



equity  
arcata

## meritocracy

A reflection on what is it and its harmful effects.

**welcoming • safe • racially equitable**

---

**[equityarcata.org](http://equityarcata.org)**

# Meritocracy

What does meritocracy mean to you?



# Meritocracy: *Merriam-Webster*

A system, organization, or society in which people are chosen and moved into positions of success, power, and influence on the basis of their demonstrated abilities and merit.



# the myth of meritocracy

Meritocracy promotes the color blind philosophy that anyone, regardless of their race or ethnicity, can succeed if they work hard enough.

The myth of meritocracy has been identified as a tool to both reinforce institutional racism and justify racist attitudes while also serving as an argument against affirmative action policies.

*Myth of Meritocracy–Wikipedia. Cooper, Jewell E.; He, Ye; Levin, Barbara B. (2011). Developing Critical Cultural Competence: A Guide for 21st-Century Educators. SAGE Publications. pp. 14–15. ISBN 9781452269276. Halley, Jean O'Malley; Eshleman, Amy; Mahadevan Vijaya, Ramya (2011). Seeing White: An Introduction to White Privilege and Race. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. pp. 191–192. ISBN 9781442203075. Cock, Jacklyn; Bernstein, Alison R. (2002). Melting Pots & Rainbow Nations: Conversations about Difference in the United States and South Africa. University of Illinois Press. pp. 34. ISBN 9780252070273.*



# white privilege



# invitation on reflection

Do you relate or not? How?

Do you feel that meritocracy affects you personally? In what ways?



## Racism has a cost for everyone | Heather C. McGhee

Does meritocracy erase or amplify the the hierarchy of human values?

