

GUIDING CONCEPTS

COLONIALITY/MODERNITY

are inseparable and refer to the organization and systemic distribution of power through the control for access to knowledge, moral and artistic resources by the dominant group

CAPITALISM

is the economic system where private entities own the factors of production. However, in a capitalized system everything can be commodified.

WHITENESS

is a set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to white race and white skin, often marking one as normal, belonging and native, while those who occupy other racial categories are perceived and often treated as foreign, exotic and unusual or “other,” resulting in those who occupy whiteness benefiting from a wide variety of societal privileges.

DECOLONIALITY

is the political and epistemological movement aimed at the liberation of colonized peoples from global coloniality in thinking, knowing and doing. Decoloniality CENTERS INDIGENEITY and global struggles or Indigenous sovereignty in thinking, knowing and doing.

RACE

is a constructed category to organize certain groups of people through class stratification and hierarchical segmentation.

RACISM

describes a particular set of experiences of members of certain “race(s)” as it pertains to structural power.

POWER

is the capacity to control circumstances such as material, human, intellectual and financial resources; the ability to achieve a purpose.

STRUCTURAL POWER

is defined as control over the access to and development of institutions of social mobility, including but not limited to wealth, income, criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among others.

OPPRESSION is the activation of structural power.

SYSTEMIC (or structural) OPPRESSION

is the ways in which history, culture, ideology, public policy, institutional practices and personal behaviors and beliefs interact to maintain a hierarchy – based on race, class, gender, sexuality and/or other group identities – that allows the privileges associated with the dominant group and disadvantages associated with the oppressed, targeted, or marginalized group to endure and adapt over time.

MIGRANT

people living and working outside their country of origin – are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses. *Human Rights Watch*

REMATRIATION

“Rematriate the land calls on us all to heal and transform the legacies of colonization, genocide and patriarchy and to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do.”

Sogorea Te Land Trust

FURTHER READINGS

Brearley, Calliou, and Voyageur (Eds.),
Restorying Indigenous Leadership

Thomas-Davis,
Don't Rely on Black Faculty to Do the Antiracist Work

Villanueva Edgar,
Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Social injustice exists.

People are not treated equitably. We live in an unjust society and an unfair world; the remarkable promises of democracy have yet to be fulfilled. Oppression (racism, classism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, etc.) exists on multiple seen and unseen levels.

Our educations have been biased.

The eurocentric educational systems, media outlets, and other institutions omit and distort information about our own groups and others. These hidden mechanisms sustain oppression, including an often invisible and normative 'white' supremacy. This 'white' supremacist thinking has affected all of us in various ways; we all have "blank spots," desconocimientos (Anzaldúa), and so forth.

Blame is not useful, but accountability is.

It is nonproductive to blame ourselves and/or others for the misinformation we have learned in the past or for ways we have benefitted and continue benefitting from these unjust social systems. However, once we have been exposed to more accurate information, we are accountable! We should work to do something with this information--perhaps by working towards a more just future.

"We are related to all that lives."¹

We are interconnected and interdependent in multiple ways, including economically, ecologically, linguistically, socially, and spiritually.

Categories and labels shape our perception.

Categories and labels, although often necessary and sometimes useful, can prevent us from recognizing our interconnectedness with others. Categories can (a) distort our perceptions; (b) create arbitrary divisions among us; (c) support an oppositional "us-against-them" mentality that prevents us from recognizing potential commonalities; and (d) reinforce the unjust status quo. Relatedly, identity categories based on inflexible labels establish and police boundaries--boundaries that shut us in with those we've deemed "like" "us" and boundaries that shut us out from those whom we assume to be different.

People have a basic goodness.

People (both the groups we study and class members) generally endeavor to do the best they can. We will all make mistakes, despite our best intentions. The point is to learn from our errors. In order to learn from our errors, we must be willing to listen and to speak (preferably, in this order!).

AnaLouise Keating:

"Dialogue: Some of My Presuppositions,"
from Teaching Transformation: Transcultural Classroom Dialogues

1. Inés Hernández-Ávila. "An Open Letter to Chicanas: On the Power and Politics of Origin." *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing of North America*. Ed. Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. 237-46