

Lesson 2 Keywords and Phrases

1. Decolonization-

Decolonization refers to the process by which colonized populations, in many cases indigenous populations, begin to reassert their sovereignty and autonomy over their cultures and territories. Though the adverse effects of colonialism are impossible to complete undo, ignore, or forget, the act of decolonization is often viewed as a positive expression of self-determination among Native Americans. The reemergence of Native languages, the prominence and success of casino gaming, and the development of Native American studies programs may all be interpreted as examples of decolonization.

2. Epistemology-

Literally translated from Greek to mean “the study of knowledge or science,” epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature, scope, and understanding of knowledge. For our purposes in NAS, this term is especially important to recognize, as many Native American epistemologies, or “ways of knowing,” are dramatically different from traditional Western modes of learning. A good example would be the difference between passing knowledge down orally, as in the case of Native Americans, or writing, which applies to western cultures.

3. Colonialism-

Colonialism is the establishment, maintenance, acquisition, and expansion of colonies in one territory by people from another territory. Colonialism is an almost exclusively violent and oppressive process whereby the sovereignty of an indigenous population subverted forcefully

by the colonizer. Since European contact, the indigenous population of the Americas has been continually colonized, as the process involves not only the acquisition of territory by the use of force or treaty (which carry the threat of force), but as well the systematic destruction of indigenous culture, such as language, history, ceremonies, etc.

4. The Fourth World-

A term that has been used widely since the 1980's, the "Fourth World" is considered by definition to encompass people and nations that are poor or marginal when compared to "First World" nations. They differ from "Third World" nations, as they are not thought to be in the process of development, rather, they are in a state of stagnation or regression. Additionally, the term is thought to represent the people in regions that are bypassed by technological advances. These people live in both urban and rural areas, and are viewed as "structurally irrelevant" to society at large, as they neither produce nor consume products important to global industry. Under this definition, it is easy to understand why some consider First Nations and Native Americans to occupy the Fourth World-and even easier to see why many Native Americans and First Nation members continue to protest this erroneous label.

5. Red Power-

This phrase is attributed to Standing Rock Sioux author and educator, Vine Deloria Jr. It denotes the idea of pan-Indian identity that was fostered in the late 1960's. The formation of the American Indian Movement, the occupation of Alcatraz, the National Congress of American Indians, can all be rightly considered examples of the expression of Red Power, as these groups represented not just a single tribe, but also all American Indian peoples. The term is directly related to

tribal sovereignty, as all these organizations represent expressions of political and social autonomy.