TIPS FOR CLASSROOM

Homophobia/Transphobia/Heterosexism are strands in a web of interlocking systems of structural inequality that are mutually constitutive and rely upon one another (Razack, 1999)

- Set classroom norms ahead of time; in syllabus
- Do introduction that include gender pronouns of choice
- Use the pronouns that your students ascribe to themselves
- Have materials in your office that indicate an affirming space; books, posters, Safezone, stickers
- Notice & let go of assumptions regarding sexuality & gender
- Interrupt and speak to derogatory language; “that’s so gay,” “fag,” etc.
- Welcome controversial conversations but help expand them from binary oppositions; e.g., culture vs. sexuality/gender & religion vs. sexuality/gender are false dichotomies
- If you don’t understand a queer paper/project topic—educate yourself rather than rejecting the student’s ideas….then you have enough information to better respond
- Refrain from outing people in your classes
- Make mistakes & clean them up; Remember to be conscious of what is being done for you & what is being done for the person/people involved
- Prejudice and oppression are not the same thing, both hurt, but there is a power imbalance with regard to oppression and it effects entire groups of people
- Use gender neutral terms; partner, they, them
- Be clear about your role with a student and refer them to campus/Seattle resources (Q Center, GBLTC, ECC/T, Counseling Center, Hall Health, Seattle Counseling Services, NW Network)
- Your silence on a subject is not neutral, you are not neutral
Q Terminology

Please read all terminology as refers to... That is: sexual identity refers to... Language is not exact and is always in motion.

Ally – a person whose attitudes and behaviors are anti-"ism" and who is committed to increasing their own understanding of the issues related to oppression, and is actively working toward eliminating oppression on many levels. e.g. confronting heterosexism, transphobia, biphobia.

Assigned Gender – the gender one is socially considered to be at birth, due to the presence of one's external sex organs.

Bisexuality – being attracted emotionally, physically, and/or sexually to people of more than one gender and/or sex. Also known as pansexuality and omnisexuality.


Biphobia – irrational fear of or aversion to people who identify as bisexual, omnisexual, or pansexual.

Coming Out – the process that some gilbtqi people go through in becoming aware of their sexual/gender orientation and of letting other people know. Gilbtqi people are often "out" to some people (e.g. friends, family) and not "out" to others (e.g. boss, work colleagues). Coming out is a process, not an event.

Discrimination—prejudice + power. It occurs when members of a more powerful social group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful social group. Discrimination can take many forms, including both individual acts of hatred or injustice and institutional denials of privileges normally accorded to other groups. Ongoing discrimination creates a climate of oppression for the affected group.

Down low or on the DL – the most generic definition is to “keep something private” but term is most often used to refer to African-American and/or Black men who secretly have sex with men but do not consider themselves gay or bisexual. This, of course, occurs across racial/ethnic groups but the term originated in a Black/African-American cultural context.

Dyke – historically, a derogatory term for lesbians. Some lesbians have chosen to reclaim this term and use it to have positive meaning, especially when saying it in the company of other lesbians and/or gay men.

Faggot – a derogatory term for gay men stemming from the use of gay men as “kindling” for the burning of witches in Europe. Some gay men have chosen to reclaim this term and use it to have positive meaning, especially when saying it in the company of other gay men and/or lesbians.

FTM or F2M – A female-to-male transsexual.
Gay – someone who has an emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual, and romantic attraction to a person of the same gender. Sometimes used to refer only to gay men, other times used to refer to the entire community.

Gender binary – a social classification that divides gender identity into masculine and feminine with expected gender roles, gender expressions, and characteristics for each one. And the idea that there are only two genders; male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.

Gender conforming – a term used to describe a person who by nature or choice conforms to gender based expectations of society (also referred to as cisgender).

Gender cues – what human beings use to attempt to tell the gender/sex of another person. Examples include hairstyle, gait, vocal inflection, body shape, facial hair, etc. Cues vary by culture and historical time period.

Genderqueer – someone who identifies as a gender other than "man" or "woman," or someone who identifies as neither, both, or some combination thereof. In relation to the gender binary (the view that there are only two genders), genderqueer people generally identify as more "both/and" or "neither/or," rather than "either/or." Some genderqueer people see their identity as one of many different genders outside of man and woman, some see it as a term encompassing all gender identities outside of the gender binary, some believe it encompasses binary genders among others, some may identify as a-gender and some see it as a third gender in addition to the traditional two. The commonality is that all genderqueer people reject the notion that there are only two genders in the world. The term genderqueer is also occasionally used more broadly as an adjective to refer to people who are in some way gender-transgressive and could have any gender identity.

Gender- Variant Individual – a term is very similar in definition to genderqueer and is typically used to describe anyone that falls outside of the gender binary or typical male and female gender and sex demarcations.

Heterosexism – a system of attitudes, behaviors, cultural norms, and institutional practices which target and subordinate gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and trans people because of their sexual orientation or gender orientation. Heterosexism is based on the assumption of the normalcy of heterosexuality and occurs on three levels: 1) individual; 2) cultural; 3) institutional.

Heterosexuality – being attracted emotionally, physically, and/or sexually to people of a the "opposite sex". Heterosexuality inherently assumes a gender binary.

Homophobia – the irrational fear and dislike/hatred of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, homosexuality, or anything in one that does not conform to rigid heteronormative stereotypes.

Homosexuality – being attracted emotionally, physically, and/or sexually to people of one’s own gender. This label is often rejected by gay, lesbian, or bisexual people because of its clinical origins and its focus on sexual behavior.
Internalized heterosexism or homophobia – the process through which GLBTQ people learn to believe the stereotypes, myths, and subordinate social status generated and maintained by a dominant society.

Intersex – a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types—for example, a girl may be born with a noticeably large clitoris, or lacking a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that it has formed more like labia. Or a person may be born with mosaic genetics, so that some of their cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY. Though we speak of intersex as an inborn condition, intersex anatomy doesn’t always show up at birth. Sometimes a person isn’t found to have intersex anatomy until they reach the age of puberty, or find out they are an infertile adult, or dies of old age and is autopsied. Some people live and die with intersex anatomy without anyone (including themselves) ever knowing.

Invisible advantage – unearned privileges become invisible to those who benefit from them. This is much like the fish that is the last to discover water.

Lesbian – a woman who has an emotional, physical, sexual, spiritual, and romantic attraction to other women.

MTF or M2F – A male-to-female transsexual.

Pansexuality – being attracted emotionally, physically, and/or sexually to people of more than one gender and/or sex. This term inherently recognizes that gender is not a binary and that it is fluid.

Passing – this term is used in a multitude of ways; e.g. being able to not be perceived as GLBTQ or queer; passing as a man (i.e. if trans or in drag); passing as a woman (i.e. if trans or in drag). Example sentence: When I at home with my family I totally pass as straight by changing how I dress, talk, and I never mention my personal life.

Polyamory – a term used to refer to the ethical philosophy and practice of having non-possessive, honest, responsible loving and/or sexual relationships with multiple partners within parameters that are known and agreed upon by all people involved. Can include: open relationships, polyfidelity, and relationships of different levels of commitment. For more information see http://www.polyamorysociety.org

Queer – historically pejorative currently used by some gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, intersex, and trans (GLBTQ) folks to reclaim this term and use it as an inclusive term for GLBTQ communities. Having a sexual orientation, sex, or gender identity or expression different from that acceptable in the mainstream. Also carries a political meaning larger than sexual/gender orientation.

Questioning – “In an attempt to broaden inclusive language, this term has become popularized to recognize that identity formation is a developmental process. During this process individuals may struggle to find a label that signifies that they are not heterosexual, and that they also do not necessarily identify with the larger LGBTQ community. While the term questioning is usually treated as an intermediate label in
the process of coming out, the length of time that an individual remains at this stage is highly variable, from a couple of days to several years. People who identify as questioning may ‘tryout’ several other labels before settling on one that seems to fit. The use of the term questioning also reserves the right to return to identifying as straight.” LGBT Georgian College

**Same Gender Loving** – a term that emerged from African American/Black communities in the early 1990’s to express an alternative sexual orientation without relying upon terms and symbols of European descent. This term offered Black women who love women and men who love men a voice and a way of identifying that resonated with the uniqueness of Black culture. Sometimes taken up by other cultural groups.

**Sex** – biology, including external genitalia, internal reproductive structures, chromosomes, hormone levels, and secondary sex characteristics such as breasts, facial and body hair, and fat distribution. These characteristics are objective in that they can be seen and measured (with appropriate technology). The scale consists not just of two categories (male and female) but is actually a continuum, with most people existing somewhere near one end or the other.

**Sexual Behavior** – refers to sexual action (including abstinence) and is not synonymous with sexual orientation.

**Sexual Identity** – *Internal* = one’s self-labeling according to the focus of one’s sexual attraction. *External* = how one is viewed by others.

**Sexual Orientation** – refers to one’s experience of to whom they are attracted sexually, physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc.

**Social group** – a group of people bounded or defined by a social characteristic such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental capacity, age, class, etc. Some social groups have relatively more social power in our society (agents) and some have less (targets).

**Straight** – an identity term that refers to people who are primarily attracted to and choose as partners, members of the “opposite” sex who primarily identify as gender “normative.” Heterosexual and not differently gendered.

**Trans** – this is a shortened slang word used to refer to transgender and all the communities within that umbrella term.

**Transsexual** – feelings that one’s biological sex does not reflect the gender they experience themselves to be. Individual’s whose gender identity is different from their biological sex may seek surgeries or procedures (sex reassignment surgery, or gender affirmative surgeries and procedures) and hormone therapies to create a greater alignment between their sex and gender identity.

**Transgender** – an umbrella term encompassing anyone whose gender expression and/or gender identity differ from conventional expectations and constructs of an individual’s physical sex they were “given” at
birth. This umbrella term is often used to describe a wide range of identities, experiences and communities.

**Transition** – term used to describe the process a person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with their gender identity or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression. Can include social, medical, and legal steps that help the person achieve the greatest level of comfort with their body, gender, and social roles. These steps could include pronoun and name changes, gender expression changes, counseling, hormone therapy, various surgical procedures, and legal document changes (birth certificates, driver’s licenses, etc.). All of this is dependent upon the person, their resources, and often the laws of the state in which they reside.

**Transphobia** – hatred or fear of gender variance among people and gender variant expression

**Transman** – A male identified person who might identify as transgender or transsexual. Sometimes this identity label is adopted to affirm one’s history with another gender.

**Transvestite** – primarily heterosexual men who cross-dress for sexual excitement. This word is being used less and less due to its association with the DSM IV and psychological disorders.

**Transwoman** – A female identified person who might identify as transgender or transsexual. Sometimes this identity label is adopted to affirm one’s history with another gender.

**Two-Spirit** – A pan-Indian word that encompasses alternative sexuality, alternative gender, and an integration of Native Spirituality. This term also includes what dominant discourse refers to as transgender and transsexual. Different nations often have/had specific names for second and third gender categories. Two-spirit include gender variance and what US dominant discourse refers to as gay, lesbian, and bisexual. Two-spirit identity affirms the interrelatedness of all aspects of identity, including sexuality, gender, culture, community, and spirituality. That is, the sexuality of two-spirit people cannot be considered as separate from the rest of an individual's identity. Two-spirit connects American Indians to ancestry by offering a link that had previously been severed by government policies and actions.

**Unearned privilege** – an advantage that is gained simply by belonging to a group that has institutional or cultural power; e.g. *heterosexual privilege*, *white privilege*. Examples of privilege: a straight couple can show affection in public without fear of ridicule or harm coming to them; a white person able to buy “flesh” colored band-aids or never having to worry that getting poor service in a restaurant is based on their skin color.

**Ze, hir, hirs, hirself, squi, squir** – gender non-specific pronouns sometimes preferred by individuals instead of pronouns that are specifically gendered male or female. There are many versions of gender non-specific pronouns currently in use.