

KEY TERMS/CONCEPTS
IONAH M. ELAINE SCULLY
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Black - When referring to Black peoples, always capitalize the “B” in Black. If non-Black yourself, do not use the plural form of “Black” to refer to Black people.

Citizens - This is a term that often reifies nationalism and national-borders in ways that exclude many im/migrants, undocumented people, and some Native/Indigenous people (many of whom do not identify as citizens of the nation-state but rather as citizens of their sovereign Indigenous nation). Consider using “people” or “bodies” or other terms. When using “citizen”, interrogate its history, usage, purpose, and meaning.

Intersectionality - This is a term coined by Black Feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to speak to the multiple matrices of power and oppression people experience at the intersections of how they experience their identity. A Black cis woman, for example, has a different experience from Black cis men and white cis women. They experience the intersections of racialized/racist sexism and sexist anti-Blackness. They experience not merely sexism and racism, but a combination of the two that is sometimes an entirely different experience. Black-Native/ Afro-Indigenous trans women with disabilities tend to experience the intersections of colonialism/Indigenous erasure, anti-Blackness, transphobia, cis-sexism and misogyny, ableism, and capitalism in ways that become something different than each of those experiences taken separately. Intersectionality is not something you *have*; it is a working-class Black feminist theoretical tool emerging from the Combahee River Collective to describe lived experiences and power dynamics.

There is no such “thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives” - Audre Lorde, Black feminist scholar/thinker/poet

Marginalized - A term to describe a very vast and broad category of people who have been made to be at the margins (often racialized, see below) of the dominant society. This therefore includes folks who are not part of Western/Eurocentric, cis-male heteronormative, able-bodied, wealth-privileged “normativity” (among other identity areas).

Minorities - A caution: when the term “minority” is used, it intends to push the experiences of those communities who have been forcibly pushed to the margins as ancillary and therefore can be seen as not a majority nor requiring important attention. Marginalized or “pushed to the margins” is a better term/set of terms as it implies more action. Still, *both* terms are not without critique. They can both sometimes be passive. In particular, why is marginalized used when the specific groups could be named? When using, ask yourself if you are using to avoid saying “people of color” or “Black folks” or “Indigenous folks”. This can be an evasive strategy that then does not address adequately the problems at hand.

Native/Indigenous - terms should be capitalized. If not Native/Indigenous yourself, do not use “Indian” except in the case of a direct quote or citation or name of an organization/institution or legal document that uses that term.

N word/N slur - In *any* variety, should not be used by non-Black people in writing/speaking, even when quoting archival material. When citing, use [n*] or, if appropriate use the term “Black/African-American” (again in brackets) in lieu of the bracketed term. When not directly citing, never use the term and do not use the bracketed reference, either.

Racialization - The process by which systems/institutions of Whiteness and Eurocentrism construct other bodies/groups of people as people of color and, in the process, construct whiteness as hierarchically superior and other bodies as inferior. This is not to say that whiteness is not a race. This is precisely to say whiteness *racializes* other bodies by also naming itself as outside of being a race, part of the project of normalizing Whiteness and delegitimizing people/communities of color, which causes harm.

Social Location/Positionality - Social location refers to one’s actual location: whose lands are you on and what lands do you come from, what is your *relationship* to those spaces, to the people there, etc.? Social location is your relationship to those around you and what those relationships mean in terms of the power/privilege/advantages or areas of marginalization/disadvantage/etc. That you have been given under the institutions and systems that shape our lived realities (see Intersectionality above). This location can change, but often in a moment to moment point in time, it is *beyond your control*. It is through self-reflection of your social location that you can identify your *positionality* which is your stance based on your social location. A cis, white, able-bodied man with documented U.S. citizenship and wealth-privilege maintains that relative social location—granted a great deal of power and as such that power can be wielded in problematic and harmful ways. When examining that social location, however, that individual *can* use that power to move from centering of self to de-centering of self to make space for more marginalized experiences to be witnessed. That is an aspect of this individual’s *positionality*. An able-bodied Indigenous person without documented U.S. citizenship carries a social location that is vastly different and their positionality may stem from examining their Indigenous ontologies (worldviews/realities), from being undocumented (examining and critiquing constructions of settler-state borders), from reconciling their able-bodiedness, and/or from examining colorism (a former of racism based on skin color).

Trans and Transgender - The term is “transgender” or sometimes “trans” or “trans*.” It is not a verb. It is an adjective and thus also, in speaking and writing, one would communicate “trans people” and not merely “trans.” Outdated terms such as “transv*st*t” and “trans**x**l” are inappropriate for cis and non-trans people to say. Also, do not say “women and trans women;” trans women *are* women. It may be helpful to say something like “women including and especially [or particularly] trans women” or “trans and cis women” or “trans women, non-binary people, and cis women” etc.