

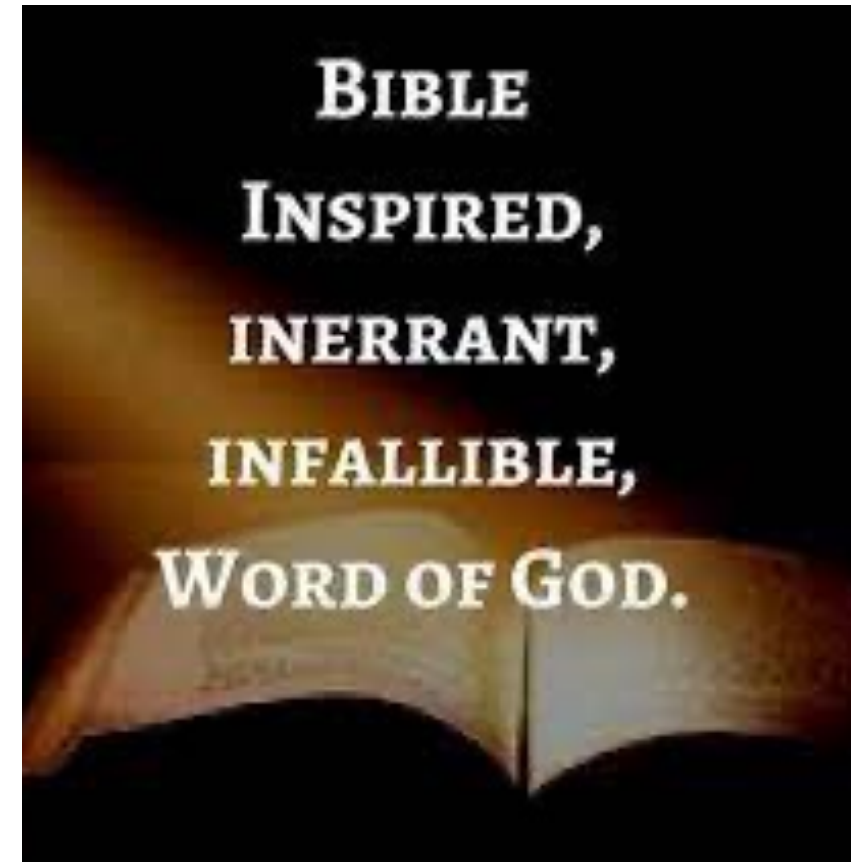
# Critical Theory: An (Im)moral Revolution

January 23 — February 27

# Reason for this "Grow" Class

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- The Bible is the infallible, divinely inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible was written over different time periods within different cultures, but the truth of God's Word never changes.
- The Bible does not change because God does not change (Hebrews 13:8).



## Reason for this "Grow" Class

- Cultures, on the other hand, are ever-changing, and secular attacks on God's Word reflect those changes.
- Our culture is not unique in its attempts to discredit the gospel.
- But our culture has been changing with alarming speed in recent years, and with those changes we have seen *new* and divisive attacks on the gospel in **Critical Theory** (CT) and applications of CT.

## Reason for this "Grow" Class

- It is essential for followers of Jesus Christ, to understand the ways that the gospel is being attacked, undermined, or discredited by today's secular culture so that:
  - our own faith stands strong and unwavering when we encounter them.
  - we may be equipped to engage with secular culture as ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

# Two Cautions



## Two Cautions: First

- CT subverts the gospel of Jesus Christ. As such, I view CT as an enemy of the gospel that we need to understand.
- But let's be careful to not generalize antipathy for the *ideas* of CT to the *people* who believe them. We want to better understand CT so that we can stand strong and so that we can be better ambassadors for our savior in a society that is affected by CT.
- The purpose of this class is **not to agitate or to stir up animosity against people who adopt the nonbiblical worldview of CT.**

## Two Cautions: Second

- We're going to take a critical look at CT, but CT is not wrong for critiquing abuses of power and exploitation. Abuses of power and exploitation are at the root of egregious sins perpetrated by individuals and by societies alike, sins like racism and discrimination.
- Let's be careful to not let our criticism of CT cause us to minimize or deny that the sins of racism and discrimination are part of our national history, and that they still exist in our country even today.

# Course Overview

## Part 1: Foundation

- Preface: Introduce Critical Theory in context of “America’s Culture War”
- Chapter 1: Where did Critical Theory and the Woke Movement Come From? All Roads Lead to **Marx**... Yikes!
- Chapter 2: Marxism + Culture = **Critical Theory**
- Chapter 3: Critical Theory + Identity Politics = Many “**Critical Theories**”



# Course Overview

## **Part 2: Revolution**

- Chapter 4: Critical Race Theory
  - How is CRT incompatible with the gospel?
  - How is CRT impacting public life (including the church)?
  - How should we, as Christians, respond?
- Chapter 5: Queer Theory and the LGBTQ+ Movement
  - How is the LGBTQ+ movement incompatible with the gospel?
  - How is the LGBTQ+ movement impacting public life (including church)?
  - How should we, as Christians, respond?

# Preface: America's Culture War

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- Culture, functions in part, to establish the values and beliefs about morality (e.g., what is right and what is wrong, what's sinful and what's sacred) that define public life.
- America's Culture War: a conflict over the values and beliefs about morality that will define public life in our country.



# Preface: America's Culture War





## Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations

Jesse Graham, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian A. Nosek  
University of Virginia

How and why do moral judgments vary across the political spectrum? To test moral foundations theory (J. Haidt & J. Graham, 2007; J. Haidt & C. Joseph, 2004), the authors developed several ways to measure people's use of 5 sets of moral intuitions: Harm/care, Fairness/reciprocity, Ingroup/loyalty, Authority/respect, and Purity/sanctity. Across 4 studies using multiple methods, liberals consistently showed greater endorsement and use of the Harm/care and Fairness/reciprocity foundations compared to the other 3 foundations, whereas conservatives endorsed and used the 5 foundations more equally. This difference was observed in abstract assessments of the moral relevance of foundation-related concerns such as violence or loyalty (Study 1), moral judgments of statements and scenarios (Study 2), "sacredness" reactions to taboo trade-offs (Study 3), and use of foundation-related words in the moral texts of religious sermons (Study 4). These findings help to illuminate the nature and intractability of moral disagreements in the American "culture war."

*Keywords:* morality, ideology, liberal, conservative

Political campaigns spend vast sums appealing to the self-interests of voters, yet rational self-interest often shows a weak and unstable relationship to voting behavior (Kinder, 1998; Miller, 1999; Sears & Funk, 1991). Voters are also influenced by a wide variety of social and emotional forces (Marcus, 2002; Westen, 2007). Some of these forces are trivial or peripheral factors whose influence we lament, such as a candidate's appearance (Ballew & Todorov, 2007). In recent years increasing attention has been paid to the role of another class of non-self-interested concerns: morality. Voters who seem to vote against their material self-interest are sometimes said to be voting instead for their values, or for their vision of a good society (Lakoff, 2004; Westen, 2007). However, the idea of what makes for a good society is not universally shared. The "culture war" that has long marked American politics (Hunter, 1991) is a clash of visions about such fundamental moral issues as the authority of parents, the sanctity of life and marriage, and the proper response to social inequalities. Ideological commitments

are moral commitments; they are not necessarily strategies for self-enrichment.

In this article we examine moral foundations theory, which was originally developed to describe moral differences across cultures (Haidt & Joseph, 2004). Building on previous theoretical work (Haidt & Graham, 2007), we apply the theory to moral differences across the political spectrum within the United States. We propose a simple hypothesis: Political liberals construct their moral systems primarily upon two psychological foundations—Harm/care and Fairness/reciprocity—whereas political conservatives construct moral systems more evenly upon five psychological foundations—the same ones as liberals, plus Ingroup/loyalty, Authority/respect, and Purity/sanctity. We call this hypothesis the *moral foundations hypothesis*, and we present four studies that support it using four different methods.

### Liberals and Conservatives

Political views are multifaceted, but a single liberal-conservative (or left-right) continuum is a useful approximation that has predictive validity for voting behavior and opinions on a wide range of issues (Jost, 2006). In terms of political philosophy, the essential element of all forms of liberalism is individual liberty (Gutmann, 2001). Liberals have historically taken an optimistic view of human nature and of human perfectibility; they hold what Sowell (2002) calls an "unconstrained vision" in which people should be left as free as possible to pursue their own courses of personal development. Conservatism, in contrast, is best understood as a "positional ideology," a reaction to the challenges to authority and institutions that are so often mounted by liberals (Muller, 1997). Conservatives have traditionally taken a more

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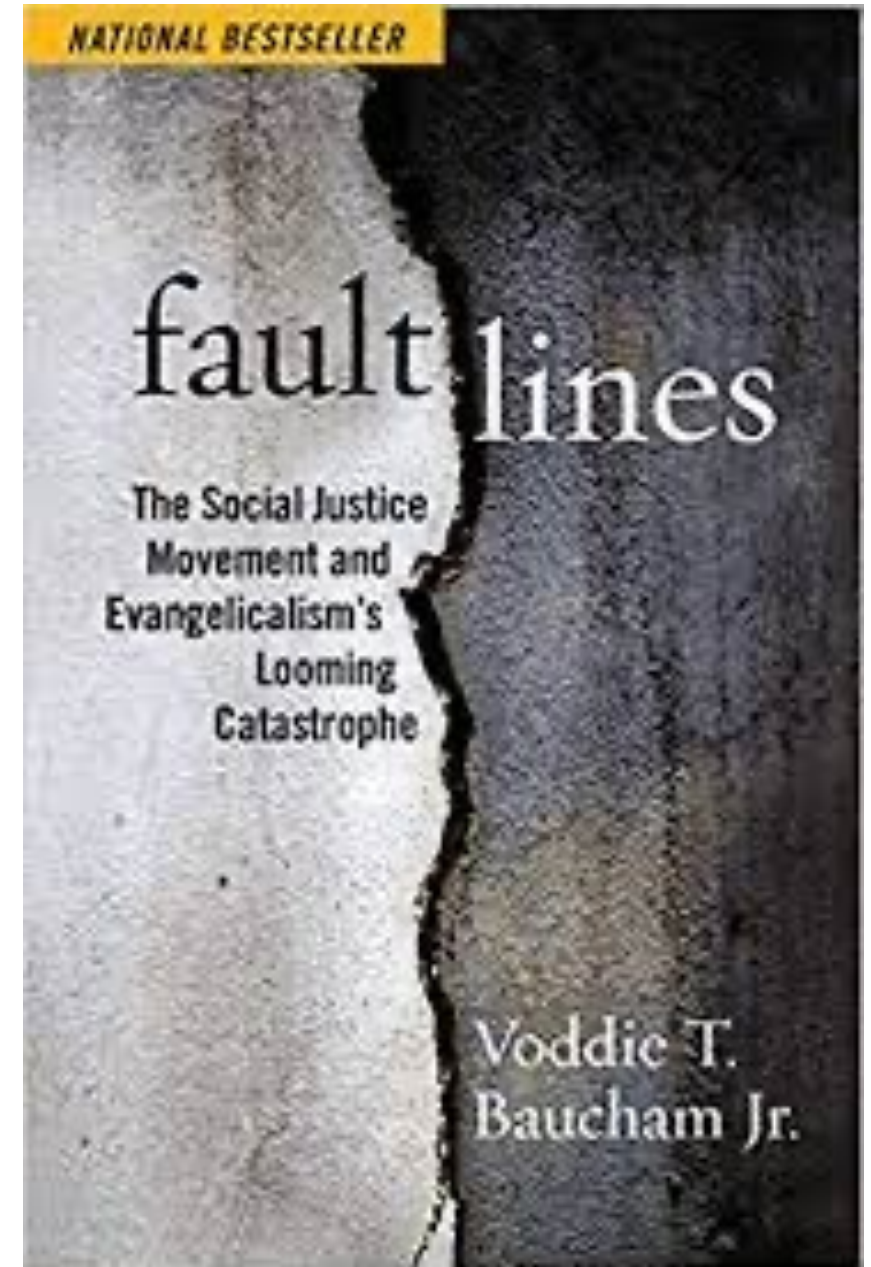
We thank Mark Berry for creating the supplemental text analysis program used in Study 4 and thank Yoav Bar-Anan, Pete Ditto, Ravi Iyer, Selin Kesebir, Sena Koleva, Allison Meade, Katarina Nguyen, Eric Oliver, Shige Oishi, Colin Tucker Smith, and Tim Wilson for helpful comments on earlier drafts. This research was supported by Institute for Education Sciences and Jacob Javits fellowships and a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (R01 MH68447). Supplemental information and analyses can be found at [www.moralfoundations.org](http://www.moralfoundations.org).

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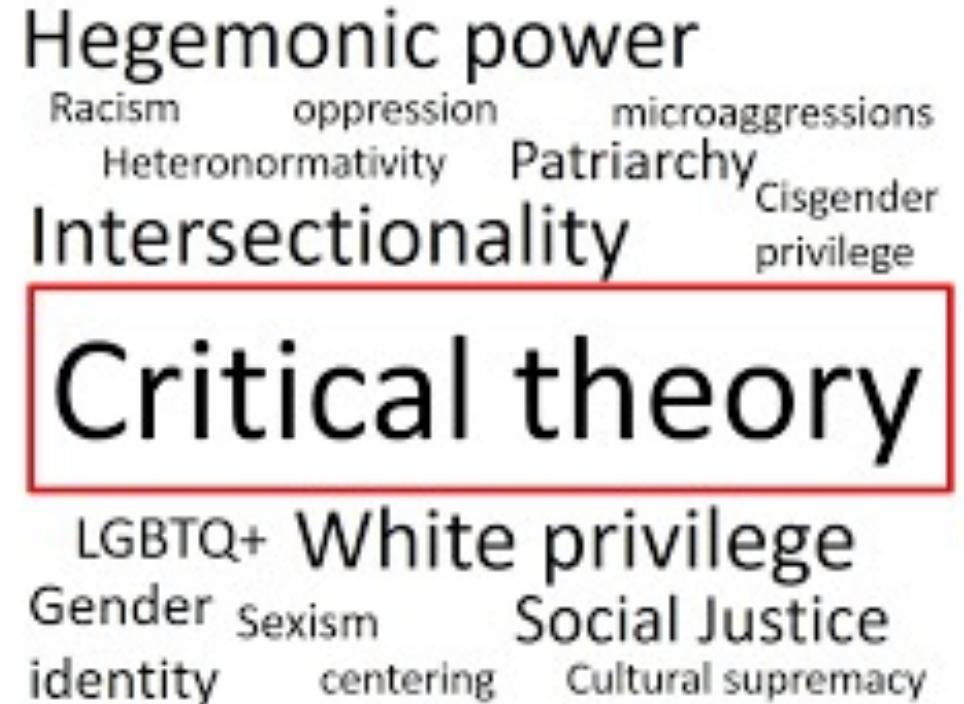
## Something Changed between 2010 and 2015: A Cultural Earthquake

- A big “earthquake” shook the cultural landscape, and when the dust settled, the chasm between conservative and progressive values seemed far greater and far deeper.
- For many Christians, the culture war seems to have escalated from fighting to preserve religious liberties and public observances to fighting for the mere survival of a biblical worldview in public life.



# Critical Theory and the Woke Movement

- CT is the philosophical foundation (underlying worldview/ideology) of “Wokeism” or the “Woke Movement”.
- CT was created by philosophers and social scientists whose work had deep ideological roots in the philosophy of Karl Marx.



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## CRIT. THEORY EXAMPLES

### FEMINIST THEORY

A theory aimed at understanding the nature of gender inequality through examination of women's and men's social roles, and how these drive interests, opportunities, and experiences in a variety of contexts

### QUEER THEORY

A theory deconstructing sexuality & viewing it as a discursive social construction, and therefore fluid, plural, and continually negotiated rather than a natural or fixed identity

### CRITICAL RACE THEORY

A theory that recognizes racism is engrained in the fabric of society, with particular attention to structural racism, institutional racism, and how the law and legal traditions adversely affect people of color

### ANTI-COLONIAL THEORY

A theory emphasizing resistance to oppressive political, economic, and cultural forces created by colonial power via advocacy for restoration of local control









# Why is CT The Topic of a Sunday School Class?

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- CT represents a worldview (a way of thinking about life and morality) that is incompatible with Biblical Christianity.
  - It offers different answers to fundamental questions of life that define a “worldview.”
- The worldview of CT is based on (at least) five lies.

Worldview Questions	Christianity	Critical Theory
Who are we? What gives us meaning?	God. Created in the image of God	The position in society of the groups we belong to: oppressor vs. oppressed
What is our fundamental problem?	<b>Sin</b> : All <b>individuals</b> have sinned	<b>Systemic power</b> : <b>Groups</b> oppress other groups
What is our ultimate hope?	Redemption through faith in Jesus Christ	Social liberation, freedom from oppression
What is our ultimate moral responsibility?	To love God and to love others	<b>Activism</b> : to dismantle structures of power & oppression
What is our ultimate purpose?	To glorify God	To create a utopian society free of oppression

The worldview of CT is dangerous for three reasons (at least)

- **First**, and foremost, the worldview of CT is based on lies.
- **Second**, your worldview shapes your **morality**: what you believe is sinful and what is sacred, your **values**, your **sense of ethics**, your sense of **responsibility**, your ideas of **justice** and **fairness**, and **what it means to “do good”**
- **Third**, to the extent you embrace the worldview of CT you will have to **abandon or distort** basic principles of Christianity.

# Critical Theory and the Woke Movement

- Video: Is CT compatible with Christianity? (5:50):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAABuCC96tI>
- Video by Christopher Rufo: What is Critical Theory?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfmpnGV0IGc>

# Chapter 1: Where did Critical Theory and Wokeism Come From?

All Roads Lead to **Marx**... Yikes!

