

CRITICAL TERMS & DEFINITIONS

White Supremacy Culture: The widespread ideology embedded in the beliefs, values, norms, and standards of our groups, communities, towns, states, and nation, which teaches—both overtly and covertly—that whiteness holds value and defines value.

It teaches that:

- Blackness is not only valueless but also dangerous and threatening.
- Indigenous peoples are to be erased, romanticized, or appropriated while their rights continue to be violated.
- People south of the border are “illegal.”
- Arabs are assumed to be Muslim, and Muslim is equated with “terrorist.”
- People of Chinese and Japanese descent are indistinguishable and blamed for global crises such as COVID-19. White supremacy culture pits other races and racial groups against one another while defining them all as inferior to the white group.

Racism: A system of advantages and disadvantages based on race. Racism is perpetuated through both interpersonal and institutional practices.

- **Source:** Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations on Race by Beverly Daniel Tatum, 1997.

Anti-Black Racism: A specific form of racism that devalues Black people and systematically disadvantages people of African descent. Anti-Black racism is rooted in the history of enslavement and colonization and continues to shape societal institutions, cultural norms, and interpersonal interactions today. It manifests through stereotypes, criminalization, exclusion from resources and opportunities, and the normalization of violence against Black communities.

- **Source:** Adapted from the Government of Canada (2020), Anti-Black Racism Strategy, and the Movement for Black Lives.

Colorism: The set of institutions and practices that privilege those with lighter skin color and discriminate against those with darker skin color.

Xenophobia: An unreasonable fear, distrust, or hatred of strangers, foreign peoples, or anything perceived as foreign or different.

Citizenship Status: A status conferred, usually by a governing agency, which grants rights and privileges to citizens and denies rights, access, and privileges to non-citizens.



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Class: One's position on the economic hierarchy, determined by wealth and income. Class also encompasses education or access to education and geographic background. Source: Tri-Co Summer Institute 2013 Committee.

Classism: Systematic oppression and differential treatment of subordinated class groups to advantage dominant class groups. It is supported by a culture of attitudes and values that assigns characteristics of worth and ability based on social class or perceived social class.

- **Source** and Further Reading: Class Action – What is Classism?

Oppression: The systematic social phenomenon of prejudice and social power that manifests on personal, institutional, and societal/cultural levels. The result is the exploitation of one social group by another for the benefit of the agent/oppressor group. Note: People can be oppressive without intending to be so.

Marginalization: When a member of a racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, or any social group is relegated to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group. Being marginalized requires historical and ongoing oppression of the identity in question.

Intersectionality: A framework for understanding how multiple social identities—such as race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and others—intersect at the individual level of experience to reflect interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the societal level.

- **Source:** Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989). *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics*.

Positionality: The place from which you view the world. It is a way of describing one's social position to understand:

- Power relations
- How one's own subjectivity affects how one interprets and observes experiences
- **Source:** <https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/c.php?g=285382&p=1900870>

Privilege: When you receive conscious or unconscious benefits from a demographic trait about yourself. These benefits may be overt (e.g., getting paid more as a man) or covert (e.g., being able to walk down a street alone at night without fear of violence).

- **Source:** <http://groupthink.kinja.com/to-the-princeton-privileged-kid-1570383740>



Four Quadrants of Racism

Internalized racism:

The private racial beliefs held by individuals.

Example: prejudice, internalized oppression and internalized privilege

Interpersonal racism:

How we act upon our racial beliefs when we interact with others.

Example: bias, bigotry, hate speech, and violence

Institutional racism:

Racial inequities within institutions and systems of power.

Example: school systems that provide unequal opportunities for people of different races.

Structural racism:

Racial bias across institutions and society

Example: the racial wealth gap reflects the cumulative effects of racial inequities.