

Multicultural Terminology

Multicultural awareness covers many areas such as, race/ethnicity, culture, spirituality, pride (LGBTQ+), and more. Understanding different areas of culture and becoming well-versed on what is socially acceptable will aid in a more informed campus climate.

African - A term people use to describe heritage for individuals who are from African but living in the Americas. Individuals are from Africa or usually second or third generation Americans in their families.

African American - Relating to the culture of African Americans. Refers to Black Americans born in the United States during and after slavery. It is not customarily an appropriate term for Africans living within the United States.

Age - Often defined by groups within decades or by age categories - children, adolescents, young adults, adults, older adults, elder adults.

Ally - Refers to someone who is a friend, advocate, and/or activist for LGBTQ people, or refers to any member of a group who is a friend, advocate or activist for people in another group. An individual who supports the struggles of a group and is not part of the group him/herself.

American Indian - This is a designation assigned to Indigenous Peoples of the United States. This term originally came from Columbus' correspondence in the 15th Century mistaking the inhabitants of the Caribbean as Indians from India.

Biracial - A term that describes people whose ancestry comes from multiple races, in this case two races.

Bisexual - A term used to identify someone who has romantic and/or sexual feelings, attractions, and/or relationships with men and women, not necessarily at equal levels of attraction, and not necessarily simultaneously (a common stereotype). A bisexual person can also be defined as someone who has romantic and/or sexual feelings, attractions and/or relationships with people of any gender (rather than saying both genders).

Black - A term that is often used to describe U.S. citizens of African descent who have lived in North America for several generations. The term is also sometimes used to refer to people who belong to a racial group having dark skin especially of sub-Saharan African and or Caribbean origin residing countries other than the U.S.

Caribbean - A native or inhabitant of a Caribbean country.

Caucasian - In North America, the term is commonly used to define a person of primarily European ancestry.

Central American - A native or inhabitant of a Central American country.

Chicano - An American of Mexican descent.

Disability - A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; the individual has a record of such an impairment; and the individual is being regarded as having such an impairment.

East Asian - A term used to refer to an individual whose ancestry is Asian but more specifically from one of the nations of People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Hong Kong and Mongolia.

Euro American - Relating to the culture of European Americans. An individual living in the United States with European ancestry.

Faith - The term is employed in a religious or theological context to refer to a confident belief in a transcendent reality, a religious teacher, a set of teachings or a supreme being.

Gay - A term that signifies same sex attraction, predominantly pertaining to men, though sometimes used by women-loving-women, and sometimes used as an umbrella term for a community identity that includes, gay, lesbian and bisexual persons.

Hispanic - Direct ancestry from Hispanic, or Spanish-speaking countries.

Immigrant - A person who resides in a nation, country, or region other than that of his/her origin. Also known as nonnative, outlander, outsider, alien, etc.

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

Intercultural - Term describing intergroup relations across cultural, social and personal identities. The term also refers to global citizenship in that multiple cultural, social and personal identities co-exist in most communities across the globe.

Interfaith - A term that refers to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions (i.e., "faiths") and spiritual or humanistic beliefs, at both the individual and institutional level with the aim of deriving a common ground in belief through a concentration on similarities between faiths, understanding of values, and commitment to the world.

International - A term used in higher education to refer to students who are enrolled at institutions in the U.S. who are not citizens of the U.S., immigrants or refugees.

Latin American - Person or persons from all of the Americas South of the United States.

Latino - Individual living in the United States originating from, or having a heritage relating to Latin America.

Lesbian - A term that signifies same sex attraction, pertaining to women. A woman who has romantic and sexual feelings, attractions, and/or relationships with other women.

Men - People who are not women or girls. Biological or self-defined male members of the human species. Some female-to-male transgender or gender non-conforming individuals also identify as men.

Middle Eastern - A generally Euro American term used to refer to an individual whose ancestry is Western Asian and North African from the nations of Turkey, Syria, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, United Arab Emirates Bahrain, Qatar, and Yemen.

Military - Of or related to armed forces, soldiers, war, and any persons who are serving as members of armed forces.

Multiracial - A term that describes people whose ancestry comes from multiple races, in this case more than two races.

Native American - Refers to the descendants of the various indigenous populations that occupied the land now designated America.

North American - A native or inhabitant of a North American state or country.

Pansexual - A term referring to being attracted to persons without regard for sexual or gender identity. The term reflects notions of gender and sexual identities beyond binaries such as male or female, straight or gay and is used mainly by those who wish to express acceptance of all gender and sexual identity possibilities. Additional terms include omniseual or pomosexual (postmodern sexuality).

Queer - An umbrella term that can refer to anyone who transgresses society's views of gender or sexuality. The definitional indeterminacy of the word Queer, its elasticity, is one of its constituent characteristics: "A zone of possibilities."

Questioning - The process of considering or exploring one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity. A term used to refer to an individual who is uncertain of her/his sexual orientation or identity.

Religion - 1. An organized belief system based on certain tenets of faith. 2. A belief in a supreme supernatural force or god(s).

South American - A native or inhabitant of a South American country.

South Asian - A term used to refer to an individual whose ancestry is Asian but more specifically from one of the nations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

Southeast Asian - A term used to refer to an individual whose ancestry is Asian but more specifically with heritage from one of the nations of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Timor-Leste.

Spirituality - A term that can refer to an ultimate or immaterial reality; enabling a person to discover the essence of their being and of life/existence overall; or the deepest values and meanings by which people live; a term that has many meanings depending on who you ask.

Straight - Slang for heterosexual - a person who has romantic and sexual feelings, attractions and/or relationships with someone considered to be - the opposite gender.

Transgender - In the past, used as an umbrella term to describe a broad range of people who experience and express their genders differently from cultural norms. Increasingly, this adjective is used specifically to describe people whose gender identities do not match their sex designation at birth, such as people designated male at birth who identify as women. Some people no longer consider this an umbrella term. Many trans advocates avoid this adjective because it encourages usage of transgender as a noun, which many people consider offensive.

Veteran - Used, when regarding the military, to describe a former member of the armed forces.

White - An individual, not of Hispanic origin, with origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East. American use typically refers to people with European ancestry.

Women - People who are not men or boys. Biological or self-defined female members of the human species. Some male-to-female transgender or gender non-conforming individuals also identify as women.