



# An Analysis of The California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

White Paper, August 20, 2025



This white paper is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal, financial, or professional advice.

## Table of Contents

Preface.....	2
Summary.....	3
Report	
The CESMC Does Not Provide a Traditionally Liberal Education .....	5
The CESMC is Rooted in Critical Social Justice Ideology.....	6
The CESMC Presents a Reductive Account of American History .....	8
The CESMC Lionizes Some Groups and Stigmatizes Others .....	9
The CESMC Presents Ongoing Oppression as a Fact While Ignoring Contrary Evidence .....	11
The CESMC Promotes Critical Thinking Only Within the Confines of Social Justice Orthodoxy .....	13
Parents and Students Say That CESMC is Ideological Pedagogy .....	14
The CESMC is Not a Fully Developed Curriculum.....	16
Empirical Studies Do Not Support the Use of CESMC .....	18
The CESMC Violates California’s Statutory Requirements for Education .	20
Conclusion.....	21
References .....	22





# Preface

The following assessment of the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum((CESMC) is provided by the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to civil liberties and promoting a common culture of fairness, understanding, and humanity for all. The current CESMC replaces a prior version<sup>A</sup> that was removed following criticisms of divisiveness, bias, and a narrow, politicized ideology based on race essentialism - that is, the belief that a person's race defines who they are, what they think, and their place in American Society. While the creators of this replacement CESMC might have had good intentions, we find that the proposed course to have the same flaws as its predecessor: it remains divisive, biased and race-essentialist, not meeting the most basic principles of a traditional liberal education in America.

It's commonly accepted that the aim of a liberal education is to cultivate disciplined, creative, fact-based and robust thinking. The American K-12 curriculum is meant to enrich the lives of our students and prepare them to grow from childhood into adulthood as well-informed, responsible, and thoughtful members of American society. On this understanding, any curriculum telling the American story should treat students as unique individuals capable of acquiring the skills of critical analysis, independent thinking, and civil discourse. FAIR supports the perspective that American culture is a byproduct of the experiences of the many ethnicities and peoples in this country. But part of our uniqueness as a country is that although Americans have many different backgrounds, we also share a common culture. It's a singular culture of shared principles, dreams, disappointments, and struggles. It is our contention that the CESMC does not tell the real American story, and in fact, the CESMC distorts U.S. history and society.

The CESMC's failures stem from one fundamental problem: its primary purpose is to promote a political ideology rather than to provide an accurate account of American history and educate students to think for themselves. FAIR supports education that provides students with an honest account of the unique challenges faced by various ethnic groups, the resources they have used to face these challenges and the positive contributions each has made to the American experience. However, it is important to teach this material from multiple perspectives while avoiding race essentialist concepts that promote division and feelings of alienation among students. We also believe that much of the division and polarization in our society arises from a lack of understanding of our shared culture and values. It's therefore imperative to instill and reinvigorate in students a fundamental understanding of civics and the founding principles of our country, as this is critical in maintaining and strengthening the fabric of our society.

---

<sup>A</sup> Bill Honig, a three term California Superintendent of Public Information, summarized the case against many ethnic studies programs in an article for EdSource (Reference 30).



# Summary

The California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum<sup>1</sup> (CESMC) claims to promote critical thinking about diverse American experiences, but frames history primarily in terms of identity and oppression. It fails to promote questioning, omits alternative viewpoints, and prioritizes political activism over objective, balanced instruction. Below are the key takeaways from FAIR’s White Paper on the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

**Does not provide a liberal education.** A true liberal education, rooted in rational inquiry and historical accuracy, should teach students how to think, not what to think. The CESMC, however, promotes activism and politically motivated narratives. The CESMC’s stated goals are explicitly political or therapeutic; none include a comprehensive and unbiased understanding of American history and society (p. 5).

**Rooted in Critical Social Justice ideology.** The CESMC is rooted in Critical Social Justice (CSJ) ideology, which holds that power, privilege and oppression shape society on the basis of identity categories such as race, sex, and sexuality. Critical Social Justice claims that oppression and injustice are embedded throughout society’s institutions and must be dismantled through political activism. The CESMC selectively includes or omits facts, narratives, and perspectives based on the goals of CSJ ideology (p. 6).

**Reductive account of American history.** The CESMC distorts American history by reducing complex narratives to simplistic binaries of oppressors and oppressed, prioritizing grievance-based identity politics over a balanced, fact-based exploration of history. It often highlights oppression while omitting stories of resilience, unity, and shared values (p. 8).

**Lionizes some groups and stigmatizes others.** The CESMC frames certain identity groups as victims while stigmatizing others as oppressors. By prioritizing empathy and moral status for “BIPOC” students, while portraying European Americans primarily as sources of oppression, the curriculum fosters division rather than a shared understanding of history. It also undermines a sense of agency among the very groups it purports to champion (p. 9).

**Presents ongoing oppression as fact while ignoring contrary evidence.** The CESMC assumes systemic racism is a defining feature of American society while ignoring evidence that racial disparities have complex causes beyond oppression. The curriculum neglects key historical trends, including America’s success in reducing racism, expanding opportunities for minorities, and fostering economic and social integration. It also disregards the country’s liberal principles of individualism, free markets, and equal protection under the law that have enabled diverse groups to prosper (p. 11).



**Presents CSJ as Orthodoxy.** While the CESMC claims to promote critical thinking, it directs scrutiny only at American society’s alleged oppressive structures, never questioning the assumptions of Critical Social Justice itself. By treating this ideology as unquestionable orthodoxy, the curriculum stifles genuine intellectual inquiry and fosters ideological conformity and dogma. A truly liberal education would present alternative perspectives as well as critiques of CSJ ideology (p. 13).

**Parent and students say that CESMC is ideological pedagogy.** Parents and students with direct experience of the CESMC report that it prioritizes political activism over balanced pedagogy, and focuses overwhelmingly on oppression narratives rather than historical and cultural studies. Many feel that Ethnic Studies promotes ideological conformity, discourages critical thinking, and pressures students to self-censor for fear of repercussions. Concerns include biased teachings, exclusion of contrary facts, and a lack of honest discourse (p. 14).

**Is not a fully developed curriculum.** The CESMC’s model curriculum is a framework rather than a fully developed curriculum, which leaves gaps that external consultants—often aligned with liberated ethnic studies—can fill. The sample lessons are inconsistent, with some offering straightforward historical accounts and others focusing heavily on social justice activism and political messaging. Many lessons emphasize oppression, activism, and grievances over a balanced exploration of history, contributions, and resilience (p. 16).

**Claimed academic benefits not strongly supported.** The claimed academic benefits of ethnic studies largely rely on research by Christine Sleeter, but most of the studies cited do not directly assess the ethnic studies curriculum being implemented today. The most relevant evidence, a study by Dee and Penner, has significant methodological flaws, including a small sample size, unclear causal mechanisms, and confounding factors such as additional interventions. While a slight positive effect was observed among a narrow group of at-risk students, the findings do not justify a large-scale curricular mandate affecting millions of students (p. 18).

**Violates California’s Statutory Requirements for Education.** The CESMC violates both constitutional and statutory requirements by prescribing a single political orthodoxy—Critical Social Justice—without presenting alternative perspectives or contrary facts. Additionally, it fails to meet California’s Education Code standards by portraying European-Americans adversely while omitting broader historical context, resulting in biased and inaccurate depictions of cultural and racial diversity (p.20).

# Complete Report

## The CESMC Does Not Provide a Traditionally Liberal Education

A liberal education in the Western tradition is based on rationality, empiricism, critical analysis and open inquiry. Its primary goal is the development of free individuals capable of thinking independently and empowered with a broad knowledge—"free from provincialism, dogma, preconception and ideology" and "conscious of their opinions and judgments."<sup>2</sup> Liberally educated people are skeptical of their own traditions and trained to think for themselves rather than merely conform to authority.<sup>3</sup> They are taught how to think, not what to think.

A well-rounded liberal education curriculum therefore should invite questioning and encourage students to engage with history and social studies as disciplines grounded in empirical evidence and critical inquiry. In our American context, that means illuminating the history and culture of all Americans while recognizing this nation's ethnic, religious and political diversity. It also means encouraging students to understand the universal ideals of liberty, opportunity and national unity that have shaped this country, as well as times of strife in which this country has not lived up to its stated ideals.

As shown below, the CESMC does not offer a truly liberal education. It simply has other goals.

### *The CESMC's Aims are Political and Therapeutic, Not Academic*

The CESMC's stated goals do not include helping students develop a comprehensive and unbiased understanding of American history and society. Instead, its aims are explicitly therapeutic and political. CESMC identifies "Eight Outcomes of K-12 Ethnic Studies Teaching," the express goals that its proponents hope to achieve by adopting the CESMC. The first of the listed outcomes is political: "pursuit of justice and equity." The other seven are "working toward greater inclusivity", "furthering self-understanding", "developing a better understanding of others", "recognizing intersectionality", "promoting self-empowerment for civic engagement", "supporting a community focus," and "developing interpersonal communication." All of the latter seven goals are psychological or quasi-therapeutic. Thus, not one of CESMC's eight desired "outcomes" involves students gaining a truthful understanding of American society.

The CESMC's "Guiding Values and Principles" also frame the goal of education in political or psychological terms rather than in terms related to historical accuracy. The first of the six "Values and Principles" is to "cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native Peoples and Black, indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)." The second is to "Celebrate and honor BIPOC people." The third is to "center and place a high value on the precolonial ancestral knowledge, narratives and communal experiences" of "BIPOC" or "marginalized" peoples. The fourth and fifth are to "critique empire building in history and its



relationship to white supremacy, racism, and other forms of power and oppression” and to “challenge racism, bigoted, discriminatory, and imperialist/colonialist beliefs.” The sixth is to “connect ourselves to past and contemporary social movements that struggle for social justice....” These again are explicitly political or quasi-therapeutic goals that are inconsistent with the truth-seeking mission of a liberal education.

## **The CESMC Is Rooted in Critical Social Justice Ideology**

The CESMC fails to provide a liberal education because it is a product of Critical Social Justice ideology. An “ideology” is a system of ideas or beliefs that seeks to explain the social and political world. An ideology also serves as the basis for political organization; it serves to justify collective action aimed at preserving or changing political practices or institutions.<sup>4</sup> Ideologies may be based on certain true facts about the world. But when education becomes ideological, it filters facts to fit the ideology instead of using facts to construct a truer understanding of the world.

Critical Social Justice ideology presumes that power, privilege and oppression shape society on the basis of reductive and essentialist identity categories such as race, sex and sexuality. It views oppression and injustice as embedded in social structures and encourages political activism to dismantle purportedly unjust institutions.<sup>5</sup> Critical Social Justice is also a political project: it seeks to contrive political solidarity among purportedly oppressed groups on the basis of their status as victims. Critical Social Justice ideology pervades the entire CESMC, shaping which facts are foregrounded and which are omitted. It also presents itself as fact rather than as one ideology among many to be debated and critiqued.

The CESMC’s grounding in critical identitarian politics is evident in the first page of the Preface, which states that the CESMC will “encourage cultural understanding of how different groups have struggled and worked together, highlighting core ethnic studies concepts such as equality and equity, justice, race and racism, ethnicity and bigotry, Indigeneity, and others” (p. 2). As made clear in the Sample Lesson Plans below, the CESMC frames ‘non-white’ ethnic groups’ fundamental experience as a political struggle against racism and oppression which can be overcome only by political solidarity against the supposed source of oppression. The word “race” is accompanied by a long footnote that defines “race” as “a (neo-)colonial social construction...based upon a Eurocentric biological fallacy that is central to inequitable power relations in society.” The footnote goes on to state that “In the United States today, races very broadly break down as people of color (POC) and white people” (p. 2). Thus, the Preface of the CESMC structures its mission in terms of Critical Social Justice ideology, framing American history as little more than a struggle of various minority groups joined in conflict against the purported racism and oppression of “whites” or Americans of European descent.

The Preface goes on to explain the CESMC in terms of the central tenet of critical theory, which holds that racism and oppression are integral to the structure of American society and that only racism and oppression explain group disparities. The Preface states that “Ethnic studies courses address institutionalized systems of advantage and address the causes of racism and other forms of bigotry including but not limited to anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, xenophobia,

antisemitism, and Islamophobia within our culture and governmental policies” (p. 3-4). The Preface further states that the CESMC is an “overarching study of the process and impact of the marginalization resulting from systems of power” (p. 8).

Critical theorists hold that the purpose of education is for victims of purported oppression to develop a “critical consciousness” in order to engage in political action. Consistent with this political goal, the CESMC states that “central to any ethnic studies course is the historic struggle of communities of color, taking into account the intersectionality of identity (gender, class, sexuality, among others), to challenge racism, discrimination, and oppression and interrogate the systems that continue to perpetuate inequality” (p. 9). In fact, according to the CESMC, it is the fundamental goal of ethnic studies courses to raise students’ awareness of their “common experiences of racism” (p. 9) and to teach them to “grapple[ ]with various power structures and forms of oppression that continue to have social, emotional, cultural, economic and political impacts” (p. 10).

Chapter 3 (Instructional Guidance for K-12 Education) further confirms that the CESMC is grounded in social justice politics. This Chapter cites several critical theorists as relevant resources, offering useful insights into pedagogy. These include Paulo Freire, a Marxist philosopher whose *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* advocates for “critical pedagogy” in which teaching and learning are considered political acts that should develop a “critical consciousness” among the oppressed in order to liberate them from their oppression. Another reference is bell hooks, whose *Teaching to Transgress* includes a chapter titled “A Revolution of Values” in which hooks identifies the source of oppression as “white supremacist capitalist patriarchy,” claims “we are living in a culture of domination,” and asserts that “biases that uphold and maintain white supremacy, imperialism, sexism, and racism have distorted education . . . .”<sup>6</sup> The Instructional Guidance also cites black feminist scholar Kimberle Crenshaw, whose “analytic framework” of intersectionality “captures how multiple identities (race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, ability, etc.) overlap and intersect, creating unique experiences, especially for those navigating multiple marginalized or oppressed identities” (p. 40). The Instructional Guidance further states that teachers should “familiarize themselves with current scholarly research” such as Critical Race Theory (the “practice of interrogating race and racism in society”) and intersectionality, which are “key theoretical frameworks and pedagogies that can be used in ethnic studies research and instruction” (p. 45).

As discussed below, social justice politics is so fundamental to the CESMC that it cannot be disentangled from any valid scholarly purpose in the CESMC.



## The CESMC Presents a Reductive Account of American History

The CESMC misrepresents the American story by hyper-focusing on systems of oppression, which reduces complex historical narratives to simplistic accounts of power struggles between oppressors and oppressed. Instead of providing students with a comprehensive, fact-based exploration of historical and cultural developments, the curriculum indoctrinates students with a one-sided ideological worldview. In doing so, it neglects the broader American narrative — a story that ought to balance the acknowledgement of injustices with stories of resilience, unity, and the shared values like “liberty and justice for all” that define the American project.

The CESMC obscures its political aim by drawing on certain true information about U.S. history and society, which gives it a veneer of scholarly objectivity. However, it frames those subjects in terms of ethno-nationalist and liberationist politics, and the selection of topics and themes aligns predictably with a perspective that is fundamentally identitarian and collectivist. In practice this means: (i) an inordinate focus on racism, discrimination and systems of oppression; and (ii) a facile account of American society in which social relationships are conditioned solely by power, privilege, marginalization and victimization.

### *The CESMC Discusses American Society In Terms of Four Broad Racial Categories That Reflect the Political Project of Critical Social Justice Ideology*

The distorting effects of Critical Social Justice ideology pervade the entire curriculum, including how it is structured. The CESMC “focuses on four ethnic groups that are at the core of the ethnic studies field”: African American, “Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x”, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Native American (p. 8). However, these are not, in fact, “ethnic groups” but, rather, broad, reductive racial categories that reflect the identitarian and collectivist conception of American society described above. Absent from the CESMC is any justification for amalgamating various ethnic groups into broad racial categories like Black, Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Native American. Each group comprises scores or hundreds of different ethnic groups or tribes, many of whom are not only vastly different from one another but also sometimes actively hostile to other ethnicities within the broad racial categories set out in the CESMC. This, again, reflects the ideological bias and priorities of Critical Social Justice ideology, which seeks to contrive political unity and to acquire political and economic power on the basis of artificial racial groupings.

The “Sample Lessons” within each ethnic grouping are also framed through social justice ideology. Some of the lessons celebrate or glorify “BIPOC” ethnic groups, such as lessons on “Classical Africa” or “African Innovators.” Many more Sample Lessons portray the various ethnic groups as objects of mistreatment, such as lessons on “Redlining and Racial Housing Covenants,” “Undocumented Immigrants from Mexico,” “Cambodian Americans—Deportation Breaking Families Apart,” the “Japanese American Incarceration Experience,” and “Native American Mascots.” Many of the Sample Lessons focus on political resistance to purported oppression and on political activism, including lessons on “Black Lives Matter and Social Change,” “Salvadoran American Migration and Collective Resistance,” “The East LA Blowouts:

An Anchor to the Chicano Movement,” and “The Shellmound Sacred Site Struggle.” These Sample Lessons selectively reflect the values and priorities of social justice activists, whose goal is to develop in students a strong sense of identity and mistreatment so that they will be motivated to engage in social justice politics.

The selective bias toward social justice politics becomes especially clear in the chapter on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, which includes a Sample Lesson on the “Model Minority Myth.” According to the Sample Lesson, the “Model Minority Myth” is a “false narrative that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have overcome racism and prejudice,” and “glosses over violence, harm and legalized racism that AAPIs have endured” (p.166). However, the Model Minority Myth is itself a myth—Asian Americans are one of the most successful groups in America, placing above “Whites” by many measures, including education and median wealth;<sup>7</sup> and they also have the lowest crime rate among the ethnicities featured in the CESMC.<sup>8</sup> These inconvenient facts are ignored in the Sample Lesson on the “Model Minority Myth” because they undermine the social justice narrative that oppression and injustice is the sole cause of underperformance among “non-white” groups. And, in fact, the CESMC explicitly states that the Model Minority Myth “places a wedge between [AAPI] and other oppressed groups, including but not limited to, African American, Latinx, and American Indian communities” (p. 166). In other words, the fact of “AAPI” success threatens the political aim to unify “marginalized” identity groups on the basis of their purported victimization.

## **The CESMC Lionizes Some Groups and Stigmatizes Others**

The CESMC pushes students to view the world through the lens of identitarian politics, in which certain purportedly marginalized groups are sacralized as victims and granted moral status, while other groups are devalued and even stigmatized.

As part of its fundamental “Guiding Values and Principles” the CESMC includes cultivation of empathy “*especially*” for “BIPOC” students – rather than for all students. Likewise, without justification or consideration of potential harms, it calls to “celebrate and honor” “BIPOC” students and to place a “high value” on the experiences of “marginalized” groups, which implies that some children – or groups of children – should be regarded as having lower value.

Further, while the CESMC highlights the contributions of members of “BIPOC” groups in lessons such as “African American Innovators,” which explores the “contributions of African Americans in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); literature and journalism; education; government; and business and entrepreneurship” (pp. 107- 118), the CESMC either ignores Americans of European heritage or treats them fundamentally as sources of oppression. In fact, the CESMC explicitly and entirely omits European American history, based on the claim that “European American-centered history and cultures are already robustly taught in school curriculum [sic]” (p. 10). And where Americans of European descent or European societies *are* included in the lessons, they are portrayed as morally inferior actors and forces. For example, in the section on “Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x,” the Instructional Guidance cites “common experiences” that unite diverse groups within this broad category as including

“ancestral memories of European colonization.” (p. 49). The Instructional Guidance refers to “the European invasion of the Americas...” (p. 49). The Sample Lessons explain that nativism led to immigration policies “restrictive to non-European countries” (p. 282), claim that 3.5 million South Asians were “transported to European colonies,” (p. 285), and cite the “Doctrine of Discovery” as a “papal policy created in Europe that gave the right to Europeans to take the land of non-Christians around the world” (p. 347).

There have been no studies conducted on the effect of a pedagogy similar to the CESMC on the “self-worth and holistic well-being” of students of European heritage. However, a recent study on adults strongly suggests that these students could be harmed.<sup>9</sup> The authors carried out a controlled study using anti-oppressive educational materials (materials that emphasize awareness of and opposition to systematic oppression) across three groupings: race, religion and caste. Participants were randomly assigned to review these materials or a neutral alternative, and then exposed to a neutral scenario. In all cases, participants exposed to anti-oppressive materials were statistically much more likely to both perceive bias and come up with punitive responses to an imaginary prejudice. In some cases, the hostility was extreme. For example, a statistically significant percentage of participants exposed to caste sensitivity training perceived the oppressor (upper caste Hindus) as a “virus” or “parasite”. These studies suggest that pedagogy similar to that promoted in the CESMC could harm students perceived as oppressors.

In addition to potentially harming students of European heritage, the CESMC causes profound and lasting harm to those very “students of color” it purports to help. This is because conditioning “BIPOC” students to view themselves as permanent victims of an oppressive society encourages them to embrace a phenomenon known to the mental health community as “chronic victimhood.”

Every human person faces difficulties in life, whether it’s illness, injury or just plain bad luck. But most of us are capable of bouncing back from these experiences, and taking charge of our life. People who are chronic victims on the other hand have “an identity that is based around a sense of grievances, imagined injustice and a pervasive sense of self-pity. They feel personally wronged by all misfortunes regardless of the source and believe that there is nothing that they can do about their situation”.<sup>10</sup> This is remarkably similar to how Critical Social Justice ideology characterizes minority students. These students are led to believe that an irresistible power external to themselves – namely American society – denies them the freedom and the power to order their own lives and that they are, therefore, neither responsible for nor capable of making the decisions and taking the actions necessary to grow and succeed in American society. Their only option is to struggle against this society and its institutions.

But is this a realistic way to prepare students to succeed in the adult world? Students need to learn that they have agency in this world, that they can act independently and make choices that influence their life and surroundings. This starts in school when students are held accountable for their behavior, and rewarded based on their accomplishments rather than their perceived victim status. Students of all ethnicities and backgrounds need to learn that they are unique individuals with a range of abilities and talents that they can develop in order to succeed

in life. In other words, teach students to focus less on what someone does to them and more on what they like to do and are capable of doing.

## **The CESMC Presents Ongoing Oppression as a Fact While Ignoring Contrary Evidence**

The CESMC takes for granted that racism and oppression are a defining feature of American society rather than a proposition to be debated. For example, one of the CESMC's stated goals is to "build new possibilities for a post-racist, post-systemic racism society that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance...." (p. 16). But this assumes that "systemic racism" is a significant problem in contemporary America.

The CESMC ignores evidence that racism had been diminishing significantly in America before academics and the media started amplifying issues of racism in the 2010s and even more so after George Floyd's death in 2020. By the mid-2010s, according to Erik Kaufman, University of Buckingham professor, police killings of Black Americans were at a historic low, while interracial marriage and tolerant attitudes were at a historic high.<sup>11</sup> An empirical analysis conducted by Harvard professor Roland Fryer found that racial differences did not explain incidents of officer-involved shootings when other factors were taken into account (although race did not account for some disparities in general use of force).<sup>12</sup> This is consistent with other empirical analyses into racial issues like police use of force, crime and group performance conducted by Associate Professor Wilfred Reilly, who concludes that "we do not in fact have an ongoing race ... war in modern America."<sup>13</sup> But media coverage on issues of race skyrocketed nonetheless, leading increasing numbers of people to view racism as a major problem in American society.<sup>14</sup>

### *The CESMC Explains Groups' Marginal Status Solely In Terms of Oppression and Refrains From Exploring Other Causes, Such as Cultural Habits or Beliefs*

While the CESMC focuses on so-called "marginalized" groups, it offers only one explanation for these groups' marginal status: oppression. The Sample Lessons emphasize victimization and injustice to the point that it over-interprets oppression as an explanation for why these groups have not attained the same social or economic status as others. The CESMC therefore does not explore the role of cultural habits or beliefs, for instance, in accounting for these groups' socio-economic status. The CESMC contains no discussion of academics who demonstrate with empirical data that cultural differences between groups predict success and that present day oppression does not explain the major problems facing minority Americans today.<sup>15</sup>

### *The CESMC Fails to Discuss the Classically Liberal Ideals and Institutions That Have Allowed Americans of Various Ethnicities to Live and Prosper in a Single Political and Economic Polity*

By viewing American society through the reductive, narrow lens of oppressive power systems, the CESMC neglects to acknowledge, let alone to teach or cultivate, the (classically) liberal values and institutions that have formed the basis for the United States' political, social



and economic systems, and which have enhanced prosperity and security for citizens. These liberal values include individualism, equality before the law, free trade, respect for private property rights, and a broadly humanistic ethics that de-emphasizes race and other immutable identities. In contrast to countries that are organized around a people or a shared history, these liberal principles have allowed various ethnic groups within the U.S. to become citizens within a single political and economic polity in which each individual enjoys full legal and political equality. These liberal principles have allowed people of varied backgrounds to prosper, mix and assimilate to an unusual degree.

Critical theorists reject these liberal principles, regarding them as a cover for racism, sexism and oppression. They advocate an illiberal version of identity politics in which purportedly oppressed groups seize power and economic status on the basis of their identity. Thus, critical theorists' rejection of liberal values is baked into the CESMC.

With its exclusive-focus on oppression, the CESMC fails to acknowledge that Western liberal principles of science, reason, humanism and progress have resulted in worldwide gains for all ethnic groups in life expectancy, child mortality, famine deaths, prosperity, peace, safety, democracy, and equal rights.<sup>16</sup> The average American today is far wealthier and more comfortable than the average American in 1776. A majority of the population in 1776 were agricultural workers earning very little (or nothing for those who were enslaved), whereas today median household income is approximately \$80,000 with many working in sectors like technology, services and industry.<sup>17</sup> Access to technology has also increased, with Americans in 1776 relying on letters for communication and horse-drawn wagons for transportation, whereas today most Americans have smartphones, internet access, automobiles, and plane travel. Americans today also have far greater access to education, with K-12 schooling now the norm. Medical knowledge in 1776 was rudimentary, with high infant mortality rates and diseases like smallpox, tuberculosis, and malaria common. Today, of course, those life-threatening diseases have been highly contained, many almost completely eradicated.

The CESMC also does not discuss the fact that many members of “marginalized” ethnic groups left their countries for the U.S. because of lack of economic opportunity and political rights in their home countries (such as in Imperial China or monarchical Europe) and the prosperity and political equality that America offers. The CESMC also includes little to no information on how members of the various ethnic groups have successfully integrated into American society, or how interactions between different groups have changed us all for the better. Instead, each group is treated as largely siloed, except when they are made objects of injustice by the “dominant” group. The CESMC also disproportionately emphasizes the activist philosophies of figures such as W.E.B. Du Bois and radical movements like the Black Liberation Army, rather than the pro-American and integrationist teachings of figures like Booker T. Washington.

Rather than celebrating individualism and the common traits that unify Americans of diverse backgrounds, the CESMC fosters division by reinforcing ideological activism over historical comprehension. It overlooks the motivations, challenges, and opportunities that have defined the immigrant experience in America. By focusing on activism over balanced,



foundational civics, the curriculum fails to provide students with a robust understanding of the constitutional framework that has guided America’s development, and it fails to teach the true principles and structure of American governance and culture.

## **The CESMC Promotes Critical Thinking Only Within the Confines of Social Justice Orthodoxy**

Although the CESMC states repeatedly that critical thinking is one of its goals, its critical inquiry is directed at only one target—the purportedly oppressive power structures of American society. Its critical eye is never trained on Critical Social Justice itself, whose assumptions and tenets are treated as orthodoxy. This is another key reason why the CESMC falls short of offering a liberal education: rather than promote open inquiry and curiosity, it prejudges American society and history according to the politicized dictates of social justice ideology. The curriculum thus seeks to cultivate ideological conformity rather than intellectual growth. Indeed, it mirrors the manipulative techniques used in social conditioning, which were part of the radical teachings of Paulo Freire, whose educational philosophy centers on viewing all social interactions through power dynamics and pushes students toward activism—rather than encourage critical thinking and independent inquiry.

The CESMC’s failure to question critical social justice itself is egregious, because a number of trenchant critiques, some listed below, are readily available. For an educational project like the CESMC to ignore such diverse viewpoints reveals how “critical” theory is the antithesis of critical thinking. These critiques include:

- *Taboo: 10 Facts You Can’t Talk About* Wilfred Reilly (2020)<sup>18</sup>, uses empirical data to debunk the narrative of continuing racism and sexism in the United States;
- *Race Marxism*, James Lindsay (2022)<sup>19</sup>, argues that Critical Race Theory is a reinvention of Marxism that substitutes race as the central construct for understanding inequality in place of economic class;
- *How Elites Ate the Social Justice Movement*, Fredrik DeBoer (2023)<sup>20</sup>, argues that hidden beneath the rhetoric of the oppressed and the symbolism of the downtrodden lies the inconvenient fact that those doing the organizing, messaging, protesting, and campaigning are predominantly drawn from this country’s more upwardly mobile educated classes for whom poses are more important than policies;
- *The Parasitic Mind: How Infectious Ideas are Killing Common Sense*, Gad Saad (2020)<sup>21</sup>, argues that the West’s commitment to freedom, reason, and true liberalism has never been more seriously threatened than it is today by the stifling forces of political correctness;
- *Social Justice Fallacies*, Thomas Sowell (2023)<sup>22</sup>, argues that those engaged in the quest for social justice adhere to a utopian view of the human condition and many propositions they take to be true simply cannot stand up to documented facts, which are often the opposite of what is widely believed;

- *The Identity Trap: A Story of Ideas and Power in Our Time*, Yascha Mounk (2023)<sup>23</sup>, offers a balanced, nuanced account of how a new set of ideas about race, gender and sexual orientation came to be extremely influential in mainstream institutions, and arguing that it would be a mistake to give up on a more universalist humanism;
- *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything About Race, Gender and Identity*, Helen Pluckrose & James Lindsay (2020)<sup>24</sup>, shows how activist Critical Social Justice scholarship does more harm than good by positing an inconsistent ethics and authoritarian orthodoxy;
- *Critical Race Theory in Your School: How to Fight Back*, George Maurer (2024)<sup>25</sup>, documents the many ways Critical Race Theory (CRT) has infiltrated California's and America's educational institutions and provides strategies for parents to use when taking a stand against CRT;
- *The New Puritans: How the Religion of Social Justice Captured the Western World*, Andrew Doyle (2022)<sup>26</sup>, offers a broadside against “woke” cancel culture and the moral certainties it shares with religious fundamentalism;
- *We Have Never Been Woke: Social Justice Discourse, Inequality and the Rise of a New Elite*, Musa al-Gharbi (2024)<sup>27</sup>, argues that a new elite class of “symbolic capitalists” are the primary producers and consumers of content on antiracism, sexism, transphobia, and xenophobia but are among the primary beneficiaries of the very inequalities they condemn; and
- *The Third Awakening*, Eric Kaufman (2024)<sup>28</sup>, argues that cultural socialism is not the classical liberalism of the American Constitution, but a modern “majorities bad, minorities good” Left-liberalism that is powered by a set of ‘liberal’ emotional attachments rather than liberal principles.

A truly liberal, balanced coursework would take these critiques into account. But the CESMC fails to do so because it presents Critical Social Justice as orthodoxy.

## Parents and Students Say That CESMC is Ideological Pedagogy

The experience of students and parents with the CESMC as implemented in school districts confirms that the CESMC is focused on one-sided political activism and fails to provide balanced teaching. Below are a few comments about ethnic studies classes from students and parents who have experienced it firsthand in their school districts, including districts in San Francisco, Palo Alto, Los Angeles, Fremont and Berkeley.<sup>29</sup>

- “Ethnic Studies is not the study of ethnicities, it’s the study of oppression”
- “My son was robbed of his math education by a teacher who prioritized his personal activism over teaching math”
- “Teachers [were] unfairly inserting their political activism into the classroom”



- “Indoctrinates people and creates division”
- “objectively pushes one political opinion...[and is] the definition of indoctrination”
- teaches that some students by “just existing are given an unfair and oppressive advantage over others”
- Contrary facts “are conveniently left out”
- “They painted some subjects as black and white”
- There was a “lack of honest discourse”
- Students felt like “answering questions would make their teachers not like them or grade them badly”
- There were more “feeling questions” than “analytical questions”
- It was about the “bad things that America did to these communities” but we “didn’t learn anything about their particular history”; it was “basically the bad things the privileged white people [or the] cisheteronormative people did to the other”
- There was “a sense of approved ideas” and questions about how they feel about it “were more an opportunity for students to express merely disapproval or consternation or anger at the oppression and approval about various forms of resilience”
- “What we’ve seen with Ethnic Studies is just this chronic unwillingness to share information because they’re worried that it will be criticized”
- The people pushing Ethnic Studies are “unwilling to listen, unwilling to be criticized, and really just not being able to open their ears and understand why people are concerned”
- Students felt unsafe when they were taught that “they were the ones who are being the oppressors”
- “Students are wanting to tell the teachers what the teachers want to hear...that is really common in the Ethnic Studies courses and it’s also common that students are self-censoring”
- “all they learn in Ethnic Studies is talking about only three specific groups are facing oppression and how we need to feel bad for them and everybody else is oppressing them”
- “There’s no learning, there’s no discourse, there’s no conversation, there’s no critical thinking...and there’s no discussion about the gains that any oppressed groups has made....”



- Many parents and students expressed that Ethnic Studies courses included one-sided and sometimes factually incorrect material on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that it has led to incidents of antisemitism. Parents and teachers also reported that Ethnic Studies misrepresented Hindu culture, focusing primarily on purported oppressive aspects.
- The lessons amount to "brown people good, white people bad"

## The CESMC is Not a Fully Developed Curriculum

The “model curriculum” is not a turnkey curriculum that comes with a training plan that can be used as is. Instead, it’s really only a curriculum framework, together with sample lesson plans. That distinction is important because it creates a gap that can be filled by outside consultants and curriculum developers, most of whom specialize in Liberated Ethnic Studies. Liberated Ethnic Studies is a politically extreme version of the model curriculum that was rejected by the State Board of Education after receiving 100,000 public comments expressing concern<sup>30</sup>. In spite of this rejection, the liberated ethnic studies model consortium remains active in the background, seeking to insert its own curriculum, which has led to controversies including charges of antisemitism<sup>31</sup>.

Missing from the Sample Lessons is any effort to provide a comprehensive or balanced account of these groups’ experiences in America, or of their existence prior to becoming part of what became America. Instead, the Sample Lessons are incoherent—they appear to have been written by different groups, with varying objectives. Many Sample Lessons are overtly political while others are relatively straightforward histories.

For example, *Sample Lesson 25: Vietnamese American Experiences* is a fairly straightforward history of the Vietnamese refugees who came to America (specifically, California) between 1975 and 1995. It talks about why they left Vietnam (to flee communism), the challenges they faced as boat people, and their experience after arriving in the US (both challenges and accomplishments). The material is relatively balanced and accurate.

In contrast, *Sample Lesson 24: South Asian Americans* is primarily focused on racism, xenophobia and violence. On day 1, students are expected to define key terms related to bullying and xenophobia (p. 268). On day 2, students grapple with the question: “What turns xenophobia into violence?” (p. 292). This culminates on day 3 with an examination of the “historical roots of xenophobia against Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians and Arab Americans in America” (p. 300). Students are expected to compare past occurrences of xenophobia with modern day forms of bias-based bullying. This lesson, which includes numerous examples of violence against South Asians, is a reflection of Critical Social Justice ideology that sees people of color primarily through the lens of oppression.

One might expect a lesson on African American studies to trace the experiences of African Americans from their origins in Africa prior to contact with Europeans, to the European slave trade and the Middle Passage, to their experiences in the slave-holding South and (to an extent) the free North, through the Civil War and Emancipation, to the Jim Crow era, the Great

Migration, to the Civil Rights movement, and ultimately to full political and legal equality today. Such a telling also might recount the ways in which African Americans have integrated into American society, for example by adopting its language, culture, its economic and educational practices, and its religion, all while leaving a unique imprint on each. It also might recount how African Americans have contributed economically through various inventions and business enterprises, or how they have enriched American culture through music like jazz and blues. It also might tell stories of resilience and success as well as persecution and injustice.

But the five Sample Lessons on African American Studies have no such coherent or systematic theme, except that all are framed by social justice ideology. The first lesson, *Classical Africa and Other Major Civilizations* glorifies African civilizations while ignoring the presence of oppression and violence that African cultures often imposed on each other. The lesson inaccurately presents all black African people and leaders as peaceful victims while rendering all white Europeans as imperialist oppressors. The Chapter then skips over hundreds of years to the second lesson on *US Housing Inequality: Redlining and Racial Housing Covenants*. The third lesson is *An Introduction to African American Innovators*, which explores accomplishments in a number of fields including science and technology, journalism, education and the arts. The fourth lesson is on *#BlackLivesMatter and Social Change*. This lesson has an activist focus: it encourages students to link an incident of racial profiling or police brutality in their own communities to “the broader Movement for Black Lives.” The lesson is biased since it does not offer a single critique of BLM including the many violent protests and the charitable money that its leaders used to purchase real estate. BLM also exaggerated the incidence of racially motivated police shootings, which resulted in a “defund the police” movement that ultimately led to increased homicides among black youth. The section on African American studies concludes with *Afrofuturism: Reimagining Black Futures and Science Fiction*.

The sample lessons in Native American Studies are similarly disjointed. This chapter starts with *This is Indian Land: The Purpose, Politics and Practice of Land Acknowledgment*, which promotes the practice of “Indigenous land acknowledgment” in order to “raise awareness” and “recognize that colonization is an ongoing process” (p. 325). It then proceeds to *Develop or Preserve? The Shellmound Sacred Site Struggle*, which discusses efforts to preserve Native American sacred sites. The chapter ends with *Native American Mascots*, which discusses the use of mascots for US sports teams and asks “whether the use of Native American mascots should be continued or banned” (p. 339). As with its other lessons, the Native American Studies curriculum is framed by the political goals of Critical Social Justice ideology and omits facts that undermine its tenets. For example, the CESMC completely ignores the brutal fighting among Native American tribes in which, for instance, the Comanche, who were known as “lord of the Plains,” were specialists in torture and genocide, wiping out nearly every tribe they encountered. In fact, several Native American tribes were as imperialist and genocidal as the “white” settlers who eventually vanquished them. But the CESMC lesson teaches that only white people are oppressors and others are victims.

## Empirical Studies Do Not Support the Use of CESMC

The purported benefits of ethnic studies are based on the research reviews of Christine Sleeter, who is cited multiple times on pages 13 and 14 of the CESMC. Some of the claimed benefits are therapeutic or political, but others focus on academic measurements such as student attendance, graduation rates and Grade Point Averages. This research is summarized in a book chapter written by Sleeter and Zavala<sup>32</sup>

FAIR showed that most of this research does not address the ethnic studies curricula being implemented in schools today<sup>33</sup>. Instead, the research was a loose compilation of a) studies on culturally relevant instruction (which is both distinct from ethnic studies and only one hallmark of ethnic studies); b) studies broadly connected to literacy, math, or science instruction for students belonging to various ethnic groups; and c) studies of interventions for at-risk youth. In addition, 40 out of 41 studies focused on curriculum, programming, or research subjects identified with a single ethnic or linguistic group. The applicability of these studies to a racially and ethnically heterogeneous student population is highly questionable.

The one study worth a more detailed consideration is that of Dee and Penner<sup>34</sup>. This was an analysis based on an ethnic studies program developed by the San Francisco School district, and piloted at five high schools in the years 2010-2013. The study included five unique school year cohorts where ethnic studies was opt-out for students with 8<sup>th</sup> grade GPA<2.0, but opt-in for students with 8<sup>th</sup> grade GPA>2.0. The study included three high schools, but three of the cohorts were at a single high school. The analysis compared the academic performance of students on either side of the GPA 2.0 threshold.

The abstract of this study reported truly remarkable results: assignment to this course increased ninth-grade student attendance by 21 percentage points, GPA by 1.4 grade points, and credits earned by 23. This headline has been repeated many times by advocates of ethnic studies, and is cited in the review by Sleeter (Sleeter, 2020, pp. 6-7). It undoubtedly played a role in the decision by the California legislature to require students to take an ethnic studies course in order to graduate.

However, the results don't hold up to scrutiny. The comments below are based on an analysis by Sander and Wyner<sup>35</sup>, but many can also be ascertained by examining the figures in the original article. (Dee & Penner, pp. 31-34).

- The analysis was not a comparison of students who took ethnic studies versus those who did not take the course. Instead, it was a comparison of students automatically assigned to ethnic studies but allowed to opt-out (treatment group), versus students who were not automatically assigned but allowed to opt-in (control group).
- The only analysis that separated the students who took ethnic studies from those who did not is reported in Table 11. Based on their model, *the treatment group benefited whether or not they took the ethnic studies course*. There is no credible explanation

for why those who opted out of ethnic studies also benefited (The authors speculate that these students were special in some other characteristics).

- The size of the treatment group was very small. Although a total of 1405 students were included in the study, only 67 had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade GPA below 2.0 *and* took the ethnic studies course.
- The claimed benefits were concentrated among a small subset of students close to the GPA 2.0 threshold. Students with 8th grade GPA below 1.75 did not appear to benefit at all; however, these were the students with the highest attendance in ethnic studies.
- The size of the benefit was much smaller than reported in the abstract. Consider the GPA for ninth grade which is claimed to increase by 1.4 grade points. Dee and Penner, Figure 3 graph the actual results. If we average the three points on either side of the boundary, the results are almost identical (1.6 in both cases). One could infer that this still represents a benefit for the students in the treatment group, but the size is a lot smaller than claimed. It is also notable that both the treatment and control groups have a lower ninth grade GPA than their eighth grade GPA.
- The small number of teachers involved in the study (4) make it hard to rule out an effect due to special skills possessed by this specific group of teachers.
- The treatment group received other interventions, such as an early warning indicator, in addition to being assigned to take ethnic studies. (Dee & Penner, pp. 18-19).
- Sander and Wyner also analyzed a follow-up study by Dee, Penner and Bonilla that claimed a higher high school graduation rate for the treatment group<sup>36</sup> This follow-up study has many of the same problems identified in the original study. For example, it did not directly compare the students who took ethnic studies to those who did not.

In summary, of the 41 studies cited by Sleeter only one applied a quantitative model to look at a curriculum similar to the CESMC in a racially and ethnically heterogeneous classroom. This study showed a small positive effect among a small group of students at risk of dropping out, which may or may not be attributed to the ethnic studies class. This is an extremely limited database to justify a significant change in the curriculum impacting millions of K-12 students nationwide.

## **The CESMC Violates California’s Statutory Requirements for Education**

The CESMC violates several legal requirements that govern the content of K-12 education. Under constitutional law curricular decisions must be based on “legitimate pedagogical purposes” and not attempt to “prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics...or other matters of opinion.”<sup>37</sup> Yet the CESMC promotes one political and ideological framework—Critical Social Justice—and fails to present alternative viewpoints or facts that undermine the tenets of this ideology. Nor does the CESMC even invite questioning about the ideology on





which it is based. Given the tenuous empirical data supporting the use of the CESMC, its pedagogical justification is weak. This should not be surprising because its goals are explicitly political and therapeutic rather than academic.

California's Education Code also provides that instructional materials should not contain matter reflecting adversely on persons because of their race, national origin or ancestry, and should not promote bias or discrimination.<sup>38</sup> Yet the CESMC's treatment of Americans of European heritage does just that. The CESMC selectively includes facts portraying European-Americans as oppressors while omitting their many achievements. The CESMC also omits facts that would suggest that oppression is hardly exclusive to Europeans but, rather, was practiced by many peoples worldwide, including the "BIPOC" groups that the CESMC purports to champion. For these reasons, the CESMC also violates California's requirement that instructional materials must portray cultural and racial diversity "accurately."<sup>39</sup>

# Conclusion

This white paper presented by FAIR has demonstrated that Critical Social Justice ideology is deeply embedded in the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. This has important implications for the various efforts of the California legislature to reform ethnic studies. For example, AB101, the Bill authorizing ethnic studies included the requirement that the instructional materials “not reflect or promote, directly or indirectly, any bias, bigotry, or discrimination against any person or group of persons”<sup>40</sup>. The bill specifically prohibited the use of portions of an earlier draft curriculum (based on “liberated ethnic studies”) that were rejected due to concerns about bias. Another requirement was that schools adopting ethnic studies of their own “hold at least two public meetings to give members of the public an opportunity to comment.”

Public comments, cited in this white paper, from the students and parents most affected by Ethnic Studies demonstrate clearly that this effort to eliminate bias, bigotry or discrimination has failed. Furthermore, the experience of Palo Alto has shown that school boards are adopting Ethnic Studies curricula before the details are available to the public<sup>41</sup>. As discussed earlier, one reason for this failure is the fact that the Ethnic Studies model curriculum is not a turnkey curriculum with a training plan to be used as-is. The CESMC creates a gap that is filled by outside consultants, most of whom specialize in Liberated Ethnic Studies, the same group that created the divisive, hotly rejected earlier draft curriculum.

There is an even more fundamental reason why efforts to reform the curriculum have failed: most of the objectionable material is a direct result of focusing on the oppressed/oppressor binary. It is impossible to label groups of students as “oppressors” without leading those students to feel discriminated against. The other side of this binary is equally harmful - labeling groups of students as victims deprives them of the agency they need to reach their full potential. The divisiveness caused by these concepts has been echoed in school board meetings across California.<sup>42</sup>

FAIR supports education that provides students with an honest account of the unique challenges faced by various ethnic groups, the resources they have used to face these challenges and the positive contributions each has made to the American experience. However, it is important to teach this material from multiple perspectives while avoiding race essentialist concepts that promote division and feelings of alienation among students. We also believe that much of the division and polarization in our society arises from a lack of understanding of our shared culture and values. It’s therefore imperative to instill and reinvigorate in students a fundamental understanding of civics and the founding principles of our country, as this is critical in maintaining and strengthening the fabric of our society.

This is a fundamentally different approach to that taken by the CESMC.



## References

- <sup>1</sup> California State Board of Education. (2021, March 18). *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum*, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmc.asp>
- <sup>2</sup> American Association for the Advancement of Science. (1990) *Project on Liberal Education and the Sciences* p. xi.
- <sup>3</sup> Nussbaum, M. C. (2009). *Education for Profit, Education for Freedom*. Liberal Education. 95 (3). Association of American Colleges and Universities: 6–13. ISSN 0024-1822.
- <sup>4</sup> Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2025, April 23) <https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/ideology/v-1>
- <sup>5</sup> Delgado, R & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory, An Introduction*. New York Univ. Press Ray, V. (2022). *On Critical Race Theory*. Random House.
- <sup>6</sup> Hooks, B. (1994) *Teaching to Transgress*. Routledge. pp. 26-29.
- <sup>7</sup> Kochhar, R, Moslimani, M. (2023, December 4). *Wealth Gaps Across Racial and Ethnic Groups*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/2023/12/04/wealth-gaps-across-racial-and-ethnic-groups/>
- <sup>8</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation (2025, April23). *Crime Data Explorer*. <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov>
- <sup>9</sup> Jagdeep, A., Jagdeep, A., Lazarus, S., Zecher, M., Fedida, O., Fihrrer, G., Vasco, C., Finkelstein, J. Finkelstein, D.S., Yanovsky, S., Jussim, L., Paresky, P. & Viswanathan, I. (2024, November 25). *Instructing Animosity: How DEI Pedagogy Produces the Hostile Attribution Bias*. Network Contagion Research Institute. <https://networkcontagion.us/reports/instructing-animosity-how-dei-pedagogy-produces-the-hostile-attribution-bias/>
- <sup>10</sup> Aragon, D. (2019, March 20). Aragon Mental Health LLC. <https://aragonmentalhealth.com/escaping-chronic-victimhood/>
- <sup>11</sup> Kaufman, E. (2021, April 7). *The Social Construction of Racism in the United States*, Manhattan Institute. <https://manhattan.institute/article/the-social-construction-of-racism-in-the-united-states/>
- <sup>12</sup> Fryer, R. G. (2019, June). *An Empirical Analysis of Racial Differences in Police Use of Force*, Journal of Political Economy. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/701423?mobileUi=0>
- <sup>13</sup> Reilly, W. (2020). *Taboo, 10 Facts [You Can't Talk About]*, Regnery. p. xxii.
- <sup>14</sup> Goldberg, Z. (2020, August 5). *How the Media Led the Great Racial Awakening*, Tablet. <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/media-great-racial-awakening>
- <sup>15</sup> Reilly, W. (2020). *Taboo, 10 Facts You Can't Talk About*. Regnery. Chapters 3 & 4;  
Loury, G. C. (2019, May 7). *Why Does Racial Inequality Persist?*. Manhattan Institute. <https://manhattan.institute/article/why-does-racial-inequality-persist;>  
Loury, G. C. (2021). *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality*. Harvard University Press.



- <sup>16</sup> Pinker, S. (2018). *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*. Viking.
- <sup>17</sup> Guzman, G. & Kollar, M. (2024, September 10). *Income in the United States:2023*. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2024/demo/p60-282.html>
- <sup>18</sup> Reilly, W. (2020). *Taboo, 10 Facts You Can't Talk About*. Regnery.
- <sup>19</sup> Lindsay, J. (2022). *Race Marxism: The Truth About Critical Race Theory and Praxis*. New Discourses.
- <sup>20</sup> DeBoer, F. (2023). *How Elites Ate the Social Justice Movement*. Simon & Schuster.
- <sup>21</sup> Saad, G. (2020). *The Parasitic Mind: How Infectious Ideas are Killing Common Sense*. Regnery.
- <sup>22</sup> Sowell, T. (2023). *Social Justice Fallacies*. Basic Books.
- <sup>23</sup> Mounk, Y. (2023). *The Identity Trap: A Story of Ideas and Power in Our Time*. Penguin Press.
- <sup>24</sup> Lindsay, J. & Pluckrose, H. (2020). *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything About Race, Gender and Identity*. Pitchstone Publishing.
- <sup>25</sup> Maurer, G. (2024). *Critical Race Theory in Your School: How to Fight Back*. Liberty Hill.
- <sup>26</sup> Doyle, A. (2022). *The New Puritans: How the Religion of Social Justice Captured the Western World*. Constable.
- <sup>27</sup> Al-Gharbi, M. (2024). *We Have Never Been Woke: Social Justice Discourse, Inequality and the Rise of a New Elite*. Princeton University Books.
- <sup>28</sup> Kaufman, E. (2024). *The Third Awakening*. Bombardier Books.
- <sup>29</sup> Israeli-American Civic Action Network. (2025, February 25). *The California Forum on Ethnic Studies in Public Schools* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0cUZ3v9b9M>; includes one comment made by a parent to a member of FAIR.
- <sup>30</sup> Honig, B. (2022, June 26). *California Schools Should Opt for Inclusive Ethnic Studies*. EdSource. <https://edsource.org/2022/california-schools-should-opt-for-inclusive-ethnic-studies/674538>
- <sup>31</sup> Palo Alto Parent Alliance. (2025, April 23). <https://www.pa-square.org/>
- <sup>32</sup> Sleeter, C. E, Zavala M. (2020). *What the Research Says about Ethnic Studies*, National Education Association. <https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/What%20the%20Research%20Says%20About%20Ethnic%20Studies.pdf>
- <sup>33</sup> Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (2024). *A Guide to Evaluating Research on Ethnic Studies*. [https://www.fairforall.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/EthnicStudies\\_C.pdf](https://www.fairforall.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/EthnicStudies_C.pdf)
- <sup>34</sup> Dee, T. S., Penner, E. K. (2017). *The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum*. National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21865>
- <sup>35</sup> Sander, R., Wyner, A.. (2022, March 28). *Studies Fail to Support Claims of New California Ethnic Studies Requirement*. Tablet. <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/studies-fail-to-support-claims-new-california-ethnic-studies-requirement>



- <sup>36</sup> Bonilla, S, Dee, T.S., Penner, E.K., (2021, September 7). *Ethnic studies increases longer-run academic engagement and attainment*. PNAS.  
<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2026386118>
- <sup>37</sup> Office of the Attorney General. (2024, January 9). *Guidance to School Districts re: Legal Requirements for Providing Inclusive Curricula and Books*, OAG-2024-01. California Department of Justice. <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/Legal%20Alert%20Re%20Inclusive%20Curricula.1.9.24.1157CLEAN.pdf>
- <sup>38</sup> California Education Code (2025, April 23). **§ 51500, § 51501 & § 60044**.  
<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/education-code>
- <sup>39</sup> California Education Code (2025, April 23). **§ 51204.5, § 60040**.  
<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/education-code>; this code specifically references the inclusion of European Americans.
- <sup>40</sup> Fensterwald, J. (2021, October 8). EdSource. <https://edsource.org/2021/california-becomes-first-state-to-require-ethnic-studies-in-high-school/662219>
- <sup>41</sup> Israeli-American Civic Action Network. (2025, February 25). *The California Forum on Ethnic Studies in Public Schools* [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0cUZ3v9b9M>
- <sup>42</sup> He, E. (2025, April 20) *This high school course is dividing districts across California*. Politico.  
<<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/04/20/this-high-school-course-is-dividing-districts-across-california-00299498>>