


# Understanding "Race"



<p>"Race" has no scientific meaning. "Race" is only considered a social construct, rather than a biological category. In fact, <b>85% of genetic diversity</b> occurs within population groups and <b>only 15% of it between population groups</b>.</p>	<p><b>"Race" as a Social Construct</b></p>	<p>Critically examine your own biases and stereotypes about "race". Consider the origins of these ideas, especially those perpetuated in popular media, such as whitewashing, tokenizing, and dehumanizing characters of colour.</p>
<p>Critical "race" theory describes the role of academia, legal institutions, and the state in perpetuating racial hierarchy. It also describes how modern racism has changed from colour conscious (apartheid, segregation) to colour blind. Critical "race" theory is meant to evolve and continue to explain the resistance to global racism.</p>	<p><b>Systems of Oppression</b></p>	<p>Dismantle the idea that we are living in a post racial society. Colour blind racism implies that racial issues are a thing of the past due to recent legal protections. Until society as a whole does the work to decolonize and foster true multiculturalism, our society will not be equal or equitable. <b>If you do not act, you are complicit.</b></p>
 <p><b>Intersectionality</b> describes how social categorizations work to create interconnected systems of oppression that act on an individual or group.</p>	<p><b>Difference and Diversity</b></p>	<p>Do not equate oppression with identity politics. Being under the influence of more systems of oppression does not give one moral superiority. The idea of an oppression hierarchy undermines solidarity between minoritized groups.</p>
<p>Feminists have worked to change the perception of gender from being a biological trait to being a social construct that has historically subordinated women.</p> <p>The LGBTQ+ community has worked to change to perception of sexuality and gender from being binary, to being on a spectrum.</p>	<p><b>Gender and Sexuality</b></p>	<p>Do not assume a person's gender or sexuality, and instead challenge your own conscious and unconscious biases. <b>Work to dismantle sexism, heteronormativity, gender normativity,</b> and other systems of oppression that affect women and the LGBTQ+ community.</p>
<p><b>European colonialism</b> evolved over time from the Roman Empire to recent forms of colonialism with common themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seizure of land and resources.</li> <li>• Creation of colonial elites and a subject class.</li> <li>• Intergenerational transfers of power.</li> <li>• Perception of rightness.</li> <li>• Military power and religion used as justifications.</li> </ul>	<p><b>History of Colonialism</b></p>	<p>Reject the idea of post colonialism which describes colonialism in the past tense from the perspective of the oppressor. <b>Decolonisation</b> seeks to dismantle colonial relationships and is described from the perspective of the oppressed. <b>Land Back</b> is a movement that seeks to restore stolen territory to Indigenous nations. Colonial governments have consistently violated treaties to continue taking Indigenous land.</p>
<p>The <b>scientific method</b> has been used to perpetuate racism through the false ideas of <b>eugenics, and craniology - the study of skull shape and volume</b> to justify European supremacy. <b>People of colour have been systematically excluded from academia,</b> and as a result Western Knowledge cannot be considered comprehensive.</p>	<p><b>Western Knowledge is Not Equal to the Truth</b></p>	<p>Consider the political and social climate of the time when evaluating Western Knowledge. Seek diverse perspectives and consider those who have suffered in the production of Western Knowledge. "Race" was eliminated as a scientific concept in the early 19th century, but historically Western Academia has remained silent on the issue.</p>
<p><b>Whiteness</b> is a signifier of dominance, due to the long history of systemic oppression and colonialism. The main privilege of whiteness is that social, political, economic, and academic hierarchies have been designed to benefit white individuals. <b>Not having to consider "race" in day to day life is an immense privilege.</b></p>	<p><b>Whiteness</b></p>	<p>Do not take these ideas personally, the goal is to fight a system, not a person. If you are in a position of power and privilege you can work to change the ideas of those around you, and to be an ally in social justice efforts. However, do not presume that those in power are the only agents of change.</p>

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