Critical Race Theory ("CRT") developed in the early and mid-1980s as a response to both the substance and style of traditional legal scholarship. Substantively, critical race scholars rejected not only the "colorblind" approach to legal issues that renders invisible the particular and often divergent experiences of people of color vis-à-vis the law, but also liberal approaches emphasizing formal equality and individual civil rights, as well as the radical critiques of critical legal theorists and their "trashing" of civil rights. Stylistically, critical race theorists often employed new methodologies for legal scholarship, including storytelling and postmodern analysis. CRT advocates effectively used these methods to illuminate and define the centrality of race as a foundational feature of U.S. law. Since its emergence, there have been a number of developments in CRT, as is the case with every specialized field of study. More recently, second generation CRT scholars have focused on the "anti-essentialist" challenge presented by a diverse community of race crits along racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, and class lines, among others.

Participants in this seminar will examine the genesis of CRT and its subsequent development, and will explore further CRT’s possibilities and limitations. We will address some of the following questions: Has CRT been successful, in light of its theoretical commitments, in changing the law and/or the lives of marginalized people for the better? How have non-legal scholarly disciplines influenced and impacted the development of CRT? Is there such a thing as "critical race praxis," and if so, what does it mean and require?

This seminar involves substantial writing and “workshopping” components. In the first part of the seminar, participants will study the early race crit writing, some second-generation CRT
scholarship, critiques of CRT, and future-oriented issues. In the second part of the seminar, we will turn to readings in the paper-topic areas of seminar participants and paper workshops and presentations.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Taking this course satisfies only one of the graduation requirements (seminar or writing). If you take this course and have not yet satisfied the seminar requirement, you will be deemed to have met the seminar requirement. However, if you take this course and you have already met the seminar requirement, you will be deemed to have met the writing requirement. Two, separate courses are required to satisfy both the seminar and writing requirements. No one course satisfies them both.

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