

Call for Papers for a Special Issue of *Library Quarterly*:  
**LibCrit: Moving Towards Critical Race Theory in LIS**

**Issue Guest Editors**, Dr. Nicole A. Cooke and Dr. Mónica Colón-Aguirre, University of South Carolina

Emerging from legal studies in the mid-1970s, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was the product of works by lawyers, activists and legal scholars who were concerned that the advances brought by the Civil Rights era had stalled, and in many instances been rolled back. The main idea behind CRT is that new theories and strategies are needed to combat all forms of racism prevalent in American society (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). CRT is based on the ideas that racism is ordinary in society and not aberrational, that our systems and social organizations recognize white as baseline, and how this serves the interests of the dominant group. CRT also posits that race is a social construct which is not objective, inherent, or fixed and also recognizes the unique “voice of color” which means that because of their different stories and experiences with oppression black, American Indian, Asian and Latinx are better suited to communicate their experiences better than whites can (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). CRT, along with book banning, intersectionality, white privilege, etc., are topics/terms and practices that are highly politicized and weaponized, when in the ironic reality, CRT is one of the keys to understanding the nation’s current racial climate.

From its origins in critical legal studies CRT has been adapted to multiple social science fields - including education, political science, communication, and sociology. At its core it is a movement which seeks to explore the role of racism and its effects on society. In principle, CRT posits that by understanding the barriers created and brought on by racism, society will be in a better position to eliminate them. This special issue intends to share some of the ways that librarians and library scholars are incorporating CRT into LIS professional practice. As of late, CRT (along with other “controversial” topics such as book banning), is at the center of heated debates among politicians which takes a particularly incendiary tone in the field of education, where K-12 school systems have received strong pushback and hostility over the assumption that they were CRT based curricula; although in reality CRT is taught at the graduate level as a method of analysis, and it is not part of the K-12 education settings. This willful misconstruing of CRT comes despite evidence showing that the education system in the United States is one in which students of minoritized status face obvious barriers when compared with whites, with BIPOC students being more likely to be disciplined than their white counterparts, and usually with more severe punishments, they are also underrepresented and less likely to be placed in advanced courses, and that the school curriculum fails to represent the perspectives of indigenous groups (Meckler and Natanson, 2021). The issues do not stop at the U.S. Department of Education. Resistance to implementing, or even considering, the study of CRT is also present in higher education. By the summer of 2021, 16 states had lawmakers pushing legislation banning the teaching of CRT in public institutions of higher learning, a move which has been described as censorship by many in higher education (Flaherty, 2021).

For this special issue, *Library Quarterly* is seeking proposals that move forward the principles of CRT in the LIS practice. We are calling for the submission of proposals that explore, document, and explain the role of race and the way in which libraries and other information professions perpetuate racism, and racist practices, as well as ideas on how information professionals can move beyond these systems and create institutions that support their patrons and create environments in which all are welcomed. The guest editors will consider all types of academic works including research studies, case studies at the institutional, state, and national levels, as well as theoretical and conceptual pieces which have CRT and its main considerations at its center. The papers for this special issue do not need to conform to the typical journal length requirements and shorter papers containing essential information as well as longer studies will be considered.

Topics which will be considered include, but are not limited to, those focusing on the following issues as they pertain to or can be applied to LIS:

- Anti-Blackness
- Colorblindness
- Colorism
- Counter storytelling / “voices of color”
- Differential racialization
- Gaslighting/race lighting
- Implicit bias
- Interest convergence
- Intersections of race and ethnicity
- Intersectionality
- Meritocracy
- Racial microaggressions
- Racism
- Structural racism
- White privilege
- CRT as it relates to/intersects with other “controversial” issues

If you are interested in contributing a paper to this special issue, please submit a proposed title, an approximately 500-word summary of the topic, and a list of the authors and their affiliations to: Nicole A. Cooke and Mónica Colón-Aguirre ([LibCritUSC@gmail.com](mailto:LibCritUSC@gmail.com)) by August 1, 2022. Proposals will be reviewed by September 1, 2022. Articles based on accepted proposals will be due by December 1, 2022. Final revised articles will be due on June 1, 2023, in advance of a January 2024 publication.

**The guest editors for this special issue are Nicole Cooke and Mónica Colón-Aguirre.**

**Nicole A. Cooke, PhD**, is the Augusta Baker Endowed Chair and an Associate Professor at the University of South Carolina. Her research and teaching interests include human information behavior, critical cultural information studies, and diversity and social justice in librarianship. She was the 2019 Association of Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) Excellence in

Teaching Award recipient, and she has edited and authored several books, including *Information Services to Diverse Populations* and *Fake News and Alternative Facts: Information Literacy in a Post-truth Era*.

**Mónica Colón-Aguirre, PhD** is an assistant professor at the University of South Carolina, School of Information Science. She is a recipient of the Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship (2008) and has more than 10 years of experience as an instructor and researcher. Her areas of research include academic libraries, library, management, user services, services for underserved populations, information behaviors of Spanish-speakers. Before she became a faculty member, she worked in libraries both in the continental United States and in her native Puerto Rico.