

# **Critical Race Theory: Clarifying the Origins of the Disinformation Campaign**


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# What is Critical Race Theory?

- Theory
- Method

# CORE PRINCIPLES OF CRT

- The nature of race...
    - Socially constructed, not biological
    - A psychological wage or form of “property” owned by whites
    - Has economic, social, and political consequences that are observable and measurable
  - Racism/White Supremacy as...
    - Endemic/Structural
    - Permanent
    - Intersectional in nature
  - BIPOC people as central to the narrative...
- 



## The Attack on CRT

**"We have successfully frozen their brand—"critical race theory"—into the public conversation and are steadily driving up negative perceptions. We will eventually turn it toxic, as we put all of the various cultural insanities under that brand category."**

# The "Invention" of a Threat



**Christopher Rufo**

## How a Conservative Activist Invented the Conflict Over Critical Race Theory


*To Christopher Rufo, a term for a school of legal scholarship looked like the perfect weapon.*

By Benjamin Wallace-Wells  
June 18, 2021 THE NEW YORKER

**"The goal is to have the public read something crazy in the newspaper and immediately think "critical race theory." We have decoded the term and will recodify it to annex the entire range of cultural constructions that are unpopular with Americans."**

# Trump Executive Order Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping

(a) “Divisive concepts” means the concepts that (1) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (2) **the United States is fundamentally racist or sexist**; (3) **an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously**; ... **an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex**; (8) *any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex*; ... **The term “divisive concepts” also includes any other form of race or sex stereotyping or any other form of race or sex scapegoating.**



# Center for Renewing America's CRT Terms

“Critical Race Theory isn’t always presented as “Critical Race Theory.” The framework of CRT can be utilized to frame other concepts or present them in an inappropriate context...The following, though not exhaustive, is a list of terms and concepts that often accompany CRT instruction.”

- Anti-racism
- Anti-bias training
- Conscious and unconscious bias
- Critical self-reflection
- Cultural awareness
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)
- Implicit Bias
- Land Acknowledgement
- Multiculturalism
- Patriarchy
- Restorative Justice
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Social Justice
- Woke



# Teachers and School Leaders Under Attack






# What are the political implications?

- Nationally

- The rise of fascist/McCarthy era politics at the local level
- The suppression of progressive discourse and practice within institutions
- The narrowing of curriculum and teaching leading to the closing of minds
- Fear-driven voting

- In Oregon

- Teachers are afraid to teach “challenging subjects”
  - A steady parade of conservative activists dominate school board meetings and disseminate their message of fear
  - Conservatives double down and are emboldened
  - Progressives silenced
  - Questions about the progressive agenda
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# Possible AAUW Actions

- Challenging efforts to eliminate discussions about sexism and racism in schools
- Calling on universities to expand “intersectional” teaching and learning
- Organizing members to engage with the African American Policy Forum and other entities engaged in pushback against this movement
- Promoting and advancing conversations about the intersections between racism and sexism internally and within universities
  - How can progressive white women, women of color and men of color work together across difference to address long-standing inequities in higher education?

