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# Critical Race Lawyering Civil Rights Clinic

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# Overview



What is Critical Race Theory (“CRT”) & How Can It Inform Lawyering Advocacy?



Case Work, Student Skill Development, & Student Reactions



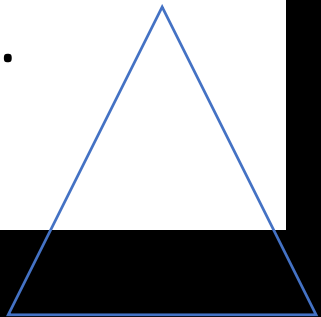
Clinic Logistics


A serene landscape photograph featuring a calm body of water in the foreground, reflecting the sky and distant mountains. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, purples, and blues, suggesting dawn or dusk. The mountains are dark and silhouetted against the lighter sky, with some mist or low clouds hanging between them. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

What is Critical Race Theory (“CRT”)?

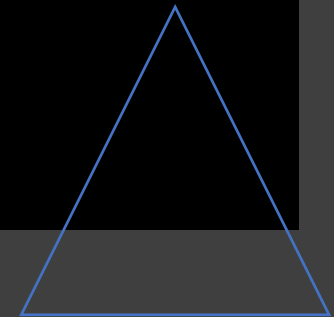


# CRT Is a Framework

- ❖ Critical Race Theory (“CRT”) is an analytical tool used to frame **legal (and non-legal)** problems concerning race, inequality, and power.
  - ❖ CRT acknowledges the communally constitutive connection between race (or membership in any traditionally subordinated group) and the law.
  - ❖ CRT provides a valuable lens through which to view issues of systemic injustice that plague members of marginalized groups.
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Example of a  
CRT Frame



# Intersectionality

- **Dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring along a single categorical axis, usually the most privileged axis.**
- **Intersectionality provides a lens through which one can examine the overlapping systems of oppression and discrimination that individuals face, based not just on one identity, but on multiple identities such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, economic background, ect..**



# CRT Frameworks Relevance to Lawyering

- If you frame the problem wrong, you will often come to the wrong solution.
- Understanding how to frame problems of racial inequality, power differentials, and subordination, will make you better lawyers.



# How Does It Differ From a Traditional Civil Rights Clinic?

- Uses a **race-based systemic reform lens** in case selection and advocacy strategy.
- Creative & expansive use of **both litigation and non-litigation forms** of advocacy.
- **Expansive Definition** of Civil Rights.



# How Does It Work In Practice?



# Clinic Seminar

- CRT Bootcamp
- Weekly seminar
- Race & Professional Identity Development

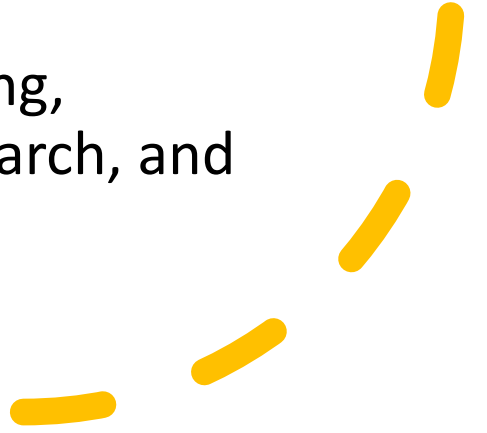




# Case Work & Skill Development

“A LAWYER IS EITHER A SOCIAL  
ENGINEER OR A PARASITE ON SOCIETY” -  
CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON

# Discrimination & School Discipline- Taking Intersectionality Mainstream

- ❖ Represented a client in filing a complaint with the Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, (“OCR”) arguing that student was subject to excessive discipline **because of his race and disability**.
  - ❖ Advanced a challenging but novel interpretation of how OCR should interpret Title VI to allow for an intersectional claim of discrimination based on race and disability.
  - ❖ Students in the fall drafted a brief to OCR outlining the argument and represented the client in a successful voluntary mediation.
  - ❖ **Student Skills:** Interviewing, Counseling, Negotiation, Brief Drafting, Legal Research, and Legal Analysis.
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## Racialized Mass Incarceration – Inserting Counternarratives


- **Parole Project**
  - Students in the clinic represent an individual who has been incarcerated for 20+ years.
  - Students engage in legal storytelling to construct counternarratives about who their client is & advocate for their release before the NC Parole Commission.
- **Student Skills:** Interviewing, Factual Development, Case Theory Development, Drafting, and Oral Advocacy.

# Disability Access

- Represent client in investigating claims they were denied access to courts due to disability.
- Advocacy with the Administrative Office of Courts to change policies and practices for disability accommodation.
- **Student Skills:** Factual Investigation, Legal Research and Analysis, Interviewing, Counseling, Negotiation, and Oral Advocacy.



# Collateral Consequences

- Represent individuals in getting records expunged.
  - Work with District Attorneys to Petition for Mass Relief under NC Second Chance Act
  - Create Videos to Explain Expungement Process, Law, and Consequences to Community Members
  - **Student Skills:** Legal Analysis, Interviewing, Counseling, Drafting, and Oral Advocacy
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# Reparatory Justice – Legal Storytelling & Counternarratives

- Work with the national legal advocacy organization to advance a novel claim regarding reparations being owed to descendants of enslaved Africans using a specific historical event and tort claims.
- Work with historians, economists, and other experts to engage in legal storytelling that advances a new narrative about the ongoing detrimental impact being suffered by descendants of enslaved Africans.



# Student Reactions

“I honestly just have had a great experience in this clinic. I have learned way more than in any other law school class and overall, it has been the best part of my law school experience, even while remote.”

“Learning about CRT frameworks changed my life. I now tell everyone I know about it.”

# Clinic Logistics

Semester Long Option

Year Long Option

Evidence Co-Requisite

Weekend Intensive/CRT Bootcamp Mandatory

6 Credits Fall/3 Credits Spring

