

## **Critical Race Theory through a Cultural Studies Lens: A Conjunctural Approach**

In his 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine wrote, “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.” As Americans in the U.S. are joining Team 1776 or Team 1619, mostly along partisan lines, the nation is catapulted into an increasingly divisive debate: Should we hold it as self-evident that American culture and its foundation are inherently White, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant (WASP) or should we reframe the history of the United States around the empirical, historical, and legal legacy of slavery?--(which is also the history of the development of the U.S. economy and the nation-state-in-full). The debate impacts the very meaning and history of U.S. American culture, so much so that it echoes, inversely, Paine’s era when the cultural foundation of the nation was about to emerge and take shape from broken frames and fragmented pieces. Team 1776 or Team 1619, either is ready to “begin the world over again” the former through ideologies and what Raymond Williams described as “selective traditions” or, the latter, through cultural and social theory and analysis. This year, Theories of Cultural Studies group considers the ongoing national debate unfolding around the cultural politics of Critical Race Theory (CRT). We examine its different dimensions, search for possible political and cultural coherencies it creates (or the chaos it amplifies) between disjointed cultural elements, and conceptualize theories that interpret and apply to competing perspectives. Submissions (300 words) may address:

- The political and social discourses that CRT’s positioning has given rise to;
- The societal, cultural, and political phenomena in an orbit around CRT (including, for example, the 1619 project and the 1776 project) and in the broader framework of our current conjuncture;
- CRT itself, its theoretical promises, and constraints as tools to think about and map out culture. For example, Stuart Hall’s conjunctural analysis in history, politics, and society, and Kimberlé Crenshaw’s “intersectionality” in race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics. Both Hall and Crenshaw deal with culture and politics in an organic fashion. Both tap into our ideas of “common sense” and seek to reveal how common sense, once produced and acknowledged, becomes culture;
- The relationship between CRT, the uprisings, and mobilizations occurring around the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, Laquan McDonald, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Samuel DuBose, Freddie Gray, and many others. How do the justifications, legitimations, adjudications, media discourses, fit into the historical, societal-categorical, and state-political insights provided by CRT?;
- What cultural studies concepts (e.g. subjectivity/subjectification, articulation, subalternity, affect theories, new materialisms, institutionality) can bring the framework of CRT directly to bear in anti-racist cultures of political mobilization into, for example, reformist, abolitionist, and Civil Rights movements in history and BLM in the present?

Additionally, we **suggest** the following four areas as **guidelines** for abstract submissions.

**Area 1--** Origin(s), definitions, and debate(s)

You may want to address the bulleted points above by discussing how, in your view, what CRT is and how it is associated with the 1619 project (and the 1776 project)? What are the key debate points that you have observed and summarized at a cultural level? What developments might this reflect around the cultural politics of the discourse on race in the United States and, possibly, elsewhere?

## **Area 2 -- CRT in relation to your areas of studies**

You may want to address the bulleted points above by discussing how CRT originated in an American cultural context. As a theoretical apparatus, how does it address or fail to address your field of cultural studies? What might be either the potentials or the limitations of viewing race through the framework of settler colonialism, the state, or through law and statutes? On the other hand, what structures determine or (at a transnational level) may co-determine race, racialization, and racism?

## **Area 3 -- CRT and interdisciplinary approaches**

Race is a central component of CRT. Political science, history, sociology, and other disciplines, where race is central to inquiry, are inevitably intertwined with CRT. The extent of possible literature from both classic and modern traditions presents challenges for any attempt at theoretical overview and synthesis. No doubt, an interdisciplinary approach is much needed when tackling CRT. How do you forge your cultural and theoretical approaches to CRT by navigating between your own discipline and the ones that pertain to CRT?

## **Area 4 -- Evaluating CRT: is or isn't this part of Cultural Studies Theories?**

As theoreticians, we want to stand at the forefront of cultural discourses and debates. How do you define Cultural Studies theories? Is CRT a newly formed theory for Cultural Studies? Epistemologically (not politically), do you embrace or challenge CRT in conducting Cultural Studies? Why?

Finally, when you submit using Easy Chair: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=csa2022> Please be sure to choose either the Working Group Panel (if proposing a whole panel) or Working Group Paper (if an individual submission) tracks, complete the submission information, **and choose the appropriate working group (Theories of Cultural Studies) from the drop-down menu at the bottom of the submission page.**

Please direct any questions you may have about the Theories of Cultural Studies Working Group CFP to its chairs:

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