

The History Wars: Debating *The 1619 Project* and CRT

By now, it seems everyone has an opinion about the *1619 Project*, a special edition of *The New York Times' Magazine* that tried to focus readers' attention upon the continuing legacies of race slavery in American life. Legislators in several states have since passed laws to ban it from school curriculums, along with the teaching of Critical Race Theory—or CRT—a set of premises developed by legal scholars in the 1990s to interpret America's institutions in the context of race and civil rights.

In this four-part course, University of Maryland historian Richard Bell will take us back to basics. We'll push past the headlines and talk candidly about what the *1619 Project* says and doesn't say, and what CRT means for the teaching of American history. To do so, we will get as close as we can to the subjects—like the American Revolution, the Constitution, Abraham Lincoln, and Reconstruction—around which so many of these debates have swirled.

#1: The History Wars: Introducing the *1619 Project* and Critical Race Theory. This first talk introduces participants to the *1619 Project* and to Critical Race Theory, describing their intellectual origins, their central contents, the nature of the controversies surrounding them, and why this all might matter. Post-Session Recommended Reading: Nikole Hannah-Jones, ed., *The 1619 Project: A New Origins Story* (2021). ISBN: 0593230574

#2: To Preserve Slavery? Debating the Causes of the American Revolution. This second talk examines the *1619 Project's* controversial claim that patriots fought the American Revolution to protect their right to own enslaved people. Is that claim supportable? What's the evidence? Does any of it hold water? Post-Session Recommended Reading: Woody Holton, *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* (2021). ISBN: 1476750378

#3: The White Man's President? Debating Lincoln's Racial Politics in the Civil War. This third talk examines the *1619 Project's* provocative claim that President Abraham Lincoln "opposed black equality." It explores Lincoln's complex and changing racial politics and explains how the Civil War brought forth the destruction of slavery. Post-Session Recommended Reading: James Oakes, *The Crooked Path to Abolition: Abraham Lincoln and the Antislavery Constitution* (2021). ISBN: 1324005858

#4: Institutional Racism? Debating the Legacies of Slavery in America.

This final talk examines the merits of some of the core claims of Critical Race Theory by exploring the histories of Reconstruction, crime and punishment, and voting rights. Post-Session Recommended Reading: Crystal M. Fleming, *How to be Less Stupid About Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide* (2018). ISBN: 0807050776

Suggestions for Further Reading*

Lecture 1: The History Wars

- Nikole Hannah-Jones et al., "[The 1619 Project](#)," *New York Times*, Aug. 14, 2019
- [The 1619 Project Curriculum](#), Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting
- James Anderson, "[U. professors send letter requesting corrections to 1619 Project](#)," *Daily Princetonian*, Feb. 6, 2020
- Anne Appelbaum, "[Democracies Don't Try to Make Everyone Agree](#)," *The Atlantic*, June 28, 2021
- Karen Attiah, "[The challenge for educators amid the critical race theory backlash/ How do you fight hot air?](#)," *Washington Post*, June 27, 2021
- Douglas Belkin and Jacob Gershman, "[Federal Lawsuits Say Antiracism and Critical Race Theory in Schools Violate Constitution](#)," *Wall Street Journal*, July 1, 2021
- Derrick Bell, [Race, Racism, and American Law](#) (5th ed., 2004)
- David W. Blight, "[The Fog of History Wars](#)," *New Yorker*, June 9, 2021
- Donna Brazile, "[Don't Ban Critical Race Instruction](#)," *Wall Street Journal*, July 1, 2021
- Khiara M. Bridges, [Critical Race Theory: A Primer](#) (2018)

* Suggestions for reading do not imply endorsement of the views therein.

- Jane Coesten et al., "[Let's Talk About Critical Race Theory Bans in Schools](#)," *New York Times*, Aug. 18, 2021
- Jelani Cobb, "[The Man Behind Critical Race Theory](#)," *New Yorker*, Sep. 13, 2021
- Kimberlé Crenshaw et al., [Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement](#) (1996)
- Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, [Critical Race Theory: An Introduction](#) (3rd ed., 2017)
- Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, eds., [Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge](#) (3rd ed., 2013)
- Ross Douthat, "[What Progressives Want, and What Conservatives are Fighting](#)," *New York Times*, June 26, 2021
- Sarah Ellison, "[How the 1619 Project took over 2020](#)," *Washington Post*, Oct 13
- David A. Graham, "[The Rise of Anti-History](#)," *The Atlantic*, July 10, 2021
- Keonghee Tao Han and Judson Laughter, eds., [Critical Race Theory in Teacher Education](#) (2019)
- Leslie M. Harris, "[I Helped Fact-Check the 1619 Project. The Times Ignored Me](#)," *Politico*, Mar. 6, 2020.
- Marisa Iati, "[What is critical race theory, and why do Republicans want to ban it in schools?](#)" *Washington Post*, May 29, 2021
- Matthew Karp, "[History as End](#)," *Harper's Magazine*, July 2021
- Ibram X. Kendi, "[The Hopefulness and Hopelessness of 1619](#)," *The Atlantic*, Aug. 20, 2019
- Ibram X. Kendi, "[There is No Debate over Critical Race Theory](#)," *The Atlantic*, July 9, 2021
- Peter Laurence, "[Critical Race Theory and Attacks on Academic Freedom](#)," *Academe Blog*, Sep. 1, 2021
- Robert S. Levine, "[Frederick Douglass and the Trouble with Critical Race Theory](#)," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Aug. 2, 2021
- Alex Lichtenstein, "[From the Editor's Desk: 1619 and All That](#)," *American Historical Review*, 125: 1 (Feb. 2020) xv–xxi
- Aya Y. Martinez, [Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory](#) (2020)

- Dorian L. McCoy and Dirk J. Rodricks, [*Critical Race Theory in Higher Education: 20 Years of Theoretical and Research Innovations*](#) (2015)
- Peggy McIntosh, [*On Privilege, Fraudulence, and Teaching As Learning: Selected Essays 1981—2019*](#) (2019)
- Katie Mettler, [‘Five professors say the 1619 Project should be amended. ‘We disagree.’ says the New York Times.’](#) *Washington Post*, Dec. 22, 2019
- Gary B. Nash et al., [*History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past*](#) (2000)
- David North and Tom Mackaman, [‘A reply to the American Historical Review’s defense of the 1619 Project.’](#) *World Social Web Site*, Jan. 30, 2020
- Simon Romero, [“Texas Pushes to Obscure the State’s History of Slavery and Racism,”](#) *New York Times*, May 20, 2021
- Christopher F. Rufo, [“Battle Over Critical Race Theory,”](#) *Wall Street Journal*, Une 27, 2021
- Jennifer Ruth, [“What Responsibility do all Academics Have to Critical Race Theory?,”](#) *Academe Blog*, July 19, 2021
- Adam Serwer, [“The Fight Over the 1619 Project Is Not About the Facts,”](#) *The Atlantic*, Dec. 23, 2019
- Jake Silverstein, [“We Respond to the Historians Who Critiqued The 1619 Project.”](#) *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 2019
- Timothy Snyder, [“The War on History is a War on Democracy,”](#) *New York Times Magazine*, June 29, 2021.
- Cory Turner, [“What Do Alabama And California Have In Common? Top-Notch U.S. History Standards.”](#) *National Public Radio*, July 15, 2021
- Benjamin Wallace-Wells, [“How a Conservative Activist Invented the Conflict Over Critical Race Theory,”](#) *New Yorker*, June 18, 2021
- Jon Weiner, [“The Predictable Backlash to Critical Race Theory. A Q&A With Kimberlé Crenshaw,”](#) *The Nation*, July 5, 2021
- George F. Will, [“The ‘1619 Project’ is filled with slovenliness and ideological ax-grinding.”](#) *Washington Post*, May 6, 2020
- [“What Is Critical Race Theory, and Why Is Everyone Talking About It?,”](#) *Columbia News*, July 1, 2021

Lecture 2: To Preserve Slavery?

- Christopher Leslie Brown, [*Moral Capital: Foundation of British Abolitionism*](#) (2006)
- Richard D. Brown et al., "[Group of Historians Challenges Woody Holton's Interpretation of the Significance of Dunmore's Proclamation.](#)" *History News Network*, Sep. 7, 2021
- Douglas R. Egerton, [*Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America*](#) (2011)
- J. William Harris, [*The Hanging of Thomas Jeremiah: A Free Black Man's Encounter with Liberty*](#) (2011)
- Woody Holton, [*Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution*](#) (2021)
- Woody Holton, "[The Specter of Emancipation and the Road to Revolution: A Rejoinder to Richard Brown et. al.](#)," *History New Network*, Sep. 8, 2021.
- Gerald Horne, [*The Counter Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America*](#) (2014)
- Philip Morgan and Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, "Arming Slaves in the American Revolution" in Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, eds., [*Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age*](#) (2006)
- Gary B. Nash, [*The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America*](#) (2005)
- Mary Beth Norton, [*1774: The Long Year of Revolution*](#) (2020)
- Jeffrey Ostler, "[The Shameful Final grievance of the Declaration of Independence.](#)" *The Atlantic*, Feb. 28, 2020
- Robert G. Parkinson, [*The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution*](#) (2016)
- William R. Ryan, [*The World of Thomas Jeremiah: Charles Town on the Eve of the American Revolution*](#) (2012)
- Alan Taylor, [*The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832*](#) (2014)
- Alan Taylor, [*American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804*](#) (2016)
- Gregory J. W. Urwin, "[The Yorktown Tragedy: Washington's Slave Roundup.](#)" *Journal of the American Revolution*, Oct. 19, 2021
- David Waldstreicher, "[The Hidden Stakes of the 1619 Controversy.](#)" *Boston Review*, Jan. 24, 2020

- Sean Wilentz, [“A Matter of Facts,”](#) *The Atlantic*, Jan. 22, 2020

Lecture 3: White Man’s President?

- Eric C. Burin, [Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society](#) (2008)
- Eric Foner, ed., [Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World](#) (2008)
- Eric Foner, [The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery](#) (2011)
- Thomas Fuller, [“It’s Liberals vs. Liberals in San Francisco After Schools Erase Contested Names,”](#) *New York Times*, Jan. 28, 2021
- Nicholas Guyatt, [Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Racial Segregation](#) (2016)
- Nikole Hannah-Jones et al., [The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story](#) (2021)
- Tom Mackaman, [“Oxford historian Richard Carwardine on the New York Times’ 1619 Project,”](#) *World Socialist Website*, Dec. 31, 2019
- James Oakes, [The Crooked Path to Abolition](#) (2021)
- Beverly C. Tomek, [Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania](#) (2012)
- David Williams, [I Freed Myself: African American Self-Emancipation in the Civil War Era](#) (2014)

Lecture 4: Institutional Racism?

- Michelle Alexander, [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness - 10th Anniversary Edition](#) (2020)
- Carol Anderson, [One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy](#) (2019)
- Ari Berman, [Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America](#) (2016)
- Douglas A. Blackmon, [Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II](#) (2009)
- Lauren Brooke-Eisen, [“The Federal Funding that Fuels Mass Incarceration,”](#) *Brennan Center*, June 7, 2021

- Crystal M. Fleming, [*How to be Less Stupid about Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and Racial Divide*](#) (2019)
- Erika Frankenberg, [*The Resegregation of Suburban Schools: A Hidden Crisis in American Education*](#) (2012)
- Jacqueline Jones, "[Abstract and Ill Informed: Adding Facts to the Critical Race Theory Debates](#)," *Perspectives on History*, Aug. 12, 2021
- Alexander Keyssar, [*Why Do We Still Have the Electoral College*](#) (2020)
- Peggy McIntosh, "[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)," *National Seed Project*
- Ashley Nellis, "[The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons](#)," *The Sentencing Project*, Oct. 13, 2021
- David M. Oshinsky, [*Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice*](#) (1997)
- Deirdre Cooper Owens, [*Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*](#) (2017)
- Richard Rothstein, [*The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*](#) (2018)
- Rebecca Skloot, [*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*](#) (2011)
- John David Smith, [*We Ask Only for Even-Handed Justice: Black Voices from Reconstruction, 1865-1877*](#) (2014)
- Jesse Wegman, [*Let the People Pick the President: The Case for Abolishing the Electoral College*](#) (2020)
- Heather Andrea Williams, [*Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery*](#) (2016)