

University of Massachusetts/Amherst

School of Education

Course Syllabus

Education 892 P

Doctoral Seminar in Multicultural Education:  
Critical Race Theory

Language, Literacy, and Culture Doctoral Research Area

Professor Sonia Nieto

Spring 2003

## General Course Information

<u>Course Title</u>	Doctoral Seminar in Multicultural Education: Critical Race Theory
<u>Credits:</u>	3
<u>Meeting Time:</u>	Monday, 4:00 - 6:30 P.M.
<u>Classroom:</u>	228 Furcolo Hall
<u>Instructor:</u>	Sonia Nieto
<u>Office:</u>	210 Furcolo Hall
<u>Hours:</u>	Wednesdays, 1:30 - 4:30 P.M. and by appointment
<u>Phone:</u>	545-1551
<u>FAX:</u>	545-2879
<u>email:</u>	snieto@educ.umass.edu
<u>Required Texts</u>	<p>Crenshaw, K., <i>et al</i> (1995). <i>Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement</i>. New York: The New Press.</p> <p>Delgado, R. D. &amp; Stefancic, J. (2001). <i>Critical race theory: An introduction</i>. New York: New York University Press.</p> <p>Available at Food for Thought Books 106 No. Pleasant Street Amherst, MA 01002 (413) 253-5432 Open Monday-Saturday, 10 A.M. - 6 P.M.</p>
<u>Course Pack:</u>	Available at Textbook Annex

## Course Description

*Critical race theory*, a term unknown two decades ago, is now a field with a growing interest, vocabulary, and literature. This doctoral seminar will consider the history, theoretical underpinnings, and implications of CRT, especially as they are related to education.

It was not until the 1990s that the concept of race as a biologically fixed trait was decisively challenged and largely rejected. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the notion that race is a social construct had reached almost universal consensus. However, at the same time, the existence of *racism* as an everyday occurrence and the reality of institutionalized racism were both more evident than ever. The limits of liberal remedies to overcome racism – particularly in the legal sphere – were becoming more apparent than ever. It is in this climate that the concept of CRT, especially as applied to the law, was born.

In this seminar, you will have the opportunity to read some of the groundbreaking texts in CRT, as well as some of its precursors. Beginning with readings in legal literature, we will then venture into theoretical constructs in feminism and postmodernism that inform critical race theory. The course will end with an exploration of the implications of CRT for the field of education, as well as for your research.

Specific objectives of the seminar include:

- To study the development and major tenets of critical race theory in the field of law.
- To analyze the contributions and critiques of feminism, postmodernism, and post-colonial theory to CRT.
- To examine the development of CRT as a significant theoretical construct in education.
- To understand how CRT might apply to your own developing research agenda.

As these goals indicate, the course will focus principally on critical race theory and other theories related to – or influenced by – CRT. Our primary work, however, will consist of understanding how CRT is implicated in education today, especially in school policies and practices, and in the preparation of teachers.

*If you have any condition, such as physical or sensory disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as we have outlined it or which will require extra time, please notify us in the first two weeks of the course so that we may make appropriate arrangements.*

## Course Format, Requirements, and Grading

### Course Format

Given the nature of a doctoral seminar, I will expect you to co-construct the course based on your particular interests and experiences, and on the goals you've articulated in your program of doctoral studies. One way to construct the course is through the topics you present in class; another is through your facilitation of readings (both of these are discussed in more detail below). Also, although you will have received the syllabus and course schedule on the first day of class, these represent just my initial thinking about the significant topics we should discuss. These are subject to revision. Please bring any ideas, resources, or activities that you think are particularly relevant to class for us to discuss.

### Course Requirements

The requirements for this course are:

- A. Attendance/participation/readings journal
- B. Leading a group discussion (or discussions) based on shared readings
- C. Paper linking your research interests with CRT

Each of these requirements is described in more detail below.

#### A. Attendance/Participation/Reading

Because of the participatory nature of the seminar, you should make every effort to attend all class sessions. The reading list is quite extensive, as you can see, and it represents the very meat of the course. As such, I expect you to come to class prepared to analyze and discuss the readings. One way to do this is to keep a careful readings journal, that is, a journal in which you write down the major ideas of the readings, as well as your reactions to them. These will be collected on the last day of the course. Also, I encourage you to do additional reading related to your particular research interests, especially as you prepare for your presentation and paper.

We will not be meeting on Tuesday, February 18 (which will be following a Monday class schedule). I encourage you instead to meet with others in the group, catch up on the extensive reading assignments, and work on your individual projects. We will also not be meeting on Monday, April 21, as several course participants and many faculty members will be presenting at the annual AERA conference.

### B. Leading a Group Discussion (or Discussions) on the Readings

Given the extensive readings for the seminar, two of you will prepare a discussion based on the readings for at least one class session. Although all participants are expected to read all the assigned texts and other readings, group leaders will prepare an in-depth overview of the particular texts and act as a catalyst for further dialogue about the issues presented in the readings. You are expected to select the texts you want to present by the second class session.

### C. Leading a Group Discussion on Your Research

Each of you will be asked to lead a discussion of how CRT adds to your own developing research interests. You can do this by describing your interest focus, discuss CRT tenets that might help you conceptualize the problem differently, or discuss how CRT can expand or limit the topic. The purpose of this presentation is to allow your colleagues to understand your work, and to generate suggestions and feedback for the reflections paper you will be writing, described below.

### D. Reflection Paper

You are expected to write a reflection of CRT from the perspective of your particular research agenda. Your paper can focus on a conceptual, implementation, research or policy issue related to CRT. You may decide to develop the paper based on an idea you have for your comprehensive paper, or you may want to develop it as an outgrowth of study you have done or a presentation you have made (or will be making) at a conference. You can write it alone or with another course participant if your research interests are similar. In any case, the paper should include an overview of relevant research.

### Grading

Grades for this doctoral seminar will be given on a Pass/Fail basis. To receive a PASS, you will need to complete all course requirements.

### Some Recommended References

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Press.
- Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Delgado, R. (1995). *Critical race theory: The cutting edge*. Phila., PA: Temple University Press.
- Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Critical white studies: Looking behind the mirror*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. R. Denzin & W. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fine, M., Weis, L. & Powell, L. (1997). Communities of differences: A critical look at desegregated spaces created for and by youth. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67, 247-284.
- Flagg, B. (1993). 'Was blind, but now I see': White race consciousness and the requirement of discriminatory intent. *Michigan Law Review*, 91(3), 953-1017.
- Giroux, H. (1997). *Channel surfing: Race talk and the destruction of today's youth*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- López, N. (2002). Rewriting race and gender high school lessons: Second-generation Dominicans in New York City. *Teachers College Record*, 104 (6), 1187-1203.
- Roediger, D. (1994). *Toward the abolition of whiteness*. London: Verso Press.
- Solorzano, D. G. & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in urban contexts. *Urban Education*, 36 (3), 308-342.
- Solorzano, D. G. & Yosso, T. J. (2001). From racial stereotyping and deficit discourse toward a critical race theory in teacher education. *Multicultural Education*, 9 (1), 2-8.
- Special issue on Education and Race, *Teachers College Record*, 100 (4), Summer, 1999.
- Warrior, R. (1995). *Tribal secrets: Recovering American Indian intellectual traditions*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.