The Center for Critical and Cultural Theory (3CT) was founded to promote intellectual synergy and community among Rice faculty and graduate students whose work is informed by a deep and sustained engagement with critical and cultural theory and their ongoing development and permutations. Though housed in the School of Humanities, and drawing primarily on faculty and students from the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Architecture, 3CT welcomes and encourages faculty and students in any field whose work is framed by an intensive engagement with critical and cultural theory and its methodological innovations.

The program's primary pedagogical aim is to help equip students to engage ambitious and synthetic research projects of social and cultural significance in a wide range of areas such as new media studies, race and ethnicity studies, science and technology studies, ecocriticism and environmental humanities, animal studies, medical humanities, transnationalism, art and architecture, psychoanalysis, and political and social theory - just to name a few of the more established pursuits in which a strong theoretical background is indispensable. 3CT is therefore committed to the view that rigorous theoretical training enables empowering reflection upon the dominant forms of disciplinary norms, practices, and protocols and their historically and socially constituted nature. 3CT aims to strengthen and enrich how its participants understand and relate to their "home" disciplines.

The Center for Critical and Cultural Theory does not currently offer an academic program at the undergraduate level.