

## GLOSSARY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

**Compare:** To find both similarities and differences.

**Critical thinking:** The intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. (Accessed on Critical Thinking.org, May 31, 2006)

**Discourse:** all texts, written and oral, that contribute to shared meaning. These texts represent cultural knowledge and are affected by intentional or unintentional uses of power.

**Genre:** A classification of a particular form of art or utterance according to criteria particular to that form. In all art forms, genres are vague categories with no fixed boundaries. Genres are formed by sets of conventions, and many works cross into multiple genres by way of borrowing and recombining these conventions. The scope of the word "genre" is usually confined to art and culture. (Genres are often divided into subgenres. Literature, for instance, can be organized according to the "poetic genres" and the "prose genres". Poetry might be subdivided into epic, lyric, and dramatic, while prose might be subdivided into fiction and non-fiction.)

**Power:** The ability to use language to set perceptions and thereby produce or prevent change.

**Privilege:** A special advantage, immunity, right, or benefit held as a prerogative of status (race, religion, sexual orientation, class, wealth, gender, etc.) and intentionally or unintentionally exercised to the exclusion or detriment of others..

**Rhetorical devices:** The full repertoire of strategies used to create meaning in speaking and writing; often times understood as the tools and strategies used in persuasive writing or speaking.

**Summary:** A condensed version of a longer text, containing the most important ideas of the original in the writer's own words.

**Text:** Any communicative product, oral, written or visual.

**Thesis:** An explicit or implicit claim/argument of an academic essay; a position taken and supported by reasoning and evidence.