

ETHNIC STUDIES & CRITICAL RACE THEORY



*Floyd Huen (center left) and Jean Quan (center) commemorating the Ethnic Studies movement.
Photo from former Mayor Jean Quan's Twitter Account.*

In 1968 and 1969, the Black Student Union, Third World Liberation Front, select staff and faculty, and members from the larger Bay Area community, organized and led a series of actions against systematic discrimination. Their specific demands included the establishment of four departments: American Indian Studies, Asian American Studies, Black Studies, and La Raza Studies within a College of Ethnic Studies. Protestors spoke out against lack of access, misrepresentation, and the overall neglect of indigenous peoples and people of color within the university's curriculum and programs. These demands reflected a respect for the diverse intellectual traditions and cultural expressions of scholars, activists, and artists of color and indigenous people throughout the United States.

Critical race theory is an academic concept that is more than 40-years-old. The core idea is that race is a social construct and that racism is not merely the product of individual bias or prejudice, but also something embedded in legal systems and policies. The basic tenets of CRT, emerged out of a framework for legal analysis in the late 1970s and early 1980s by legal scholars Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado, among others. A good example is when, in the 1930s, government officials drew red lines around areas deemed poor financial risks, explicitly due to the race. Banks, backed by the federal government, simply refused to offer mortgages to Black people in white areas. Today, the conservative right has passed laws banning both Ethnic Studies and Critical Race Theory to prevent public schools from teaching about how the foundation of this nation has benefitted the white population at the expense of historically marginalized populations.



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RELATED VIDEOS & READING



Education is Solidarity: The Third World Liberation Front | See Us Unite (2 min)



Trevor Noah On Teaching America's Antiracist History | The Daily Show (10 min)



Housing Segregation and Redlining in the U.S. | NPR (6 min)



Using critical race theory to understand the backlash against it | Hechinger Report

RELATED ACCOUNTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Below are links to programs that advocate for Ethnic Studies! Check them out!



Nationwide HS Ethnic Studies Network



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SOURCES

“Asian Americans Have a Long History of Activism in The US.” YouTube, 1 Apr. 2021, youtu.be/XZr1DzaMmil.

“Debunking Critical Race Theory Myths.” YouTube, 14 July 2021, youtu.be/gTv-FPcOgWk.

“Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History: Code Switch: Npr.” YouTube, 11 Apr. 2018, youtu.be/O5FBJyqfoLM.

“The War over TEACHING AMERICA'S Racist History in Schools: The Daily Show.” YouTube, 5 May 2021, youtu.be/XQKRYJnqldM.