Critical Race Theory
Fall 2016 (2168)

Class Number: 22894 Subject and Catalogue Number: IRTS 7077 001

Professor: Houh
Credits: 2 Classroom
Primary Basis for the Grade: To be determined; Letter Grade
Prerequisites: None
Enrollment: Open

Meets Seminar Requirement? No Meets Writing Requirement? No
Meets Client Counseling Requirement? No Meets Lawyering Requirement? No
Meeting Times: Monday 1:30 to 3:30 pm
Location: 208

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

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 class 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?

Last updated: 04 04 2016 cd