

**Race, Racism, and Critical Race Theory (CRT):
What they are, what they are not, and why they
matter**

Gregg Jamison, PhD

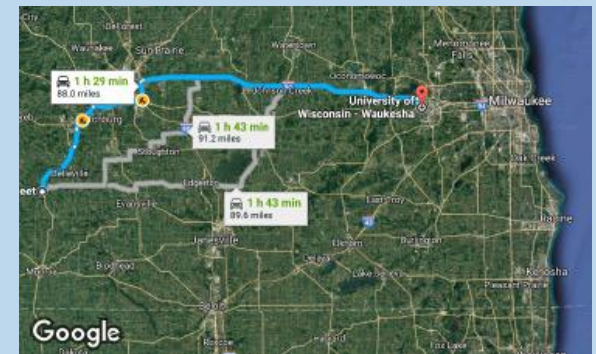
Associate Professor of Anthropology

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Waukesha

Hi, my name is Gregg Jamison, I'm an anthropologist who specializes in archaeology

I teach anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Waukesha

I live in **New Glarus** with my family



Why am I talking to you about this?

I'm a white male archaeologist, why am I talking about race, racism, and CRT?

Because I'm an anthropologist too: anthropology is the study of people: I like people and culture (especially my own)

Because I want to help make a better world for my kids, your kids, their kids, and everyone else

Because I'm a teacher and believe that education is the best way to make the world a better place for everyone

I talk about race, racism, and CRT in my classes

Themes and Goals of this Presentation

Provide a background on the topics and the ways anthropologists and other scientists study them

Explain what they are, what they are not, and why they're important

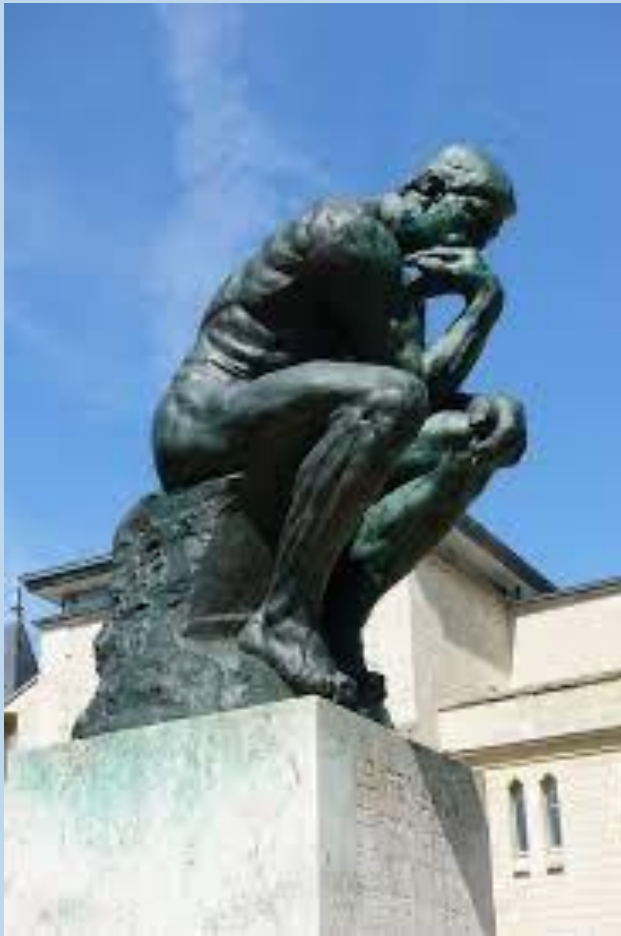
Avoid politics: stick to academic and scientific knowledge, dispel misinformation

“It is inappropriate for scientists to let misinformation go unremarked.”

<https://nature.com>

nature

Themes and Goals of this Presentation



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thinker

Provide resources for you to learn more about race, racism, and CRT

Help you learn and think more about human variation

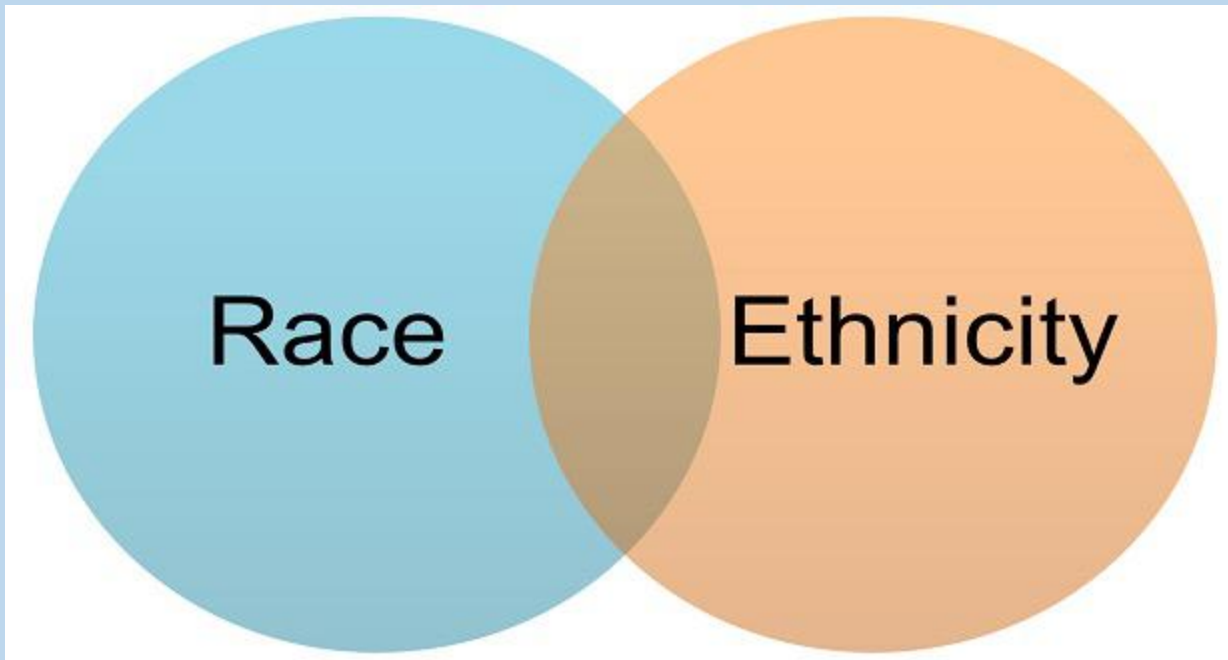
Answer your questions and ask you some:

What do race, racism, and CRT mean to you?

Defining the Terms

Race: a social construction to describe a group of people who share physical and cultural traits as well as common ancestry (Golash-Boza 2018)

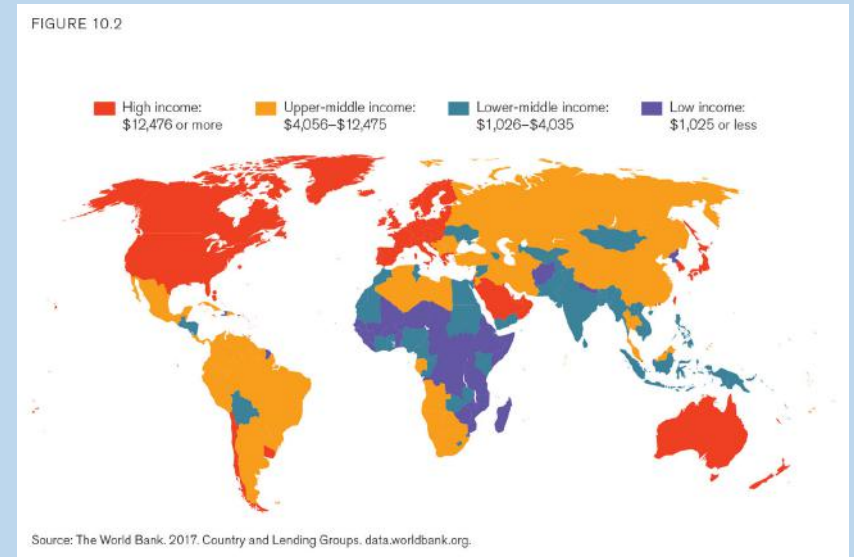
Ethnicity: group identity based on notions of similar and shared history, culture, and kinship (Golash-Boza 2018)



<http://www.theinclusion.com/a-point-of-view-revisiting-race-and-ethnicity/>

Defining the Terms

<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/opinion/the-rise-of-systemic-racism-in-europe/>



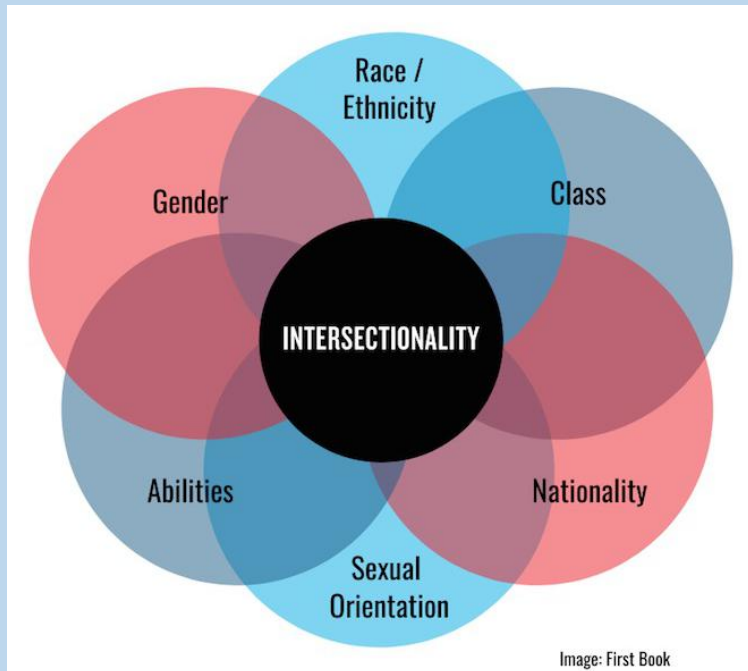
Racism: belief that races are populations whose physical differences are linked to significant cultural differences within a social hierarchy, and the practice of subordinating races believed to be inferior (Golash-Boza 2018)

Social Inequality: Unequal access to wealth, power, and prestige in a stratified society (Lavenda and Schultz 2020)

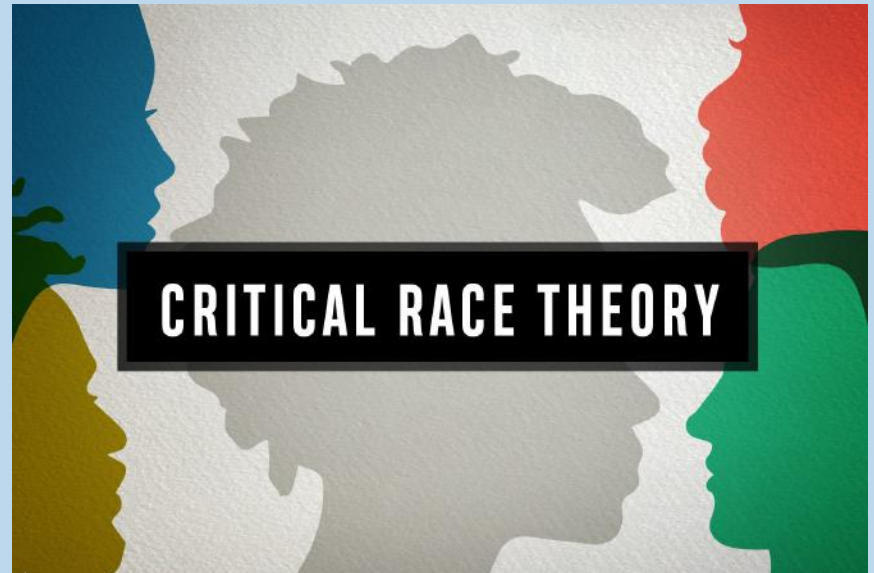
Defining the Terms

Critical Race Theory (CRT): a cross-disciplinary academic and legal framework that examines the intersection of race and law in the United States (mine)

Intersectionality: perspective that simultaneously looks at multiple forms of oppression and inequality, including race, ethnicity, class, sex/gender, and others (Golash-Boza 2018)



<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/10/here-s-how-organizations-put-intersectionality-to-work/>



<https://news.csusm.edu/ask-the-expert-the-rise-and-meaning-of-critical-race-theory/>

What Race Is

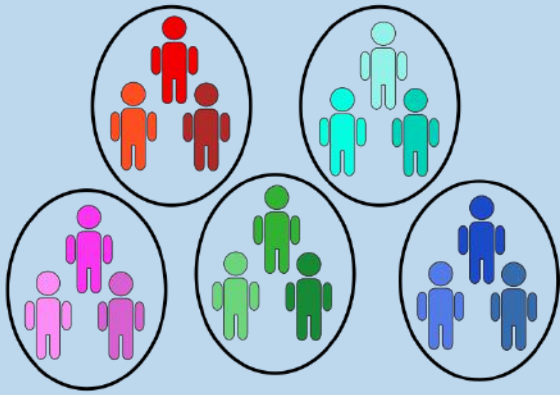
Classification system used to group people by perceived and observed differences in appearance and behavior

Cultural construction based on the historical misunderstanding that there are significant biological differences between groups of people (classified into different races)



<https://www.ushmm.org/information/press/press-kits/traveling-exhibitions/deadly-medicine/head-shots-of-racial-types>

A) Popular conception of genetics and "5 races"

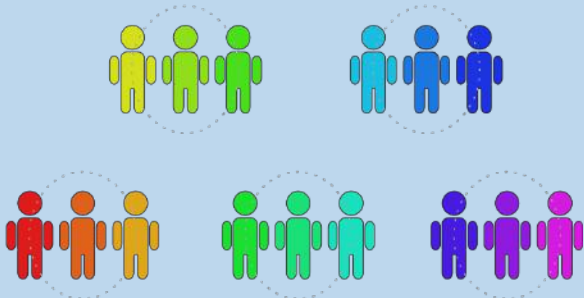


Studying and Understanding Race

<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna24714532>



B) Actual genetic variation



<https://i0.wp.com/sitn.hms.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Fig1-raceConception-2.png>

Study race from historical, cultural (social), and biological (genetic) perspectives

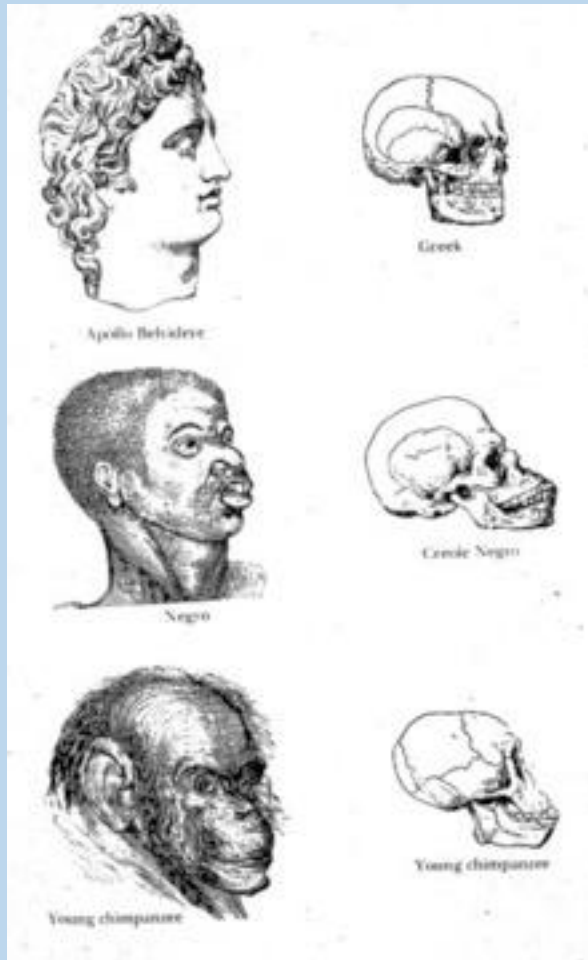
Comparative approach to investigate how racial categories are constructed, change over time, vary among cultures, reflect power, and negatively affect people and communities

Studying and Understanding Race

Concepts of biologically distinct races have origins in European Colonialism

Originally based on skin color, later attributed to differences in intellect and behavior that justified slavery and other forms of oppression

Based on misunderstandings of human variation, which has many sources



Sources of human variation

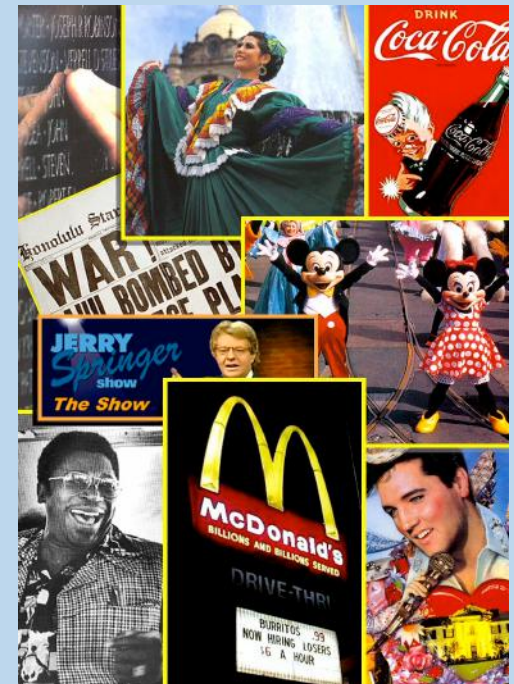
Humans are diverse, 3 Major sources:

Culture (ideas, beliefs, actions & behaviors)

Environmental (adaptation to different environments)

Biology (genetics and traits)

<https://www.americananthro.org/>



Studying and Understanding Race

Anthropological perspective: race is a cultural (social) construct, not based on valid biological differences

Based on 3 important points:

All humans share the same genes and DNA, as much genetic variation within a race as among them

Racial categories and classifications have changed over time (they are fluid, not static and fixed)

Racial categories, classifications, and expressions vary cross-culturally

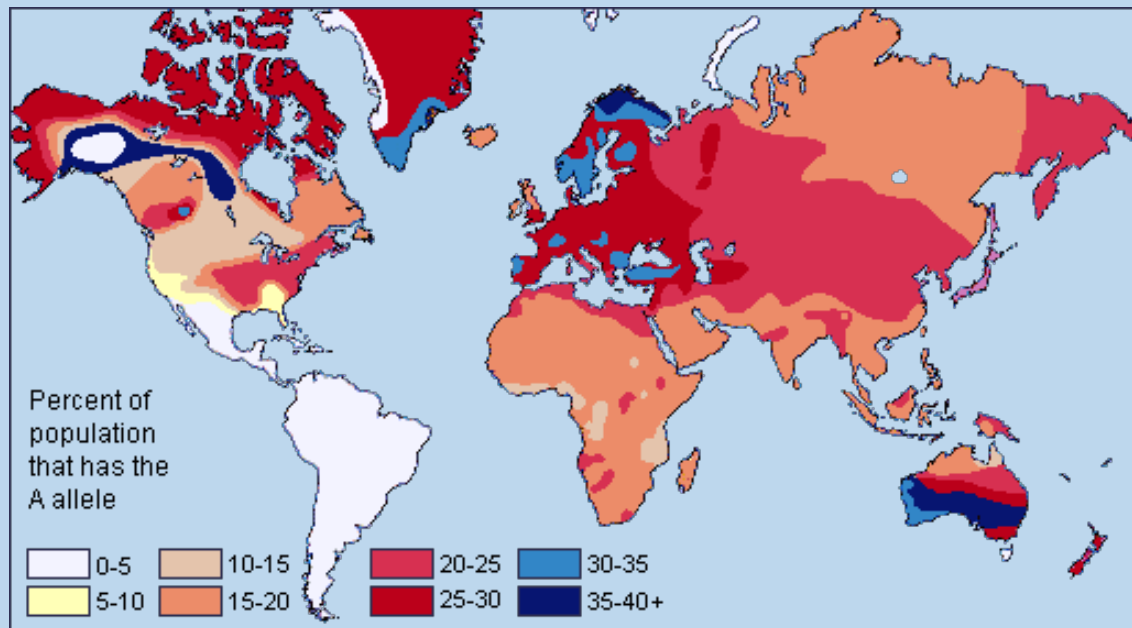
This does NOT mean it isn't real or important, just that it isn't based on biology!

What Race Is Not

A scientifically valid way of classifying people into groups or explaining human variation

Something that isn't real or important (it is) or that should be dismissed (we do not live in a post-racial society)

A reason to ignore human biological variation (it does exist, just not in a manner that justifies biologically distinct races)



What Race Is Not

Guest 2018



The same thing as ethnicity (though they are closely related)

A rational, ethical, or legal justification for oppression and inequalities, past and present

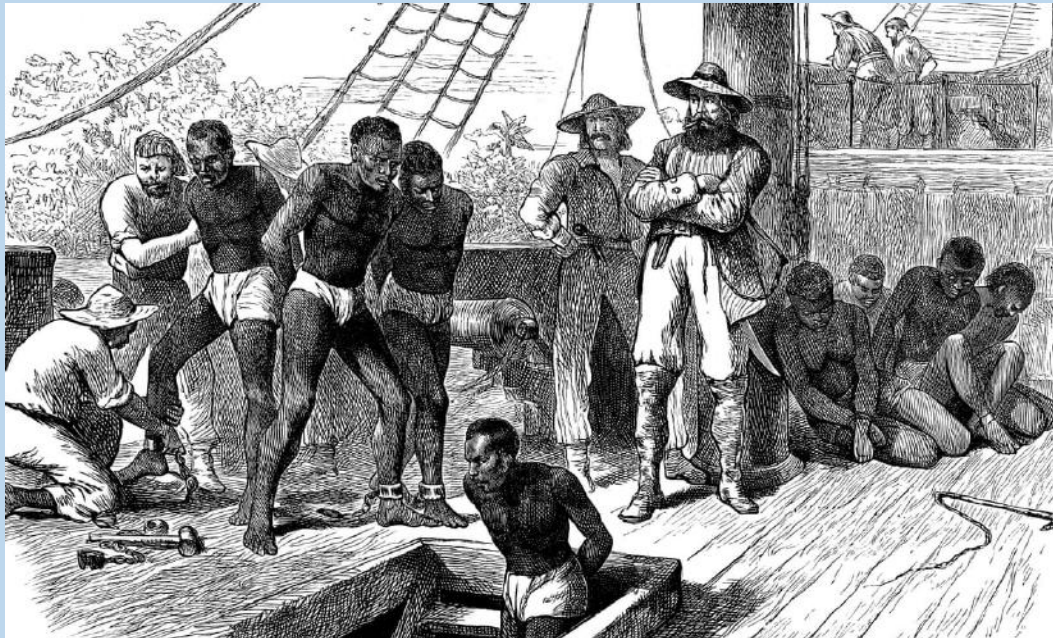
Something that you should personally feel guilty or ashamed of

What Racism Is

Rationalization for the subordination of people deemed inferior to those of a dominant group

Foundation of social inequality in many societies, past and present (including our own), based on power and control

A major source of stereotypes, fear, anxiety, and conflict, past and present



Studying and Understanding Racism

Anthropologists and other scholars study racism using historical and contemporary cultural (social) approaches

Emphasis on racism as a form of social inequality that negatively affects millions of people all over the world

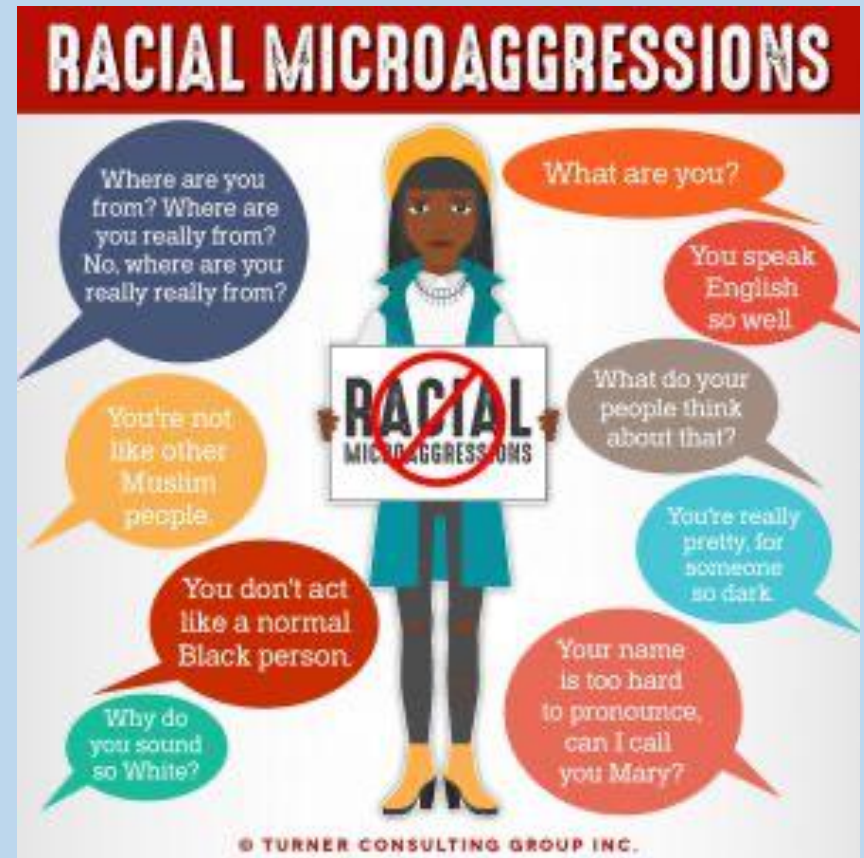
Recognition that racism takes many forms, has many consequences for those who suffer because of it



Studying and Understanding Racism

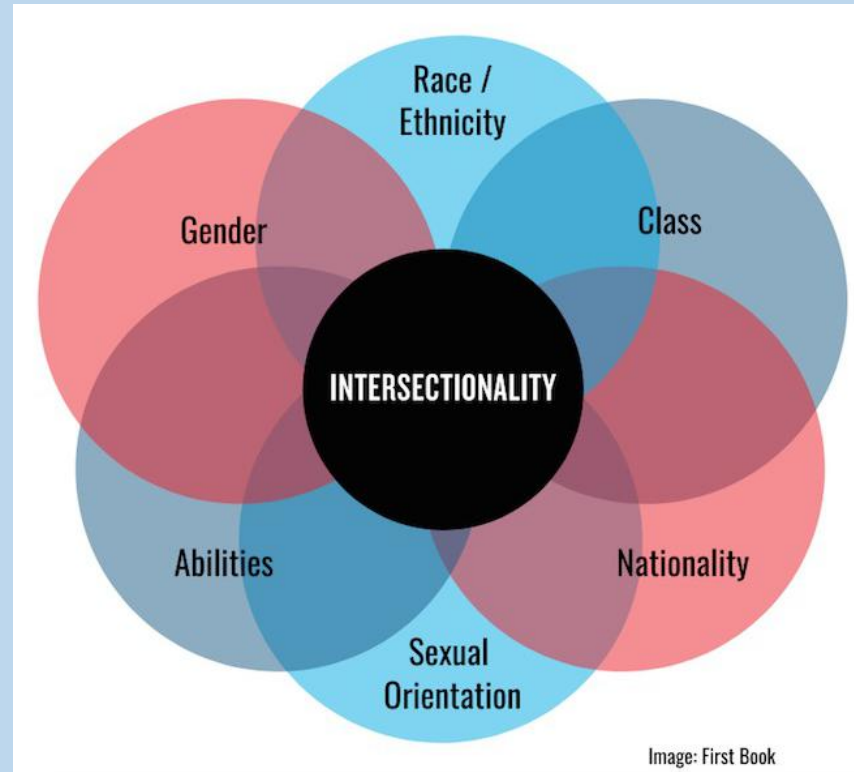
Examination of how racism has changed over time and how past uses are connected to present

Comparative perspectives to understand how racism impacts people at multiple scales: individuals, communities, different racial/ethnic groups, and cross-culturally



<https://caps.tamu.edu/diversity-inclusion/microaggressions/>

Studying and Understanding Racism



<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/10/heres-how-organizations-put-intersectionality-to-work/>

Analyses of close relationships between racism, ethnicity, and other forms of inequality

Intersectionality: perspective that simultaneously looks at multiple forms of oppression and inequality, including race, ethnicity, class, sex/gender, and others (Golash-Boza 2018)

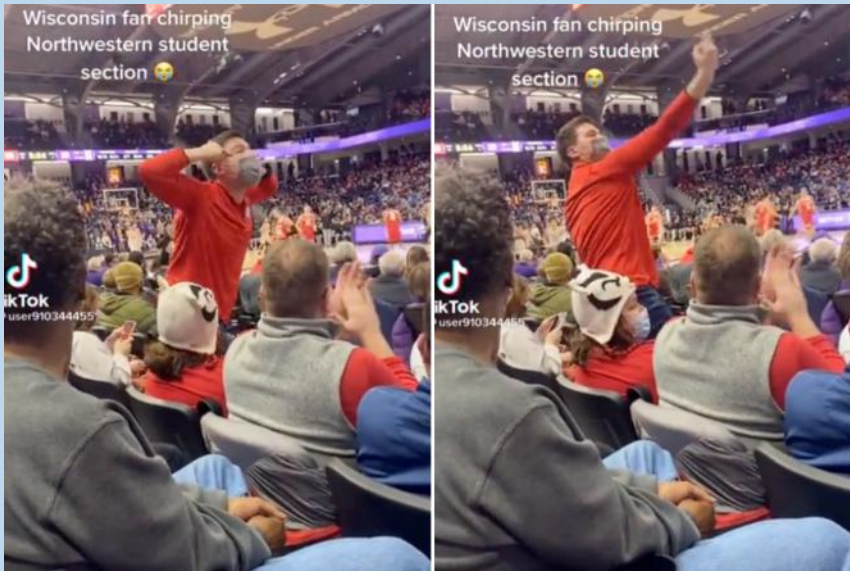
What Racism Is Not

An irrelevant, outdated concept in modern societies (including ours)

A simple, dichotomous state of being (people are not either racist or not, it's far more complex)

Something that you should feel guilty or ashamed of (unless you choose to be, or want to do something about it)

<https://nypost.com/2022/01/20/wisc-consin-bans-fan-for-anti-asian-gesture/>

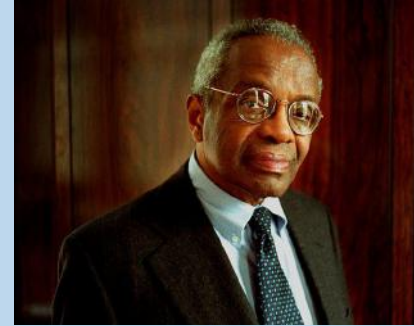


<https://www.nbc15.com/2022/01/20/uw-bans-man-who-used-racist-gesture-nu-game-buying-tickets/>

What CRT Is

An intellectual framework originally developed by feminist and legal scholars over 30 years ago **to investigate intersectionality in our legal and justice systems**

In practical terms, **a way of thinking about American history and culture that recognizes the roles of race and racism in both**



Sandra Harding, Dorothy Smith, Kimberle Crenshaw, Derrick Bell, and Richard Delgado; major contributors to the development of CRT

What CRT Is



<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/we-need-teach-truth-about-systemic-racism-say-educators>

An active practice (think verb, not noun) that is malleable, fluid, and dynamic (part of the reason it is confusing)

A recognition that laws and legislation are not objective and have been influenced by race and racism

A critical approach to the study of American culture, history, and legislation

Pillars of CRT

Race is a social (cultural) construction, not based on biology

Racism is a normal feature of society and embedded in its institutions

Legislation that affects BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Color) tends to serve the interests of dominant groups, a concept known as “Interest Convergence”

Minority groups experience negative stereotypes in a variety of ways, known as “differential racialization”

Intersectionality dictates that individuals are not identified based only on race

BIPOC are uniquely qualified to speak about their experiences with race, racism, and inequalities

Studying and Understanding CRT

No single way to study and interpret CRT (part of the reason it's confusing)

CRT “just says, let’s pay attention to what has happened in this country, and how what has happened in this country is continuing to create differential outcomes. ... Critical race theory ... is more patriotic than those who are opposed to it because ... we believe in the promises of equality. And we know we can’t get there if we can’t confront and talk honestly about inequality.” (Kimberle Crenshaw)



<https://transcripts.cnn.com/show/cnr/date/2021-05-22/segment/04>

What CRT Is Not

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/kimberle-crenshaw-critical-race-theory-woke-marxism-education-11626793272>



An attack on American culture, history, religious beliefs, or other values

An attempt to rewrite American history or control K-12 education

An effort to indoctrinate our children to a “woke” or liberal agenda

https://www.loudountimes.com/news/rally-opposing-critical-race-theory-held-in-leesburg/article_9cd04bbe-cbac-11eb-be7a-7b34ad16e9d8.html



What CRT Is Not

An attack on “white” (Euro-American) culture or attempt to demonize everything that makes America great

A demand that everyone think about race and racism all the time or in the same ways

Something that you or anyone you know should be against or feel guilty about

Why?

<https://www.adl.org/blog/two-years-ago-they-marched-in-charlottesville-where-are-they-now>



Don't fear CRT

You aren't responsible for it and don't need to do anything about it (unless you want to)

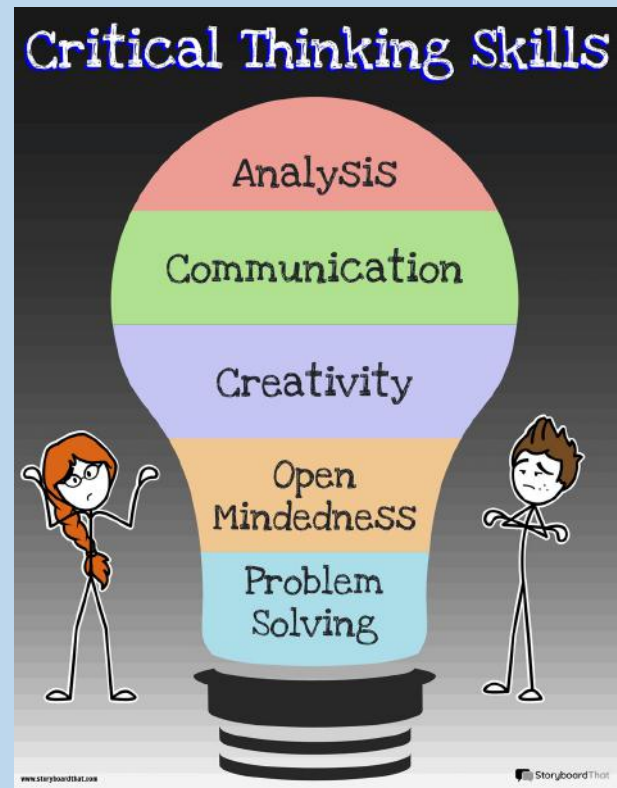
It's complex, your children won't learn it in K-12 education

CRT doesn't erase history; it improves it in at least 3 ways:

Fosters critical thinking skills

Recognizes complexity of American culture and history

Helps combat misinformation

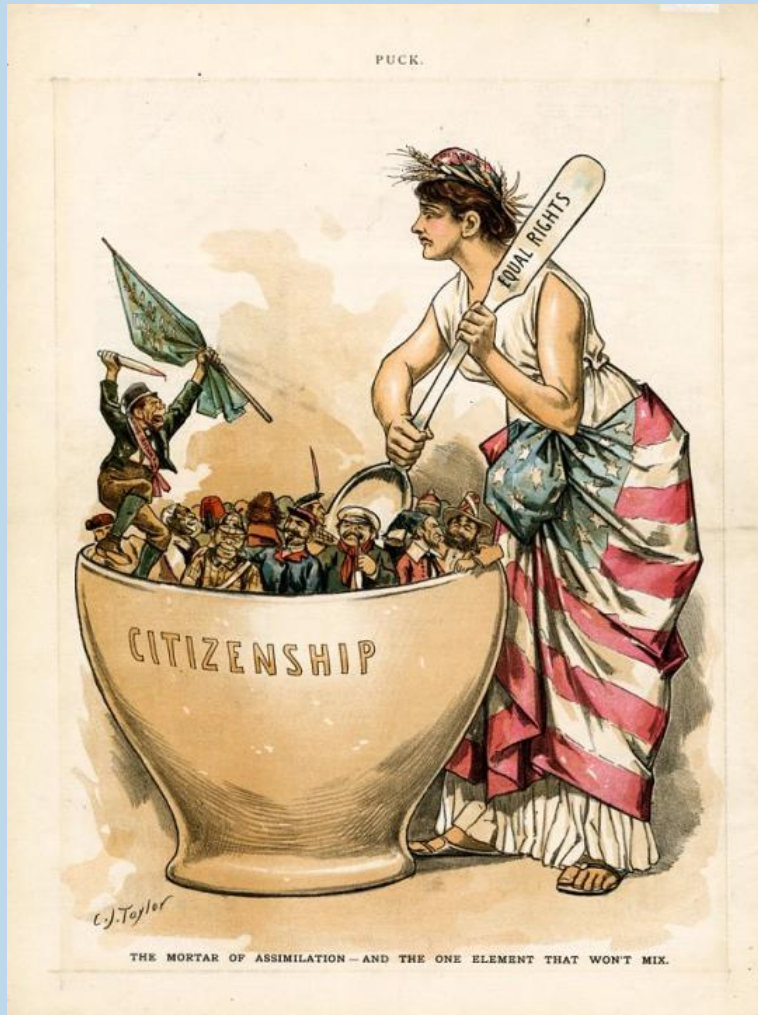


<https://www.storyboardthat.com/articles/e/critical-thinking-skills>



www.emr.ac.uk

Why this all matters



Race and racism are important components of American culture and history

CRT helps understand their roles and relationships, which do exist and help connect the past with the present

They also help us understand that the US is and has always been diverse

<https://www.studentsofhistory.com/the-american-melting-pot>

Why this all matters

Studying and understanding race, racism, and CRT help us learn more about human variation

We are an incredibly unique and diverse species, studying race, racism, and CRT helps us understand how we define and explain our differences

A better understanding of human diversity is a practical skill in today's world



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2021/03/22/globalization-can-transform-business-even-during-the-pandemic/?sh=2371ed812c9f>

Why this all matters

Studying race, racism, and CRT encourage us to think critically about American history, culture, and people

The ability to think critically and independently is one of our greatest (and most unique) characteristics

This helps us understand other perspectives and combat misinformation, things everyone, everywhere can benefit from today!

<https://research.asu.edu/s-even-ways-to-protect-yourself-against-misinformation>



Further resources

There are lots of good, free, non-academic resources if you want to learn more, here are a few websites I recommend to get started:

<https://www.understandinggrace.org/>

<https://www.americananthro.org/LearnAndTeach/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2062>

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BRIF2_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QgirlTwCTugSfKie5Fs/preview?pru=AAABcpYTvbw*Ob34mfP01BJjN0KDMrufsg

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/158-resources-understanding-systemic-racism-america-180975029/>

<https://education.wm.edu/news/news-archive/2021/what-is-critical-race-theory-resources-for-educators.php>

Further resources

There are lots of good, free, non-academic resources if you want to learn more, here are a few more websites I recommend:

https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/what-critical-race-theory-is-and-what-it-means-for-teachers?gclid=CjwKCAiAjoeRBhAJEiwAYY3nDlaJ9MO9vzLTogqGsoeQ8awyJiSmzqNRcDepMwg5Obe6jaNeS_GasRoCuxsQAvD_BwE

<https://utorontopress.com/blog/2020/07/23/gonzalez-race-and-ethnicity-in-the-classroom/?fbclid=IwAR0gSIKeaeZ8CsVSsHrul4c3-It2M6He8bGh0oRsv5Nra9eW0sRmklktTs>

<https://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2017/science-genetics-reshaping-race-debate-21st-century/>

Further resources

Here are some good videos and books about race and racism:

<https://www.nationalbook.org/books/caste-the-origins-of-our-discontents/>

<https://cup.columbia.edu/book/racism-not-race/9780231200660>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/the-myth-of-race/p0957s4f>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNqOUjHWsn0>

<https://understandingrace.org/History>