

From: Lars Jefferson
Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 2:12 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethic studies

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing about some deep concerns regarding ethnic studies as written in the recent draft. I am a product of California public education and CSU system. I teach overseas in China.

There is a historical and critical approach to education. History attempts to be dispassionate and invites discussions of narratives and perspectives to define truth. Universal humanism and enlightenment guide the modern era, and provide a framework through empirical, objective evidence to do this.

The document provided is however grounded in postmodern ways of thinking. These include focus on identity, standpoint epistemology, discourse and power. These values are antithetical to the liberal order. First and foremost, postmodern thought REJECTS objectivity and reality. Everything is subjective to the viewer. There are no universals. The claims that everyone has a unique viewpoint divorces people from reality. In this type of thinking a simple object like chair can be called hippo, chicken or thunderstorm. Under standpoint epistemology, we have to accept these claims because disagreement is denial of a persons reality and by extension "erases" them.

Discourse is how we communicate. Postmodern philosopher Foucault puts all discourse in the most terrible light. Every conversation and interaction is grounded in power. Therefore when something happens, according to Foucault, we must look for dominant and oppressed. Anything that is dominant is considered bad, hence we have terms of white supremacy being thrown around without any definition of what that actually means. This notion ignores truth, including objectivity by questioning observable claims like gravity, biological sex and scientific truths. Under this methodology, the person making the claim has some sort of special viewpoint and reality that must be considered. As such if a white man states that "Ice is cold", would be looked at skeptically because of his participation in whiteness. If a minority or oppressed person says "Ice is hot" we have to accept that claim because they have special knowledge that has been oppressed and we can't falsify their claim because doing so would be oppressive.

As everything is filtered through discourse and power, this WILL lead students into an age of utter solipsism where anyone can say and do anything because questions it is oppression. The fact that post modern philosophy cannot be falsified or even tested is highly problematic. The only way to pass these courses as they exist in colleges is agreement. That is not education. It's indoctrination.

Dr Martin Luther King advocated judging people by the content of their character and not color of their skin. Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality postulates that immutable characteristics define people. This view only creates a hierarchy of oppression and rejects that people can be more than immutable characteristics based on skin color, sex, identity or other self imposed defining attributes. It is antithetical to liberal values of equality under the law and society. We should treat everyone equally regardless of immutable characteristics.

There are many social and political issues that need to be addressed with care and empathy. Let us not abandon our principles of universal humanism and human rights in educating our students.

I would like to also point out that Critical Social Justice being advocated is a utopian vision of society. Past attempts at utopian visions have NEVER worked. The USSR, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, the People's Temple, and radical Islamists have all tried and failed to create utopian societies. They have never ended well. I beg you to consider these realities when making your final decisions.

People need to have the right to think and say whatever's they want, not do whatever they want. That is liberalism in a nutshell. Stand for liberal values of individualism, humanism and the enlightenment.

Peace,

Lars Jefferson