as well as attempts to regulate the behavior of others.
INTERNALIZED TRANSPHOBIA	Discomfort with one's own transgender identity as a result of internalizing society's normative gender expectations.
INTERSEX	A general term used for a variety of conditions in which an individual's reproductive or sexual anatomy (re: genitals, secondary sex characteristics, chromosomes and/or hormone levels) do not fit into the medical/societal definition of male or female. Some members of the intersex community prefer to use person-first language to describe themselves (e.g. "a person with an intersex condition") and conceptualize their condition as one of medical diagnosis. Others (re)claim intersex as an identity.
LIVING FULL-TIME	When a trans person is living full-time in their gender. This is often a prerequisite to obtaining gender affirmation surgery.
MALE GAZE	In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey coined this term to describe the way in which the camera locates the spectator in the male subject position and the woman on-screen as the object of desire. The male subject position is also heterosexual, cisgender and white. Here, the viewer's position encourages them to identify with the male protagonist. The power of looking is centralized in the man who is the bearer of the look, and the patriarchal order is reified. In film, women are to be objectified and consumed by men; women are present only to be looked at, and their value is tied only to their relationship to a male protagonist. Mulvey asserts that the two main modes of looking through the male gaze are fetishistic and voyeuristic. Mulvey draws on psychoanalytic theory. This concept is related to Lacan's theories of "the gaze."

MALE PRIVILEGE

A group of unearned cultural, legal, social and institutional rights extended to cisgender men based on their assigned-sex and gender. Cisgender men have access to institutional power, make the rules, control the resources and are assumed capable. Masculinity, as enacted by cisgender men, is universalized and viewed as the normative gender. Cisgender men are often unaware of their differential treatment (see Fragile Masculinity). While trans men, masculine-of-center women and nonbinary folks have access to benefits based on their proximity to hegemonic masculinity (see above definition), male privilege is reserved for cisgender men. This is particularly true for white cisgender men.

MASCULINITY

A socially constructed set of attributes, behaviors and roles associated with boys and men. Performing masculinity in a culturally established way is expected of people assigned-male-at-birth.

MISGENDER

To intentionally or unintentionally use language that does not align with the person's gender identity, e.g. gender identity terms, pronouns, honorifics, deadnames, gendered terms of endearment. This can be incredibly painful (see Microaggressions p. 3).

MISOGYNY

A type of gender-based oppression founded in the belief that women are inferior to and must remain subordinate to men. "Misogyny" literally means "hatred of women." It is predicated upon the binary gender system (see Gender Binary). Misogyny, and societal acceptance of it, can be blamed for men's violence against women and girls (including trans women); discrimination against women in employment, education and politics; lack of appropriate health care for women; and continuing unequal divisions of labor in the home, among many other social inequities. White supremacy and cisgender patriarchy, along with other forms of oppression, intersect with misogyny to impact the lived experience of women of color and queer and trans women.

MISOGYNOIR – A term coined by queer black feminist scholar Moya Bailey to describe the particular racialized sexism that black women face. Misogynoir is oppression against black women where anti-blackness and misogyny converge and compound one another. This term is not applicable to non-black women of color (or white women).

TRANSMISOGYNY – A term to describe how transphobia, sexism, misogyny, and cissexism converge and compound one another in the lives of trans women and trans femmes.

TRANSMISOGYNOIR – The marginalization of black trans women and trans feminine people that is inclusive of transphobia, racism, and misogyny, and how all of these intersect. Takes into account that black women face a different, racialized form of misogyny that is compounded with transphobia.

MTF (MALE TO FEMALE)	Abbreviation for “Male-to-Female.” A term referring to people who identify as women who were assigned male at birth. Some trans women reject this term because they have always been female, regardless of sex assignment.
MX.	A gender-inclusive honorific, pronounced as <i>mixter</i> , or <i>mix</i> .
NATURALIZATION	The social construction of gender and other roles as “natural” or innate to a given group. In social practice, the construction of these roles is obscured once the naturalization process becomes a social “given.” Related to biological determinism and gender essentialism.
NONBINARY	An identity term for a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. A person whose beautiful existence transcends reductive binary constructs and works to annihilate gender and gender-based oppression once and for all.
OUTING	The act of disclosing, intentionally or unintentionally, a person’s identity to others without that person’s permission. Outing someone can have serious consequences on their safety, employment, family situation, etc.
PACKING	The act of wearing padding or a prosthesis to give the appearance of having a penis.
PACKER	A phallic object worn in the underwear to give the appearance of having a penis. Packers range from padded forms to rolled-up socks to prosthetics. They are most often used by trans men or masculine-presenting people who were not assigned-male-at-birth.
PATRIARCHY	A sociopolitical system in which cisgender heterosexual men have authority over everyone else. Also, the way we describe society as fundamentally based on heterosexism, sexism and male dominance. This is also known as cisheteropatriarchy. Here, all actors are presumed to be heterosexual and should align with strict gender binary roles. Patriarchy is reliant upon ideologies of domination and the exploitation of all things related to the feminine.
THE PERSONAL AS POLITICAL	A term created to underscore the ways in which the everyday experiences of women are inherently political. Issues like access to health care, equal pay, paid parental leave and gender-based violence have real impacts on the lived experiences of women. The line between public and private is not immutable. This phrase has been used to encourage women’s political participation.

POST-FEMINISM

Distancing oneself from feminism while simultaneously championing the empowerment of individual women. The premise of post-feminism is that we have moved beyond feminism and that sexism and misogyny are no longer operating. Post-feminism is rooted in the atomization and individualism of neoliberalism. Post-feminism is a paradoxical framework that is often used to do harm to women by distracting from the realities of gender-based oppression with individual success stories. These stories are often of white, class-privileged, able-bodied, straight and cisgender women who deploy the empowerment of women to succeed under capitalism. Post-feminism forwards the ideology of white supremacy.

PRONOUNS

Words we use to refer to common or proper nouns. In the context of gender, pronouns are used to refer to people, and are often gendered. Examples of pronouns include *they/them/theirs*, *she/her/hers*, *he/him/his* and *ze/hir/hirs*. Most pronouns are gendered and binary, although there are personal pronouns in many languages that are not gender-specific. We use pronouns to attribute gender (see Gender Attribution). Using incorrect pronouns, or assuming them based on appearance, is a way to misgender someone (see Misgender).

PAY EQUITY

Pay equity is the concept that all people should be compensated equitably based on their work, not their race, gender or another marginalized social identity. It is also a means of eliminating gender and race discrimination in the wage-setting system. Women are almost half of the workforce. They are the sole or co-breadwinner in half of American families with children. They receive more college and graduate degrees than men. Yet, on average, women continue to earn considerably less money than men. White women make \$0.82 on the dollar compared to men. Latinas make \$0.58, and black women make \$0.65. The pay rates of trans women are not studied adequately for numerous reasons, including erasure and high rates of unemployment. Trans folks are four times more likely to live in extreme poverty than the general population.

PAY GAP

See Gender Pay Gap (p. 14).

QUEER THEORY

A collection of academic and intellectual pursuits growing out of feminist theory in the early to mid-1990s, queer theory presents a post-structuralist, post-modern complication of sex, gender and sexuality, characterized by destruction/destabilization of said categories and positions “the queer” as definitively anti-normative. It offers up the challenge to investigate manifestations of fixed identity, to consider its permutations in varied and non-predictable ways.

QUESTIONING

An identity term for a person who is exploring their sexuality and/or gender. People may be questioning at different times in their lives, because gender and sexuality can be experienced as fluid and/or ever-changing. It does not have to be a linear experience or progression.

RAPE CULTURE

An environment or society in which sexual violence is both prevalent and normalized. Sexual violence starts with established attitudes and beliefs about others. These beliefs are strengthened by repeated exposure and reinforcement. These behaviors, jokes, media messages, etc., create a culture in which some people are seen or viewed as less-than, which gives permission for people to treat them in particular ways.

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

The concept of reproductive justice was first developed by activist Loretta Ross, who wanted to incite a paradigm shift beyond the single-issue framework of the pro-choice movement and towards a more intersectional framework, recognizing the interrelatedness among all social justice issues. Reproductive justice emphasizes that each person's ability to live out their rights and access to needed health services is uniquely shaped by their social identities and the matrix of oppression. The three core principles of reproductive justice are: the right to have a baby under the conditions in which one wants to; the right to terminate a pregnancy, with the options available that make sense; and the right to raise a child, to parent in a safe environment in a healthy community.

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH

The designation that refers to a person's biological, morphological, hormonal and genetic composition. One's sex is typically assigned at birth and classified, based on socially constructed binaries, as either male, female or intersex (see definition p. 16). However, a spectrum of sex identities and characteristics exists, and many people possess a range of biological traits.

SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION

Occurs when a person is defined by their sexual attributes and the rest of their personality, identity and existence is ignored; objectification involves reduction of a person to an object for one's gaze or pleasure.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Bullying or coercion of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is always unwanted and often subtle in nature. For more information, please visit the Title IX website at amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect.

SLUT-SHAMING

The act of making a girl or woman feel guilty or ashamed about their sexuality or (actual or perceived) sexual behavior. Often women and girls slut-shame each other, which is an act of collusion with sexism. This is a means by which we enforce rigid gender norms related to sexuality. People of other gender identities may experience slut-shaming, but it does not manifest in systemic ways or occur to the same degree. Slut-shaming relies upon a double standard that places women in the impossible position: to be sexual, but not too sexual. This is not something men experience.

SOFT BUTCH	An identity term often used by queer women or lesbians who exhibit some stereotypical butch traits without entirely fitting the masculine stereotype associated with butch lesbians.
STEALTH	Similar to passing, a term that describes when a transgender person lives full-time as their gender identity and does not claim their transgender identity. Being stealth isn't the goal of all trans folks, but it is for some. Oftentimes, this means acting in ways that are gender-normative.
STUD	Term used to describe black masculine-presenting women. Coined in black lesbian communities to separate from the term "butch."
TOXIC MASCULINITY	Masculinity as defined by violence, sexual acts, status, aggression, and the oppression of others. Toxic masculinity hurts everyone, including cisgender men. It is characterized with rigid gender roles and expectations that are often violently enforced. Men are unable to express or feel emotion, and the fear of being deemed in proximity to being gay or a woman is constant threat. Toxic masculinity is our cultural ideal of manliness in its most extreme form. It is foregrounded by misogyny, sexism, and homophobia.
TRANSGENDER OR TRANS	This term refers to an individual whose gender identity does not match or is at some distance from their assigned-sex-at-birth. For some folks, "transgender" and/or "trans" are considered to be umbrella terms.
TRANS-EXCLUSIONARY RADICAL FEMINIST (TERF)	A term for feminists who define and celebrate womanhood through the medically defined "female" body. TERFs believe that trans women are not women because they were socialized as boys. This is a biological essentialist argument. By and large, TERF ideology is rejected by mainstream feminism, as well as most queer and trans communities. However, TERF ideology does still infiltrate many women's spaces.
TRANSITIONING	The process in which a trans or nonbinary person begins to live as their gender identity. It may include changing one's name, taking hormones, having surgery and/or altering legal documents. Transitioning means very different things to different people. There are different types of transition:
	LEGAL TRANSITION – The process of changing how one's gender is represented on legal documents, inclusive of one's birth certificate, driver's license, social security, insurance and/or passport. Many countries and U.S. states have legal barriers that make it expensive and difficult for trans people to legally transition.

MEDICAL TRANSITION – A medical transition includes hormones and/or surgeries. Please see Hormone Replacement Therapy and Gender Affirmation Surgery.

SOCIAL TRANSITION – A social transition includes transition from one gender to another by changing mannerisms, dress, hair, pronouns, name and/or a variety of other factors. A social transition involves elements of a transition that are not necessarily medical or legal.

TRANSPHOBIA

Fear, hatred and intolerance of people who identify as transgender, nonbinary, genderqueer and gender-nonconforming, or those who break, blur or transgress assigned gender roles and the gender binary.

TRANSSEXUAL

Individuals whose assigned sex at birth does not match their gender identity and who, through gender affirmation surgery and/or hormone treatments, seek to change their physical body to better align with their gender identity. The term “transsexual” is not interchangeable with the term “transgender.” This term is considered by many to be outdated, but remains an important and salient identity term for some.

TRANS MAN

Someone who identifies as a man, but was assigned female or intersex at birth.

TRANS WOMAN

Someone who identifies as a woman, but was assigned male or intersex at birth.

TUCKING

The practice of concealing the penis and testes so that the person’s front is flat, or without a bulge, especially in tight clothing. Tucking usually involves pushing the penis between one’s legs and then putting underwear or tape on to keep it in place. It can also involve tucking the testes back up inside the person.

VICTIM BLAMING

Victim-blaming statements and attitudes place the blame on the victim of a crime or act of abuse. Victim-blaming attitudes marginalize the victim/survivor and make it harder to come forward and report the abuse.

WHITE FEMINISM

A form of feminism that centers the experiences of white (also: cisgender, straight and upper-class) women. White feminism is feminism absent intersectionality. Some critics of white feminism argue that it is another ideology of white supremacy and that it isn’t actually feminism at all. White feminism is predicated upon the erasure of women of color and the ways in which racism and sexism converge and compound one another.

WOMANISM

A term coined by Alice Walker, referring to African American women's need to create a movement centered on their needs. Walker famously wrote that "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender." Womanists often believe that feminism, especially white feminism, does not adequately address the needs of black women.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

The right of women to vote in elections. Also, a name given to movements in various parts of the world to secure the enfranchisement of women. In the United States, the 19th Amendment extended the franchise to women, but in reality it wasn't until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that the franchise was extended to black women. Today, through various laws, including voter ID laws, many women, including many trans women, undocumented women, women of color, and incarcerated women, are unable to vote.

XTX

A response by trans folks who reject the terms "FTM" and "MTF," claiming that they were always their gender identity, regardless of birth-assigned sex. Some trans people use "XTF" and "XTM" to describe their gender.

SEXUAL AND ROMANTIC IDENTITY

DISCLAIMER: Identity terms mean very particular things to different individuals. The definitions provided in this section are approximates of how they are generally understood by their authors. The best way to truly understand what an identity term means is to ask someone who uses that term to name their own sexual identity. In other words: ask first whether they are in a place to talk about their sexual identity, and if they consent, ask!

AROMANTIC

An identity term for a person who experiences little to no romantic attraction to others and/or has a lack of interest in romantic relationships, activities or connections.

ASEXUAL

An identity term for a people who do not feel sexual attraction, experience little sexual attraction to others or do not feel desire for a sexual partner or partners. Asexuality can be conceptualized as a continuum with identities along the continuum possessing their own identity labels. Some asexual individuals may still experience romantic attractions. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy. Not all asexual people are aromantic.

BDSM

An acronym used in the kink and fetish communities that stands for “Bondage & Discipline,” “Dominance & Submission” and “Sadism & Masochism.”

BIPHOBIA

Myriad behaviors, beliefs and attitudes that can include hatred, discomfort, fear, erasure and/or violence against/towards people who identify or are perceived as bisexual, non-monosexual, etc., that manifest interpersonally, institutionally and systemically. The spectra of this particular form of violence impact folks across various identities within the LGBTQ+ community due to perceived proximity by outside aggressors, and by those within the community. E.g. assuming someone who identifies as bisexual is just in a phase and will eventually choose the kind of gender they’re attracted to.

BISEXUAL

An identity term that most often refers to a person who is attracted to people of multiple genders. Many folks often denote men and women, but not always. Some folks may define bisexuality as being sexually attracted to those of similar or different gender. Some may also understand bisexuality as an umbrella term encompassing a number of sexual identities that represent experiences of being sexually attracted to more than one gender. Also commonly shortened to “bi.” Those who use this term to describe their experience may or may not also use it to denote their romantic attraction.

CISHETERO-NORMATIVITY

A pervasive system of belief (on an individual, systemic and ideological level) that being cisgender and heterosexual (straight) and associated ways of being in the world (life-path, material desires, family/kinship structures, political/social goals, etc.) are the default and “normal.”

CIVIL MARRIAGE

Marriage that is performed and carried out by a government institution in accordance with the marriage laws of the jurisdiction, without religious content.

DEMISEXUAL

A sexual identity term for people who feel sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond. Demisexuals vary in the quality and intensity of their sexual desire, many feeling sexual attraction rarely and some having little to no interest in sexual activity. Some conceptualize demisexuality as a form of asexuality.

DEMIROMANTIC

A romantic identity term for people who feel romantic attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond. Demiromantic folks vary in the quality and intensity of their romantic desire, with many feeling romantic attraction rarely and some having little to no interest in romantic activity. Some conceptualize demiromantic as part of the aromantic spectrum.

DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP

Legal recognition of unmarried couples, offered by some state and local governments. Domestic partnerships offer some of the same benefits enjoyed by married persons—including the right to share health insurance coverage, and rights under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

DOMINANT

Person who exercises control in a Dominant/Submissive relationship or BDSM activities. Can be used for any gender. (Masculine: Dom, Feminine: Domme)

DOWN LOW

A term used to refer to men who may or may not explicitly identify as heterosexual, who engage in relationships with women, but who engage in sex with men. Typically, these men do not identify themselves as gay or bisexual. The term originated in the black community, but the behavior is not unique to any race, ethnicity or culture.

DYKE

Originally a derogatory term for a lesbian, with lesbians beginning to reclaim the word in the 1970s. Today, many lesbians affirmatively refer to themselves as dykes, but it is still commonly used as an insult and should be avoided by those outside of the lesbian community.

FAG

A derogatory word used to denote a gay man. Occasionally used as a self-identifying affirming term by some members of the queer and trans community, but should be avoided by those outside of the community.

FLUID(ITY)	Generally with another term attached, like “genderfluid” or “fluid-sexuality,” “fluid(ity)” describes an identity that may change or shift over time between/within/without various identities.
GAY	A sexual identity term that most often refers to a person who is sexually attracted to a person of a similar gender.
HETEROROMANTIC	A romantic identity term that most often refers to a person who is romantically attracted to people of a different gender.
HETEROSEXUALITY (HETEROSEXUAL)	Term developed as diagnosis of the hyper-infatuation with a different sex, first used by sexologist Karl Maria Kertbeny in 1868. The term began to be normalized in medical literature over the course of the first half of the 20th century. According to historian Jonathan Ned Katz, the term became solidified after World War II as “opposite of homosexual” (which was reflected in the rise in use of the gay-slang term “straight” outside of the LGBTQ+ community). Is used today to denote the normalized dominant sexual identity.
HETEROSEXUAL PRIVILEGE	Term that refers to the ways in which the structure of cisnormative society provides advantages to heterosexual people that are not accorded to members of the LGBTQ+ community. These advantages are so embedded into all dimensions of society that they are taken for granted and practically unrecognizable to heterosexual folks. They manifest through political and legal protections (e.g. the absence of political attack and regulation), cultural and social hegemony (e.g. diverse narratives in media, or lack of familial alienation) and various ensuing economic rewards (e.g. access to stable employment without fear of employer aggression if outed).
HOMOROMANTIC	A romantic identity term that most often refers to a person who is romantically attracted to people of their same gender.
HOMOSEXUALITY (HOMOSEXUAL)	Term developed as a diagnosis in the APA’s DSM from 1925 to 1973, used to pathologize and criminalize people whose sexual and romantic identity varies from the “heterosexual” norm. Often used in different academic literature today. Presently considered offensive and dated to many in the LGBTQ+ community, though some still claim it as an identity.
HOMONATIONALISM	A concept introduced by Jasbir K. Puar to name the political deployments of certain kinds of LGBTQ+ people in the service of U.S. nationalist and imperialist agendas. Used to explain the ways in which cis-gay and lesbian veterans of the Iraq War were celebrated as proof of American exceptionalism in contrast to racist/orientalist discourse about Iraqi combatants and other people in Central Asia racialized outside of U.S. understandings of whiteness.

HOMONORMATIVITY	A concept crystallized by Lisa Duggan that names the ever-present phenomenon where members of the LGBTQ+ community subscribe to heteronormative approximations of intimate, romantic and sexual lives that are the product of white, neoliberal (capitalist), sexist, transmisogynistic and cissexist norms. Often this is placed as an ideal image that is deployed against other members of the community to police their ways of being as less real, legitimate or possible.
HOMOPHOBIA	Myriad behaviors, beliefs and attitudes that may include hatred, discomfort, fear, erasure and/or violence against/towards people who identify or are perceived as gay, lesbian or queer that manifest interpersonally, institutionally and systemically. The spectra of this particular form of violence impact folks across various identities within the LGBTQ+ community due to perceived proximity by outside aggressors, and by those within the community (see internalized homophobia, bipobia, transphobia, etc.)—e.g. referring to gayness as a substitute for “less-than,” “inferior” or “dysfunction,” as represented by “That’s so gay.”
INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA	The fear and self-hate of one’s own gay, lesbian or queer sexual identity in individuals who have learned negative ideas about these groups through childhood/adulthood socialization. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group. This can result in depression, alienation, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.
INTERNALIZED BIPHOBIA	The fear and self-hate of one’s own bisexual, pansexual or non-monosexual sexual identity in individuals who have learned negative ideas about these groups through childhood/adulthood socialization. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group. This can result in depression, alienation, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.
INTERNALIZED TRANSPHOBIA	The fear and self-hate of one’s own transgender, nonbinary or genderqueer gender identity in individuals who have learned negative ideas about these groups through childhood/adulthood socialization. One form of internalized oppression is the acceptance of the myths and stereotypes applied to the oppressed group. This can result in depression, alienation, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.
KINK	Refers to any sexual practices, concepts or fantasies that are perceived to be unconventional. The term derives from the idea of a “bend” in one’s sexual behavior, to contrast such behavior with “straight” or “vanilla” sexual mores and proclivities.
LESBIAN	A identity term that most often refers to a person who identifies as a woman who is sexually attracted to other women. Those who use this term to describe their experience may or may not also use it to denote their romantic attraction.

LIFESTYLE	An offensive term attributed to the queer and trans community, often deployed by people to trivialize our identities and experiences. This term supports an understanding of sexual and gender identity as “a choice” or behavior that can be corrected.
MONOGAMY	Relationship structure that centers on the practice of having only one partner/significant other at a time or of having only one sexual partner at a time.
MONOSEXUAL	A sexual identity term that most often refers to a person who is sexually attracted to one particular gender.
OMNISEXUAL	A sexual identity term that most often refers to a person who experiences sexual attraction to people of all and/or many gender identities/expressions. Also commonly shortened to “omni.”
PANSEXUAL	An identity term that most often refers to a person who experiences sexual attraction to people of all and/or many gender identities/expressions. Also commonly shortened to “pan.”
POLYAMORY	Relationship structure that centers on the practice of consensually having or being open to having more than one or many partners/significant others. Sometimes used as an umbrella term for all forms of ethical, consensual and loving non-monogamy.
QUEER	Reclaimed* derogatory term that is used in a few different ways: a catchall term for the LGBTQ+ community; a sexual identity term that is often characterized by the incorporation of fluidity and anti-normativity; academic nomenclature to represent a prolific postmodern feminist theoretical project centered on sexuality and gender. Simultaneously appears in the academic and organizing circles in the late 1980s and early 1990s. *Not reclaimed by everyone.
SEXUALITY	Socially constructed concept that captures the relationships between a person’s experience, practice and conceptualizations of their physical, emotional and psychic attraction (or absence thereof) to other people and/or self. Can be understood in terms of the following:
	SEXUAL IDENTITY – The language someone uses to name their own concept of their sexual being that can be, but is not universally, defined in terms of the gender that someone is physically attracted to. Examples: asexual, graysexual, demisexual, non-monosexual, bisexual, omnisexual, pansexual, straight, lesbian and gay. Also, known as sexual orientation.
	SEXUAL BEHAVIOR – How someone actuates their sexual identity, through various actions, practices and behaviors. Not necessarily aligned stereotypically with the behaviors associated with a person’s sexual identity.

ROMANTIC IDENTITY – How someone names their own concept of their emotional/psychic/affectional attraction that often (but not always) includes the genders that they are attracted to. Examples: aromantic, grayromantic, demiromantic, biromantic, panromantic and omniromantic. Also known as romantic orientation.

ROMANTIC BEHAVIOR – How someone actuates their romantic identity, through various actions, practices and behaviors. This does not necessarily align stereotypically with the behaviors associated with a person's romantic orientation.

**SAFE, SANE
AND CONSENSUAL**

The phrase “Safe, Sane and Consensual” (sometimes shortened to SSC) can be traced back to a Gay-Male-S/M Activists report from August 1983, which appears to be its earliest mention. It is thought that the “safe” and “sane” originated from the sayings of having a “safe and sane” 4th of July celebration. The idea of having a good time while being careful seemed appropriate for BDSM and began to pick up in popularity. As BDSM communities became more cohesive and an accepted place to express our kinky interests, it became a saying of safety and an ethical practice. The idea has continued to evolve among the BDSM culture.

**SAME GENDER
LOVING**

An identity term often attributed to Cleo Manago to describe queer sexual identities among black queer and trans communities. Manago created the term as an Afrocentric alternative to more white, academic, elite terms like queer, gay and lesbian.

SUBMISSIVE

Person who gives up control of themselves to a partner who may hold the identity of a dominant or dom within BDSM activities. This could take the form of a 24/7 dynamic, or an occasional one.

STRAIGHT

First used in gay communities as slang: to “go straight” was to stop engaging in any form of queer sex or romantic behavior.

STUD

Defined in Gender and Gender Identity Terms.

SWITCH

Person who switches between roles. Both dominant/submissive, top/bottom, etc.

TRANSPHOBIA

Myriad behaviors, beliefs and attitudes that may include hatred, discomfort, fear, erasure and/or violence against/towards people who identify or are perceived as transgender, nonbinary, genderqueer, etc., that manifest interpersonally, institutionally and systemically. The spectra of this particular form of violence impact folks across various identities within the LGBTQ+ community due to perceived proximity by outside aggressors, and by those within the community.

CLASS

CLASS

Relative social rank in terms of income, wealth, education, status and/or power. (classism.org/class-definitions/)

CLASSISM

Differential treatment based on social class or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic assignment of worth based on social class; policies and practices set up to benefit more class-privileged people at the expense of the less class-privileged people, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality and causing basic human needs to go unmet. (classism.org/class-definitions/)

INDIVIDUAL CLASSISM – This term refers to classism on a personal or individual level, either in behavior or attitudes, either conscious and intentional or unconscious and unintentional. (classism.org/class-definitions/)

INSTITUTIONAL CLASSISM – This term refers to the ways in which intentional and unintentional classism is manifest in the various institutions of our society. (classism.org/class-definitions/)

INTERNALIZED CLASSISM – Acceptance and justification of classism by working-class and poor people, such as feelings of inferiority to higher-class people, feelings of superiority to people lower on the class spectrum than oneself, hostility and blame toward other working-class or poor people, and beliefs that classist institutions are fair.

CLASS PRIVILEGE

Tangible or intangible unearned advantages of higher-class status, such as personal contacts with employers, good childhood health care, inherited money or speaking with the same dialect/accents as people with institutional power, among other examples. (classism.org/class-definitions/)

CAPITALISM

An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state. This system leads to exploitative labor practices, which affect marginalized groups disproportionately.

FIRST-GENERATION

Any student who does not have a parent or guardian who has completed a four-year degree in the United States. We allow individuals to self-identify, as there are many circumstances and complexities that could limit a student from receiving informed guidance from family about navigating higher education.

POLITICS AND POLICY

TITLE IX

Title IX is a civil rights law that applies to institutions that receive federal funds. Title IX guarantees equal access to educational opportunities regardless of sex or gender.

To learn more about Title IX at Amherst College visit amherst.edu/campuslife/health-safety-wellness/sexual-respect/title_ix_explained.

DACA

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a kind of administrative relief from deportation. The purpose of DACA is to protect eligible immigrant youth who came to the United States when they were children from deportation. DACA gives young undocumented immigrants: 1) protection from deportation, and 2) a work permit. The program expires after two years, subject to renewal. (undocu.berkeley.edu/legal-support-overview/what-is-daca/)

UNDOCUMENTED

A term used to reference people who do not have citizenship or legal documentation to be or remain in the United States.

DREAM ACT

Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, popularly known as the DREAM Act, is a legislative proposal drafted by both Republicans and Democrats. It was created to help undocumented immigrants in the United States who meet certain requirements have an opportunity to enlist in the military or go to college and have a path to citizenship, first by being granted conditional residency and then permanent residency (usimmigration.org/glossary/dream-act).

GI BILL

Signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 22, 1944, the GI Bill was designed to provide veterans with education and vocational benefits after discharge. The bill also provided for unemployment allowances, loan guarantees and job counseling. Since then, Congress has enacted several expansions to the original GI Bill benefits, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill and the Montgomery GI Bill. (goarmy.com/benefits/education-benefits/plan-for-your-future/the-gi-bill.html)

GLOBAL POWER AND INEQUALITY

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

A belief in the superiority, rightful leadership and special moral status of the United States and its people, originally grounded in 17th-century Puritan and Protestant religious culture. This is generally expressed as sentiments that the U.S. is fundamentally different from other countries and therefore has unique rights and obligations.

CAPITALISM

An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state. This system leads to exploitative labor practices, which affect marginalized groups disproportionately.

COLONIALISM

The direct occupation, rule and/or exploitation of an area and its people by a foreign power (and/or its local representatives). This involves the development or restructuring of the colonized society for the benefit of the colonizer and at the expense of the colonized. Often, the practice of colonialism involves the relocation of the colonizing population to the colonized territory, where they live while maintaining political and cultural allegiance to their country of origin.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

A concept that illustrates one's rights and obligations as being rooted beyond the specifics of one's own country, or beyond the rights and obligations of one's national citizenship. Often overlooks factors such as systemic oppression, economic exploitation and power imbalance, thereby failing to acknowledge and address the realities of international relationships driving the Global North/Global South Divide.

GLOBAL NORTH/ GLOBAL SOUTH DIVIDE

A concept popularized by postcolonial studies to illustrate the economic development, power and wealth gap between the Global North and the Global South. The divide can be used to identify this gap between nations, or between communities within one nation. Those in the Global North have access to power and capital, whereas those in the Global South do not and are most often exploited and disenfranchised by those in the Global North for a benefit that is not shared across the divide.

IMPERIALISM

The domination and exploitation of one territory's people, culture and goods, driven by an outside power. Imperialism refers to the ways that powerful (often Global North) countries exercise power over other countries, whether through settlement, sovereignty or indirect mechanisms of control. This can differ from colonialism, which specifies occupation of the colonized land.

LEGAL/ILLEGAL	Highly racialized term to describe a person's presence in a nation without government-issued immigration status. Not an appropriate noun or adjective to describe an individual. Often misused to designate certain undocumented members of a society (specifically people of color) to deny their contributions, right to exist and recognition as people within certain national boundaries.
NEocolonialism	Sustaining the exploitative colonialist model, driven by the colonizing power, even after a colonized territory has successfully claimed political independence. For example, after European powers granted political independence to African colonies, they continued to exploit the economies of the new African countries at the cost of these countries and their people.
MIGRANT	An individual who chooses to resettle a significant distance from "home," especially to another region or country (often because of armed conflict, war, disaster, poverty, persecution or other catastrophic circumstances).
POSTCOLONIALISM	The critical study of colonialism, neocolonialism and the colonial legacy in formerly colonized countries.
REFUGEE	An individual who is forced to leave their home by armed conflict, war, disaster, poverty, persecution or other catastrophic circumstances. Driving forces can include natural disasters as well as circumstances orchestrated by domestic or international powers.
WHITE SAVIOR COMPLEX	An attitude or posture of condescending benevolence based on the idea that white people inherently should, are in a position to and are qualified to "save" people of color. This can be seen internationally as well as domestically. See Eurocentrism (p. 5) and American Exceptionalism (p. 31).

DISABILITY

ABLEISM

The system of beliefs and practices that perpetuate institutional, structural and individual limitations and violences against disabled folks/people with disabilities in physical, sociopolitical and economic environments.

ACCESSIBILITY

1. The measure of the usability of a space, platform, medium or other material thing whose use is mitigated or contingent upon a person's physical and/or cognitive capacities.
2. The continuous aspiration project aimed at countering and/or eliminating barriers to participation and interaction between any physical or social environments and disabled folk/people with disabilities.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Passed in 1990, the ADA is the comprehensive disability civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination against some disabled folks/people with disabilities and allows for many to engage in parts of the physical and social environment from which they were previously excluded. Has various limitations and expectations, particularly for the private sector.

THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Comprises those individuals who are Deaf and hard of hearing who share a common language, common experiences and values, and a common way of interacting with each other and with people outside of the Deaf community. Deaf folks often do not identify with disability.

DISABILITY

An umbrella term that names a vast grouping of identities, communities and experiences of diverse physical, emotional, sensory and cognitive ways of being. Has a fraught history within medicalized, politico-legal frames. The term is often deployed today to build community and coalition in the work of challenging ableism in various domains of society.

DISABILITY-FIRST LANGUAGE

Advocated by some within various disability activist and community spaces, it is a common language initiative to name one's disability as identity, as a resistance to the medical model of disability (see definition below). Finds its justification in the need to elevate a political analysis of an ableist society where disabled folks / people with disabilities experience limitations based on ableist physical and social (non-physical) environments (see Ableism). Ex: a deaf person or an autistic person.

IDENTITY-FIRST LANGUAGE	Advocated by some within various disability community spaces, it is a language convention that names one's disability as a primary part of one's self-identity, i.e. "I am a disabled person." Is rooted in the social model of disability (see definition below). Not to be generalized to all communities and cultures of disability.
MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY	Historical foundation for understanding disability in the West that conceptualizes disability as a medical phenomenon or diagnosis. Primary focus is on medical care and treatment managed through a professional network of care providers and/or family.
PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE	Advocated by some within various disability community spaces, it is a common language convention that foregrounds the person before the disability, i.e. "I am a person with a disability." This works to decenter disability as identity, and encourages viewing individuals for their whole selves. Not to be generalized to all communities and cultures of disability. Ex: a person who is deaf or a person with autism.
POLITICAL/RELATIONAL MODEL OF DISABILITY	A friendly departure from the social model that aims to incorporate various expansions and complications into the understanding of disability, including a destabilized notion of disability vs. "impairment"; incorporating family, support aids, other crucial loved ones and care providers; and negative effects experienced by disabled folks/people with disabilities in an ableist world.
SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY	A model that conceptualizes disability as a social identity category that is brought into relief by the ways both the built and sociopolitical environments of society are organized, which ultimately restrict life choices for disabled folks/people with disabilities.

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Resource Center Team

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Center for International Student Engagement
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Queer Resource Center
Women's & Gender Center