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*ANALYZING  
RACIAL AND  
SOCIAL  
ISSUES*

CRITICAL THEORY LENS

# *CRITICAL THEORY*

“Examination of power dynamics through the context of history, social and political influences. Critical Theory explains the problem, provides the norms and catalyst for action to occur” (Hirton, 2014).

# *CRITICAL RACE THEORY*

WHAT IS CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT)?

A WAY TO ANALYZE SYSTEMS, INSTITUTIONS, POWER IN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH A LENS OF RACE AND RACISM

# *CRITICAL RACE THEORY*

## What is Critical Race Theory (CRT)?

- Critical Race Theory scholars Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, and Kimberlé Crenshaw address the liberal notion of color blindness
- They argue that ignoring racial difference maintains and perpetuates the “status quo with all of its deeply institutionalized injustices to racial minorities” and
- Bell et. al. also insist that “dismissing the importance of race is a way to guarantee that institutionalized and systematic racism continues and even prospers”.

*(Olson, Gary A. "Working with Difference: Critical Race Studies and the Teaching of Composition." Composition Studies in the New Millennium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future, 2003.)*

# *CRITICAL RACE THEORY*

Origin of Critical Race Theory:

- Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated in US law schools as an academic theory
- CRT brings together issues of power, race, and racism to address the liberal notion of color blindness in supposedly “post-racist America”.
- CRT is a theoretical frame that helps people better understand discourses of race and racism in contemporary color blind and supposedly “post-racial American society”.

# *CRITICAL RACE THEORY*

## ORIGIN OF CRT:

- Originated from Critical Legal Studies (CLS) as academic theory which argued that the law is NOT objective or apolitical
- CRT recognizes how RACE and Racial INEQUALITY are reproduced through the law
- CRT acknowledges Slavery, Segregation and Marginalization of Black Americans and other people of color is:
  - Embedded in US social and political fabric
  - Woven into public policies, procedures, and practices, and
  - Codified in the United States laws, systems and institutions.

# *CRITICAL RACE THEORY*

## **Does Racism still Exist?**

- CRT recognizes sadly that Racism is NOT a bygone relic of the past
- Dismisses contemporary general understanding of what constitutes racism in the US
- Students in K-12 public schools are taught that the Civil Rights Movement worked to eliminate racism and all forms of derogatory, discriminatory and segregationist behaviors and policies
- The Civil Rights Movement dismantled racism de jure, but the racism of systemic and institutional prejudice, discrimination, injustices, and inequities remain entrenched in the American culture and DNA
- Systemic and institutional racism very much inform the lived realities and experiences of people of color in the US.

# *CRITICAL RACE THEORY*

## WHY IS CRT IMPORTANT?

- **Race** in the US is endemic, and deeply ingrained in American life through historical consciousness and ideological choices about race
- **Race** influences and shapes societal structures and functions as well as individual attitudes and behaviors.
- **CRT** scholars argue the law can have dual functions and used to both:
  - **Deepen racial and social disparities**, and
  - **Has the potential for emancipation (liberating people from bondage) and for eliminating inequality and injustice in society**
- ❖ **CRT** helps people see the conflicting duality in the law with the aim to rectify the inconsistencies that impact historically marginalized US population

# CRT AND US EDUCATION SYSTEM

## Deepen Racial and Social Disparities:

- US Education System and **SCHOOL SEGREGATION**
- Compelling and profound example of replication of Racism throughout education
- **School Segregation** law - "Separate and Equal" - used to deepen racial inequality
  - 9 young Black Girls in Little Rock Arkansas
  - Rugby Bridges in New Orleans
- **Voter ID Laws** - aimed to disenfranchise and discriminate against certain population of voters – a pernicious and enduring problem in the US
  - **1982 Voting Rights Amendments** - establish new standards for jurisdictions to "bail-out" of earlier requirements that protected historically marginalized voters
- **US Immigration laws** – earlier laws (1790, 1795, 1798) excluded non-white immigrants and limited who could become citizens or residents of the US to mainly white people
- Series of restrictive immigration and nationality laws including quotas favoring people from European nations
- Non-white immigrants – Black, Brown, Asian and Chinese people impacted

## Potential for Emancipation; eliminating disparities:

- **Brown v. Board of Education**
  - **School Desegregation** law helped to eliminate school segregation
- **Voter Eligibility Laws** - aimed to stop discrimination and curtail voter suppression
  - Landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act
- **US Immigration laws:**
  - 1870 US Naturalization Act – extended the right of citizenship to people of African descent
  - 1965 landmark Immigration and Nationality Act – favoring family unification and skilled immigrants, eliminated country quotas
  - Subsequent immigration laws favor refugees – 1990 law created "temporary protection status" for immigrants running from countries facing natural disasters, armed conflict, or other extreme conditions
  - 1998 US Immigration and Control Act – granted legalization to millions of unauthorized immigrants from Central America fleeing armed conflicts and/or persecution
  - 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) – allows young adults who entered the US illegally as children to apply for deportation relief and work permit

# CRT AND US EDUCATION SYSTEM

## K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM:

### SCHOOL CURRICULUM:

- Dominant white historical, mythical narrative
- Exclusion of history and lived experiences of people of color
- Exclusion of the colonist culture of violence, genocide and land grab from indigenous people in the New world, now USA

### SCHOOL ASSESSMENT:

- Not culturally responsive
- Contributes to gap in student achievements
- Not used to provide support/resources for students of color
- Used to promote false narratives and **stereotyping about the ineducability of children of color**

## K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM:

### SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:

- Disparate School discipline policies that disproportionately impact students of color, and
- **compromise their educational outcomes**

### SCHOOL FUNDING:

- Inequitable, and Unjust
- Under-resourced and funded school districts with mostly student of color
- Norristown Area School District vs. North Penn or Wissahickon or Lower Merion School Districts – All are Montgomery County School Districts
- PA currently sued for inequitable school funding for school districts with high population of students of color

# *CRITICAL RACE THEORY*

**Critical Race Theory** is a framework that:

- **Explains the systemic nature of racism.**
- **CRT has been widely mischaracterized by conservatives as a movement to indoctrinate white students with a liberal agenda, make them hate themselves, each other, and their country.**
- Fights over CRT have invaded school board meetings across the country, including PA.
- Conservative parents demand that administrators prevent teachers from discussing issues dealing **with racism, sexism, and gender identity** in class.
- Legislators in **32 states** proposed anti-CRT legislation to be considered this year. **PA House Bill 1532**
- Anti-CRT legislation has been passed in 14 states.

# USING CRT LENS TO ANALYZE RACIAL AND SOCIAL DISPARITY ISSUES

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Ted+Cruz+questions+Judge+Ketanji+Brown+Jackson-Youtube+Video&&view=detail&mid=B03E92ED31>

[Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson addresses Critical Race Theory during questioning from Sen. Ted Cruz - Bing video](#)

## CRITICAL RACE THEORY IS:

- Misunderstood
- Distorted
- Attacks on Public Servants, including Judges, School Board Directors
- Four Ways to Stop Spread of Misinformation (Notre Dame Deloitte Center for Ethical Leadership):
- Misapplied
- Spread of Misinformation

<https://ethicalleadership.nd.edu/news/how-to-stop-the-spreadof-misinformation/>

# USING CRT LENS TO ANALYZE RACIAL AND SOCIAL DISPARITY ISSUES

## Fundamental Questions to Consider:

- How has US laws historically protected RACISM?
- How has the law upheld RACIAL Hierarchies and Advantage of a particular group?
- How does the law reproduce and promote RACIAL Inequities?
- **How can the law be used to dismantle RACISM, Racial Inequities and Social Injustice?**
- Think about some of the laws, policies, procedures, and practices like;
  - Red Lining Policies and Laws
  - Voter Suppression laws
  - Classroom Dialogue Censorship Laws
  - Policies on Community Policing
  - System and Institutional Culture, Policies, Procedures, and Practices, , etc., etc.

# USING CRT LENS TO ANALYZE RACIAL AND SOCIAL DISPARITY ISSUES

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mall-fight-new-jersey-police-black-teenager-bridgewater-commons/?msclkid=3>

Teen Fight at the Bridgewater Commons Mall  
Bridgewater Township, New Jersey

## Community Policing of Black People:

- Using CRT lens, what do you make of this picture? Racial Profiling by Police?
- What do you think of the behavior of the police – pulling the Black teen from under the white teen, tackling, handcuffing and arresting him?
- Would the police behave in the same manner if the 2 teens fighting were both white?
- What has Race got to do with it?

# USING CRT LENS TO ANALYZE RACIAL AND SOCIAL DISPARITY ISSUES

PROTEST OVER POLICE HANDLING OF FIGHT BETWEEN A BLACK MOSLEM STUDENT AND A WHITE STUDENT



BLACK MOSLEM STUDENT IN HIJAH DISROBING CASE



# USING CRT LENS TO ANALYZE RACIAL AND SOCIAL DISPARITY ISSUES

## CRITICAL RACE THEORY:

An academic framework and tool which forces us to create safe spaces that help people to:

- engage in meaningful and authentic dialogue about disparities
- analyze systems, institutions, policies, laws, and practices
- analyze individual attitudes, behaviors and actions
- Helps counter misinformation
- <https://youtu.be/9zMy1HWkOvA> (How to use Critical Thinking to Counter Misinformation)

# *CRITICAL HOPE*

From CT and CRT emerges **Critical Hope** (CH)

**CRITICAL HOPE** is the practice whereby CT or CRT lens is used to address unjust systems through meaningful dialogue and empathetic responses, attitudes and behaviors (Martin, 2018)

CT and CH framework forces people to

- face their own privilege, biases and their possible complicity in maintaining the status quo
- work on actionable and sustainable community-based solutions that lead to a safe, and welcoming society for all.

# *CRITICAL HOPE*

## Questions to Ponder on:

- ❑ In an environment where so many Americans are hurting, how can we build a bridge that will lead to healing?
- ❑ What type of progress do we need so that we can build a better tomorrow that will bring about sustainable change?
- ❑ How do we, individually and collectively, engage in “Anti-Racist” work now?

### *Dr. Bernice King (MLK, Jr. 's daughter):*

“We must do this ‘hard work’ through ‘Love’ and the ‘Heart’. ... We need a revolution of voices, ... a value system where people are at the center and all people are valued, celebrated in a culture and environment of love, non-violent community and nation”.

**Late Congressman John Lewis, American Civil Rights Icon** advised us all that “If you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have a moral obligation to do something about it”.

# ANALYZING RACIAL & SOCIAL ISSUES THROUGH CRT LENS



REAL CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU AND ME.  
EVERYONE OF US CAN HELP MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE AND CREATE A SAFE AND  
WELCOMING COMMUNITY AND EQUITABLE,  
JUST SOCIETY FOR ALL AMERICANS.

THE TIME IS NOW!

THANK YOU.

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