Social Justice 101

International Student Orientation 2018
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WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE?
Creating justice in terms of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

**Privileged identity:** social identities (race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc) that historically have not faced oppression or have received unearned advantages.
Social Justice and U.S. Historical Context (Major Events)

13th Amendment - Abolishment of Slavery (1865)

15th Amendment - Voting rights for all races (1870)

19th Amendment - Women’s right to vote (1920)

Brown v. Board of Education - Desegregation of school systems (1954)

Civil Rights Act - Banned discrimination based on race, religion, sex or national origin in employment practices and public accommodations (1964)

Social Justice vs. Diversity/Multiculturalism

Social Justice

● Privilege
● Oppression
● Recognizes Inequality
● Action Oriented

Diversity/Multiculturalism

● Tolerance
● Acceptance
● Celebration of Difference
● Awareness

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion @ U-M:

“At the University of Michigan, our dedication to academic excellence for public good is inseparable from our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. It is central to our mission as an educational institution to ensure that each member of our community has full opportunity to thrive in our environment, for we believe that diversity is key to individual flourishing, educational excellence and the advancement of knowledge.”
How might this affect you?
Social Identities (U.S. Definitions)

**Sex:** Assigned at birth, and usually characterized by reproductive organs (male, female, intersex).

**Gender:** An internal sense of being a woman, man, neither, both or another gender. This can be expressed through clothing, hairstyles, voice, body shape, etc. Most people make their gender expression match their gender identity. **Cis-gender** is when someone’s gender expression matches their assigned sex at birth.

**Sexual Orientation:** The leaning of one’s sexual attraction, or lack of attraction (asexuality). There is a spectrum where someone can land regarding their sexual attraction (homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual).

**Race:** term used to identify people based on physical traits (Asian, Middle Eastern, Latinx, Black, White, Native American, Multiracial, etc.)

**Ethnicity:** term used to identify a group of people who share cultural heritage (Irish, Puerto Rican, White, African-American, European-American, Chinese, Indian).

**Able-Bodied:** someone without a physical disability. To be inclusive, your could say “I am a temporarily able-bodied person” to imply that some loss of physical function will happen to everyone.
Power, Privilege and Social Identity

Citizenship
Sexual Orientation
Gender Expression
Sex
Race/Ethnicity
Physical Abilities
Sometimes you're a caterpillar

Animated by Kat Blaque

Written by Chescaleigh
MICROAGGRESSIONS

An everyday exchange/comment/question that is interpreted as a sense of bias/oppression due to a person’s social identities: race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, disability, socioeconomic status. These exchanges are not made with conscious intent to harm/offend the other person.

“Wow! Your English is so good!”

“I have scheduled the exam during Rosh Hashanah, but it shouldn’t matter because I don’t see any Jewish students in the room.”

“You know a lot about sports for a girl.”
PRONOUNS AND GENDER INCLUSION

Pronouns are the way someone wishes to be referred to in speech when their name is not being used. Pronouns traditionally have reflected the gender of the person (he/she), but that is quickly changing to be more inclusive to a spectrum of gender expression/identity.

At U-M, you will often hear people introduce themselves with their pronoun: “Hi, I’m Kelly Wagner, and I go by She/Her/Hers.” This creates a safe environment for someone to state their pronoun, which is especially helpful if their pronoun does not match their biological sex or visual gender expression.

Common pronouns:
- He/Him/His
- She/Her/Hers
- They/Their/Theirs (gender neutral)
- Ze/Hir/Hirs (gender neutral)
PRONOUNS AND GENDER INCLUSION

When/How do I ask someone their pronoun?
Because it may be unsafe or uncomfortable for someone to share their pronouns, only ask when necessary - such as a colleague, classmate, or it is someone that you know you will be interacting with again.

If you are in a group and others may know that person well, you could listen for what pronoun they use to refer to that person.

If you don’t feel comfortable asking/asking could affect that person’s safety, “they” is a safe option since it is gender-neutral.

What happens if I use the wrong pronoun?
Correct the mistake, apologize and move on (unless they want to talk about it).
University Resources
On-Campus Resources:

The Spectrum Center
The Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs (MESA)
Services for Students with Disabilities
The Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR)
Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC)
Center for the Education of Women
Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI)