

FIGHTING
CRITICAL
RACE
THEORY
IN IDAHO

**A Comprehensive Toolkit for Parents,
School Districts, and Legislators**



What is Critical Race Theory?

JAMES LINDSAY, NEW DISCOURSES



Most people will have heard of Critical Race Theory by now, but in case you haven't, it's a particular way of thinking about race and racism that developed first at Harvard Law School from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. Its stated objective is to question whether the Civil Rights Movement and Civil Rights Acts legislation improved the racial situation in Western nations, especially the United States. Its true objective is to re-organize the social, cultural, and legal playing field in a way that claims to reverse "historical injustices" around the issue of race, allegedly without reproducing them.

To keep this short and simple, I'll provide you with two quotes from the book *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (third edition) by Critical Race Theorists Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. These quotes summarize everything that Critical Race Theory is really about in its own words.

First, Critical Race Theory views race and racism this way: race is a political construction that was invented by

white people to give themselves power while excluding all other races from it, and racism is the ordinary state of affairs in society, present in all interactions, institutions, and phenomena, and effectively permanent in society (short of a full sociocultural revolution that puts them in charge). That is, Critical Race Theory assumes that racism is present in everything under a doctrine known as "systemic racism." Quoting from Delgado and Stefancic,

What do critical race theorists believe? Probably not every member would subscribe to every tenet set out in this book, but many would agree on the following propositions. First, that racism is ordinary, not aberrational—"normal science," the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color in this country. Second, most would agree that our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material. The first feature, ordinariness, means that racism is difficult to cure or address. The second feature, sometimes called "interest convergence" or material

determinism, adds a further dimension. Because racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class people (psychically), large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it.

As you can see, Critical Race Theorists believe that people who they claim benefit from “systemic racism,” which they declare to be the ordinary state of affairs in society, want to maintain it, which is why Critical Race Theorists say virtually everyone is racist. People who are especially skilled at finding the “systemic racism” in everything are called “Critical Race Theorists.” They proceed according to a simplified version of this first assumption of Critical Race Theory, which can be expressed in the words of Robin DiAngelo this way: “The question is not ‘Did racism take place?’ but ‘How did racism manifest in that situation?’” That is, they assume racism is present in everything and look for it “critically” until they find it. Importantly, this is assessed subjectively according to the “lived experience” of racism and does not depend upon there being any evidence of racism.

Second, Critical Race Theory does not continue the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement, as many incorrectly believe. It is against liberalism and the liberal order upon which Western societies are founded, and it rejects both equality and neutral principles of constitutional law (these were the backbone of both the abolitionist movement that ended slavery and the Civil Rights Movement). It also rejects legal reasoning and Enlightenment rationalism. This makes Critical Race Theory unreasonable, illiberal, against equality, and anti-American, by definition.

The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights discourse,

which stresses incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law.

Critical Race Theory believes these bedrock liberal principles upon which free societies are built are ways that discrimination can be hidden and maintained rather than overcome. As stated by Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo in their Critical Theory education manual *Is Everyone Really Equal?*,

[Critical] movements initially advocated for a type of liberal humanism (individualism, freedom, and peace) but quickly turned to a rejection of liberal humanism. The ideal of individual autonomy that underlies liberal humanism (the idea that people are free to make independent rational decisions that determine their own fate) was viewed as a mechanism for keeping the marginalized in their place by obscuring larger structural systems of inequality. In other words, it fooled people into believing that they had more freedom and choice than societal structures actually allow.

As you can see, Critical Race Theory presents a radically different view of our society and of us than most of us recognize or accept. They begin with the assumption of racism and look to find it. They say everyone who doesn't do this is complicit in the problem, including just for disagreeing with Critical Race Theory. And they reject the fundamental liberal, reasonable, legal, and scientific principles upon which liberal societies operate. That is, even though they touch on real truths about race and racism in our world, they are radicals in every sense of the word, and there's almost no reason to believe they describe reality as it is and much reason to believe they get the issue almost exactly backwards.

This excerpt was used with permission from New Discourses.

The Core Scholars of Critical Race Theory

DANIEL BUCK, NATHAN HOFFMAN, ANNA MILLER



Derrick Bell

Professorship: Harvard Law School

NOTABLE WORKS: Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism

NOTABLE QUOTES:

"Progress in American race relations is largely a mirage, obscuring the fact that whites continue, consciously or unconsciously to do all in their power to ensure their dominion and maintain control."

"Beyond the ebb and flow of racial progress lies the still viable and widely accepted (though seldom expressed) belief that America is a white country in which blacks, particularly as a group, are not entitled to the concern, resources, or even empathy that would be extended to similarly situated whites."

"Today, CRT can claim a presence in education, psychology, cultural studies, political science, and even philosophy."

"The way we imagine discrimination or disempowerment often is more complicated for people who are subjected to multiple forms of exclusion. The good news is that intersectionality provides us a way to see it." Note: she coined the term intersectionality.

"The view of CRT as a stable project sometimes denies the extent to which CRT was and continues to be constituted through a series of dynamic engagements situated within specific institutions over the terms by which their racial logics would be engaged."



Kimberlé Crenshaw

Professorship: Law at UCLA and Columbia

NOTABLE WORKS: Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color, Twenty Years of Critical Race Theory

NOTABLE QUOTES:

"There were also allegiances between and among these groups in terms of individual sympathies (or allergies) to neo-Marxism, post-modernism, liberal integrationism, radical feminism, leftist Black nationalism and the like."



Richard Delgado

Professorship: University of Alabama Law School

NOTABLE WORKS: The imperial scholar: reflections on a review of civil rights literature, Critical Race Theory: An Introduction

NOTABLE QUOTES:

"Critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law."

[Racism is] "normal—not aberrant in American society."

"It also invites the neutral-principles response: if the idea is to start playing fair now, how can we achieve fairness by discriminating against whites."



Ibram X. Kendi

Professorship: Director of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University

"Critical Race Theory argues that racism requires sweeping changes but liberalism has no mechanism for such change."

NOTABLE WORKS: Stamped, How to Be an Anti-Racist

NOTABLE QUOTES:

"If racial discrimination is defined as treating, considering, or making a distinction in favor or against an individual based on that person's race, then racial discrimination is not inherently racist. The defining question is whether the discrimination is creating equity or inequity. If discrimination is creating equity, then it is antiracist. If discrimination is creating inequity, then it is racist. Someone reproducing inequity through permanently assisting an overrepresented racial group into wealth and power is entirely different than someone challenging that inequity by temporarily assisting an underrepresented racial group into relative wealth and power until equity is reached."

"The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination."

"The opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is 'anti-racist.'"



Gloria Ladson-Billings

Professorship: University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education



Robin DiAngelo

Professorship: University of Washington School of Education

NOTABLE WORKS: White Fragility, Nice Racism

NOTABLE QUOTES:

"All white people are invested in and collude with racism,"

"The white collective fundamentally hates blackness for what it reminds us of: that we are capable and guilty of perpetrating immeasurable harm and that our gains come through the subjugation of others."

[white people are] "socialized into a deeply internalized sense of superiority that we either are unaware of or can never admit to ourselves, we become highly fragile in conversations about race."



Barbara Applebaum

Professorship: Syracuse University School of Education

NOTABLE WORKS: What is Critical Race Theory and What's it Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?, Dreamkeepers, But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy

NOTABLE QUOTES:

"Much of reality is socially constructed"

"Racism is a permanent fixture of American life."

[Critical Race Theory questions liberalism's] "emphasis on incrementalism."

NOTABLE WORKS: Being White, Being Good: White Complicity, White Moral Responsibility, and Social Justice Pedagogy

NOTABLE QUOTES:

[All white people] "are racist in this use of the term, because we benefit from systemic white privilege. Generally, whites think of racism as voluntary, intentional conduct done by horrible others. Whites spend a lot of time trying to convince ourselves and each other that we are not racist. A big step would

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >

be for whites to admit that we are racist and then to consider what to do about it."

"White privilege protects and supports white moral standing and this protective shield depends on there being an 'abject other' that constitutes white as 'good.' Whites, thus, benefit from white privilege in a very deep way. As Zeus Leonardo remarks, all whites are responsible for white dominance since their 'very being depends on it.'"



Herbert Marcuse

Philosopher of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory

NOTABLE WORKS: An Essay on Liberation, Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory

NOTABLE QUOTES:

Coined the term "Repressive Tolerance" the idea that being tolerant is a form of complicity with intolerance, and that intolerant speech must be answered with violence.

"Liberating tolerance, then, would mean intolerance against movements from the Right and toleration of movements from the Left."

"Under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination."

"Those who devote their lives to earning a living are incapable of living a human existence."



What Do These Scholars Say & Believe?

The academic definitions of critical race theory are patently radical. They reject classically liberal conceptions of government, meritocracy, equality before the law, equal treatment, incremental improvement, enlightenment rationalist, objectivity, and more. While the popular definition of Critical Race Theory as "only using race as a lens to understand society, history, and literature" is partially true, it is using race as a lens to interrogate American society and ultimately condemn it. It's teaching American history to portray democratic capitalism and representative government as a historic failure.

Another way to conceive of critical race theory is marxism with bourgeoisie and proletariat replaced with white and black. And the intellectual history of Critical Race Theory confirms this characterization. Critical Race Theory is a branch of the more broad Critical Theory. This ideological movement began with neo-marxists in the Austrian School like Herbert Marcuse and a marxist pedagogue Paolo Freire. History, and American history in particular, can be understood as a power play between white and black, oppressor and oppressed. These are the essential dichotomies to understand American society, and only a radical deconstruction of capitalism and liberal democracy can undo them. **It's all about power.**

What Critical Race Theory Looks Like in K-12 Schools

TONY KINNETT & MANHATTAN INSTITUTE

The biggest deflection made by the media (though it's changing all the time) is that Critical Race Theory isn't being taught in American public schools. From local news channels, state news publications, to national outlets—critics claim CRT isn't in classrooms. The concepts, presuppositions, and demands of CRT are taught in K-12 schools across the nation, though they're cleverly disguised as the "buzzwords" that tens-of-thousands of educators use to sound morally righteous, academic, and research-based. Following are a few of the common buzzwords used in K-12 curriculum that institute the two core tenants of Critical Race Theory:

Equity, not Equality

The comic of three people standing behind a fence trying to watch a baseball game. One is tall and can see over, one is just shy of peeking over, and the final is too short to see any of the game.

The proposed solution: giving additional resources so that the short individual may stand on boxes and see the game, whereas the tall person needs no assistance.

The core idea: Equality is bad because some people are historically "shorted."

The issue: Equity-centered education often seeks to take resources from "more prosperous" individuals because it's perceived they must have cheated people to gain success. You end up chopping off the legs of the tall person to give bloody stumps to the short person.

In Education, we might remove an advanced program (such as in Virginia or Boston) so that all students may receive additional resources of the "advanced teachers", crippling the advanced students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The idea that if you utilize examples, styles, and materials that are culturally unfamiliar to your students, students-of-color will fare poorly, as compared to white students.

The proposed solution: remove many of the Western-Civilization books, music, and materials to replace with alternative materials.

The core idea: Minority groups fail to learn if they learn using materials focused on the majority.

The issue: Removing great works that have benefited all peoples to pander to people based on gender or color has never worked in history, and steals opportunities to learn the very truths that provide an opportunity for prosperity and virtue.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is the center of the "Disrupt Texts" movement, which advocated for works like "The Odyssey" to be banned from a Massachusetts School.

Decentering or Deconstructing "Whiteness"

The idea that we must move away from ideas, lessons, perspectives, and cultural materials considered "white".

The proposed solution: reminding students that white supremacy is a direct result of Western Civilization, and that students who appear white should sacrifice any leadership to the historically oppressed.

The core idea: White people are a cultural group whose perceived advancements have come at the expense of others.

The issue: Painting any group as a moral good or evil based on the color of their skin is responsible for every case of racial violence in human history. This chart, originally displayed at the Smithsonian, has become a

7 Fighting Critical Race Theory In Idaho

mainstay in countless racial equity trainings, beating teachers into believing that white culture is responsible for these supposedly evil traits.

Tackling Systemic Injustice

The concept that almost every economic, cultural, political, and generational disparity in the United States and other Western nations is due to a string of policies, practices, and traditions maintained in the systems of those nations.

The proposed solution: tearing down institutions and systems in the United States and building new systems designed by an anti-Capitalist, anti-Western, anti-Enlightenment framework.

The core idea: All white, Asian, Jewish, Italian, and Irish individuals immorally benefit from a system that was built and reformed to assist only them, at the expense of Black communities. (Hispanic communities may be a part of the oppressed or oppressors based on the advocate)

The issue: In education, racial equity departments site all disparities as a result of racism without citing the specific laws or actions that have resulted in current racism. At best, generational racism is cited as a core reason for Black poverty (ignoring the generational crimes against the Appalachian, Irish, Chinese, Native American, etc.). Instead of citing policies to rectify, graphs showing “perceived outcome” indicate that because individuals think they’re a victim of racism, they are.

How to Advocate Against Critical Race Theory

THE CHALKBOARD REVIEW TEAM, PURPLE 4 PARENTS, IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION, HERITAGE FOUNDATION, MANHATTAN INSTITUTE

Join a Group and Connect

Local groups through social media, churches, parent-teacher associations, and other community-organizations are the best place to share local news, evidence, contact information, and support the stakeholders in the fight against Critical Race Theory.

Stakeholders in education are those immediately impacted by the education system. Here at Chalkboard Review, we believe every individual is a stakeholder in the most important facet of public involvement: education.

Defend Good Parents & Teachers

According to the most recent statistics, only 1 out of 3 teachers in public schools are far-Left. This leaves 2 out of 3 teachers as moderates and conservatives, often muzzled or threatened with being fired for speaking out.

The best way to get eyes inside your local school, defend against Critical Race Theory, and persuade your administration to make your public & private schools a safe haven for freedom of all peoples and colors is to

convince the good teachers and parents that you have their back.

Connecting through local churches, businesses, and meetings ensures that teachers like this are helping you in every step.

Teachers unions already spend millions a year trying to butter up teachers, and it isn't working. Local support makes all the difference.

Know How to Hold Your School Board Accountable

Your local school board is responsible for hiring the superintendent, confirming and denying contracts with both teachers and curriculum, and is usually the final authority on core issues of school policy. Here are the biggest things to know before you take Critical Race Theory to the school board meetings:

KEEP CRITICAL RACE THEORY THE SINGLE-ISSUE YOU'RE PRESENTING.

Don't pair your concerns on CRT with Social-Emotional Learning, Mask Mandates, LGBTQ+ issues, or other hot button issues. Keeping the topic simple allows you to present your points, concerns, and get direct answers from the school board—helping you prepare for future elections, meetings, policy-suggestions, or lawsuits.

HOLD YOUR SCHOOL BOARD TO THEIR WORD.

If your school board contends that CRT isn't being taught, hold them to it. Keep an eye on the classrooms, and present any racist & marxist materials to the school board as evidence they aren't keeping their word. It's hard to defend against an accusation when their words are staring them back in the face next to a glowing worksheet on "black communism."

PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Be careful of sweeping statements, generalizations, and baseless accusations. Nothing discredits a parent or teacher in front of the school board faster than moving away from the specific concerns, recommendations, and individual cases the school board is responsible and accountable for.

GET INVOLVED IN SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS.

While in many states, school board members are kept from party affiliation labels, your local election office and party headquarters are required to show the voting history of candidates. Vet those running for school boards and know how they stand on issues. The most impactful offices are local.

Scholars Leading The Fight Against CRT



Anna Miller

Idaho Freedom Foundation
Anna@IdahoFreedom.org
Twitter: @AnnaKate_Miller



Chris Rufo

Manhattan Institute
ChristopherRufo.com
Twitter: @RealChrisRufo



James Lindsay

The New Discourses
NewDiscourses.com
Twitter: @ConceptualJames

Goalpost Shifts with **Critical** **Race Theory**

NEIL SHENVI, JAMES LINDSAY



“Shifting the Goalposts”

An ideological fallacy in which a person changes the definitions, rules, or other criteria to shield their position from criticism.

The claim: “We shouldn’t be teaching kids controversial concepts like ‘white privilege’ and ‘intersectionality’”

The objection: “That’s not Critical Race Theory!”

The response: First, we should focus on ideas, not their origin or the labels being used. It doesn’t matter whether a teacher learned about “white fragility” from Robin DiAngelo or from her knitting group; the concept itself is fundamentally flawed. Second, many of these ideas really are found within CRT. Take, for example, the idea that “all whites are complicit in racism.” In their popular text *CRT: An Introduction*, Delgado and Stefancic write: “many critical race theorists and social scientists hold that racism is pervasive, systemic, and deeply ingrained. If we take this perspective, then no white member of society seems quite so innocent” (p. 91).

Further reading: Sensoy and DiAngelo’s *Is Everyone Really Equal?* for an accessible introduction to Critical Social Justice in education.

The claim: “CRT teaches that racism is everywhere”

The objection: “No, CRT is just teaching history and the impact of slavery on our country.”

The response: Numerous highly-cited books and articles written by critical race theorists list its central claims, and they all affirm that one of CRT’s core tenets is that racism is “not an aberration in everyday life [but] is often normal practice in deeply racialized social systems” (Kumasi, in Levinson’s *Beyond Critique*, p. 209-213). Yosso writes: “CRT starts from the premise that race and racism are central, endemic, permanent and a fundamental part of defining and explaining how

US society functions” (Yosso, “Whose Culture Has Capital?”). Matsudsa et al. write: “Critical race theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life” (*Words that Wound*, p. 6). We can and should teach about slavery, the Black Codes, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement. But teaching history does not require CRT and CRT is not merely about studying history and its impact.

Further reading: Tara J. Yosso “Whose culture has capital?” *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8:1, (2005) 69-91

The claim: “We’re seeing CRT in K-12 classrooms”

The objection: “No, CRT is only taught in law schools.”

The response: First, CRT is not only taught in law schools. While it began as a legal discipline, CRT has spread widely through disciplines like education, sociology, and history. Again, in their classic text, Delgado and Stefancic name education, political science, women’s studies, ethnic studies, American studies, sociology, theology, health care, and philosophy as disciplines where scholars “use critical theory and its ideas” (*CRT: An Introduction*, p. 7-8). Second, an academic theory’s ideas can be used in secondary- and even primary-school education even if the theory itself is taught only at higher levels. For example, quantum mechanics isn’t normally taught until college, but even children learn about atoms, electrons, and orbitals

Further reading: Adrienne D. Dixson’s *CRT in Education*

Provided by James Lindsay & New Discourses.

Additional resources:

IdahoFreedom.org/Research
 ChristopherRufo.com
 NewDiscourses.com
 Heritage.org/CRT

Who to Contact in Idaho:



Idaho Governor

BRAD LITTLE

governor@Gov.Idaho.gov



Idaho State Board of Education Member

BILL GILBERT

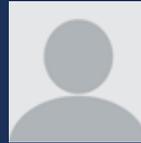
Board@OSBE.Idaho.gov



Superintendent of Public Instruction*

SHERRI YBARRA

SYbarra@SDE.Idaho.gov



Idaho State Board of Education Member

POSITION OPEN

Board@OSBE.Idaho.gov



Idaho State Board of Education President

KURT LIEBICH

KLiebich@Redbuilt.com



Idaho Senate Education Committee Chairman

STEVEN THAYN

SThayn@Senate.Idaho.gov



Idaho State Board of Education Vice President

DAVID HILL

DaveHillsBOE@gmail.com



Idaho Joint Finance-Appropriations
Committee Co-Chair

STEVE BAIR

SBair@Senate.Idaho.gov



Idaho State Board of Education Secretary

LINDA CLARK

ClarkLindaID@gmail.com



Idaho House Education Committee Chair

LANCE CLOW

LClow@House.Idaho.gov



Idaho State Board of Education Member

DEBBIE CRITCHFIELD

DCritchfield1@gmail.com



Idaho Joint Finance-Appropriations
Committee Co-Chair

RICK YOUNGBLOOD

RYoungblood@House.Idaho.gov



Idaho State Board of Education Member

SHAWN KEOUGH

Shawn@ShawnKeough.com

This project was a collaboration effort with many excellent individuals and organizations, including: The Chalkboard Review Team, Manhattan Institute, New Discourses, Parents Defending Education, Purple 4 Parents, the Idaho Freedom Foundation, and AEI Education. Teachers, parents, and curriculum developers created this project to give easy-to-use resources free-of-charge to parents in order to strengthen communities.

* Ybarra also sits on the Idaho State Board of Education.

This toolkit was last updated July 9, 2021.