

Critical Race Theory and Its Role in Chemistry

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What is Critical Race Theory?

- Critical race theory (CRT) is an intellectual movement that analyzes the intersection of race and law.
 - It originated when scholars studying law and practicing lawyers noticed discrepancies in how laws affect people of varied race
 - Recently, there have been a lot of strong opinions in the news about if CRT should be taught in K-12 schooling,

Here is an excellent video of an interview with Ibram Kendi at Boston University

- The founder of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University
- Author of How to Be an Antiracist
- <https://youtu.be/miVIHcdjaWM>

Key Points I Want to Draw Focus To

- CRT is not currently being taught in K-12 schooling and is not even being taught at all advanced law degree programs.
- CRT criticizes the idea that laws introduced by federal and state governments, and enforced the judicial system, should be considered “race neutral” or “color blind.”
 - Current scholars urge that we recognize that racism isn’t a result of evil people, but instead is a systemic issue, and therefore requires a systemic fix.
- CRT has a lot of overlap with “intersectionality” pioneered by Kimberlé Crenshaw
 - Looks at how overlap of various social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, and class, contributes to how an individual experiences systemic discrimination.

How CRT Applies to Chemistry

- The tenants that these lawyers and authors use could also be helpful in promoting equity in Chemistry.
- We need to recognize how racism is systemic issue in chemistry, because academia is an institution.
 - There is disproportionately large percentage of white men relative to the population in chemistry, and a disproportionately low percentage of underrepresented groups relative to the population.
- Standardized Testing
 - Students from affluent backgrounds have an unfair advantage because they can afford extra study materials, tutors, and practice exams.
- Application Fees
 - Along the same lines as standardized testing, application fees disadvantage students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.