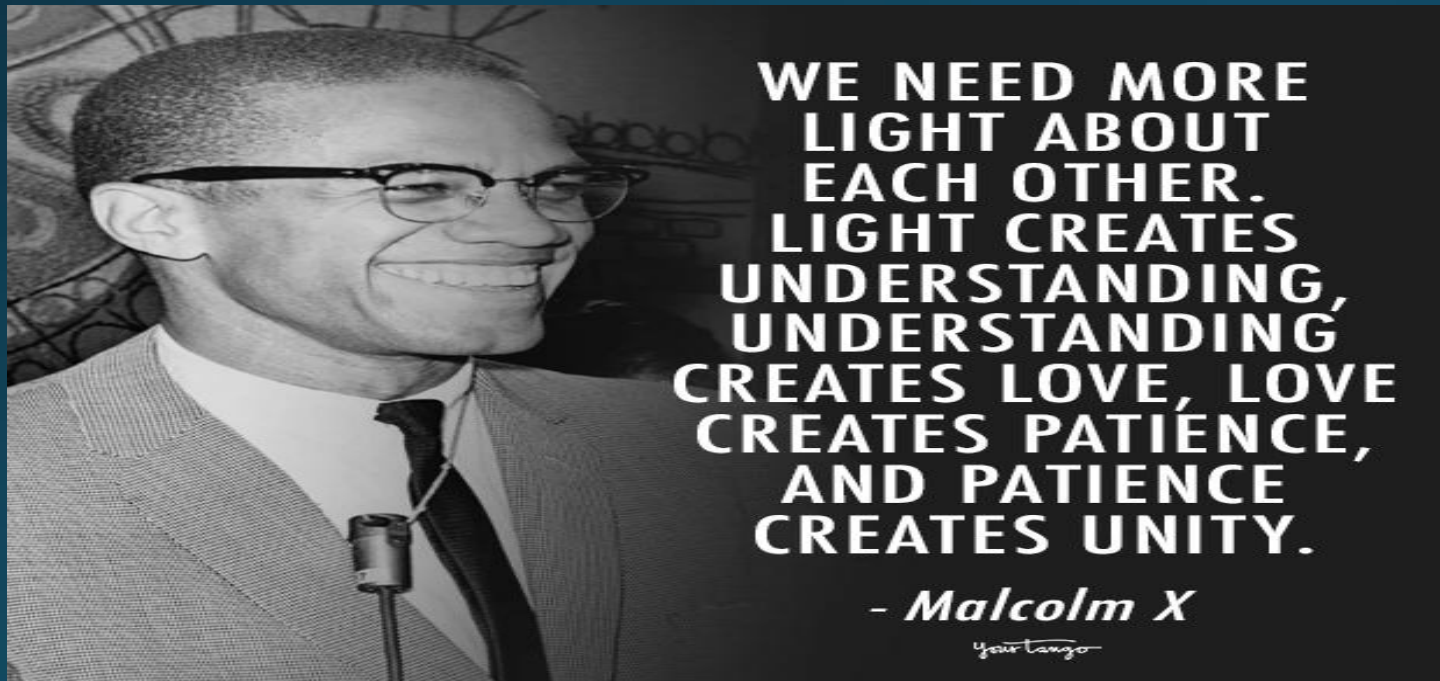


Educating in Today's Political Climate: Demystifying CRT and Using Collective Strategies to Support Colleagues in Troubling Times



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GOALS

1. Increase awareness of specific pressures, risks, and constraints educators are facing.
2. Gain clarity on what CRT is/isn't.
3. Share strategies, resources, and collective resilience practices.
4. Commit to one action (e.g. advocacy, peer support, syllabus redesign, etc.)

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- What's one situation in your teaching (or on-campus job) where you felt constrained or fearful due to politics or backlash?
- What support (if any) did the you have — or what support was missing?
- If you were advising your institution, what policy or structural supports would you advocate for?





Central Tenets of CRT

- **The Centrality of Race and Racism in Society**
 - CRT asserts that Racism is a permanent component of American life
- **The Challenge to Dominant Ideology**
 - CRT challenges the claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy in society
- **The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge**
 - Critical Race Theory asserts that the experiential knowledge of people of color is appropriate, legitimate, and an integral part to analyzing and understanding racial inequality



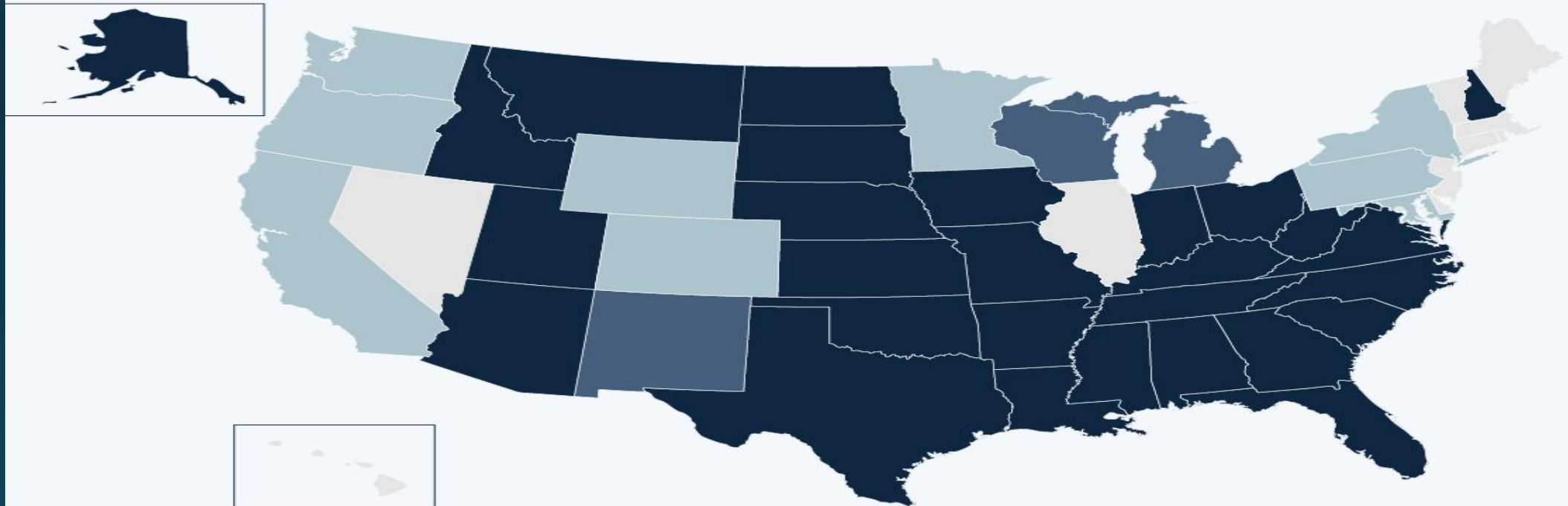
Central Tenets of CRT (Continued)

- **The Interdisciplinary Perspective**
 - CRT challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focuses of most analyses and insists that race and racism be placed in both a contemporary and historical context using interdisciplinary methods
- **The Commitment to Social Justice**
 - CRT is a framework that is committed to a social justice agenda to eliminate all forms of subordination of people

Anti-CRT Measures Adopted by 28 U.S. States

Anti-Critical Race Theory measures
adopted in the U.S. (as of April 2023)

■ State-level ■ City/county-level only ■ School district-level only



Source: UCLA Law CRT Forward Tracking Project

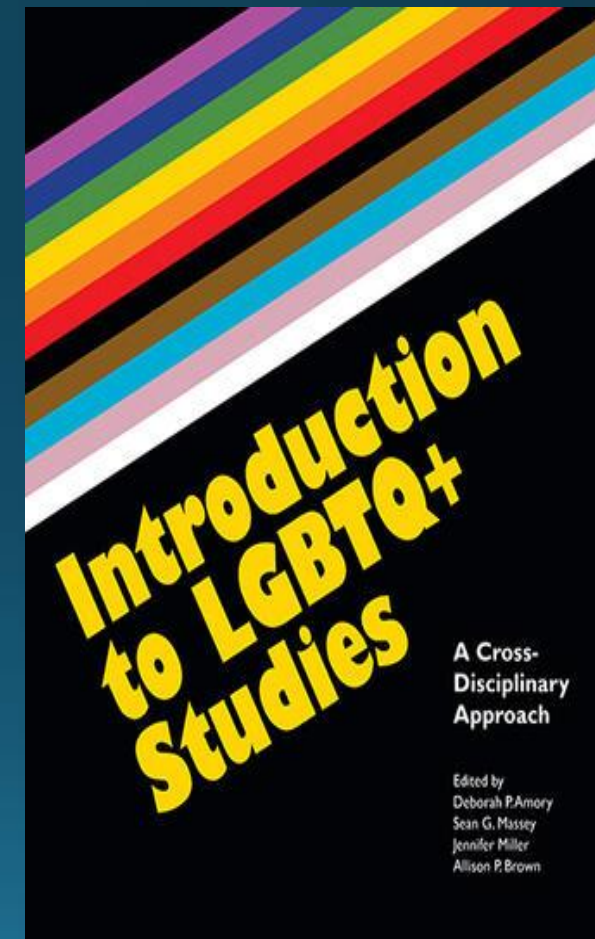


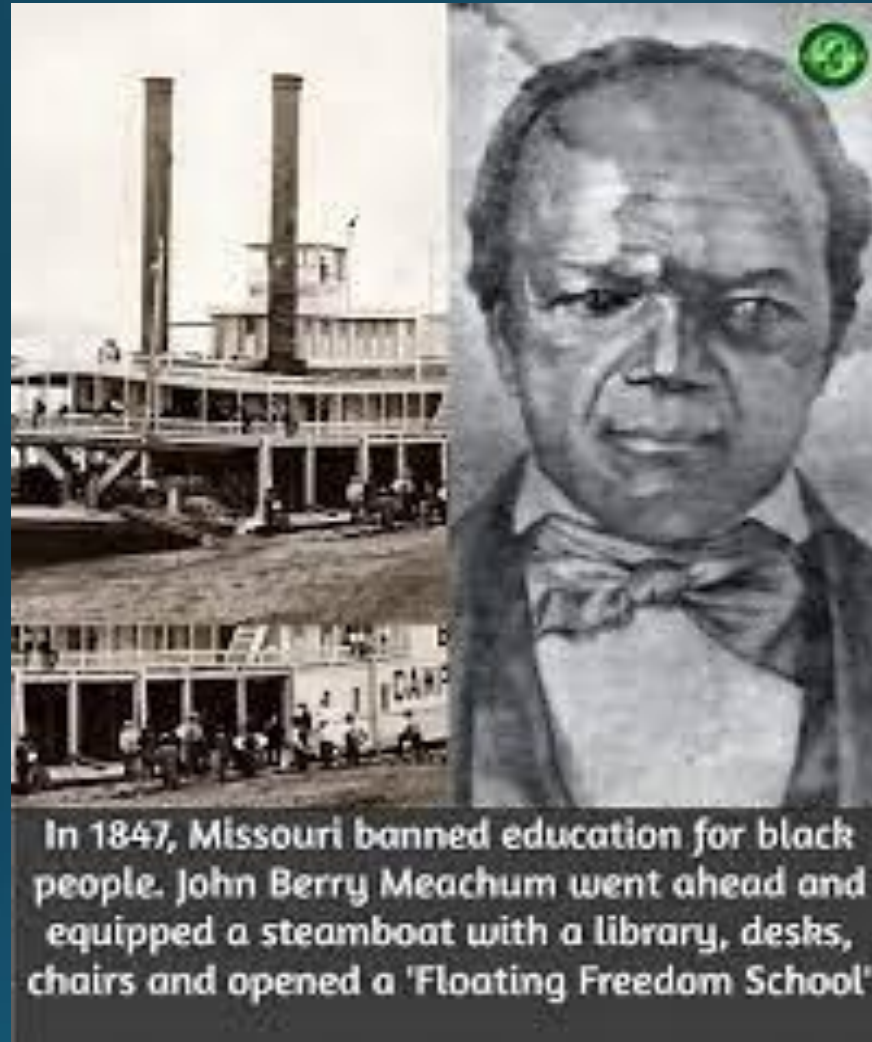
ANTI-CRT BANS AND THEIR EFFECT

- “These institutions’ embrace of pervasive and repugnant race-based preferences and other forms of racial discrimination have emanated throughout every facet of academia.” Dear Colleague Letter, 2025
- 28 states have passed anti-DEI or anti-CRT legislation since 2020
 - Essentially an educational gag order
- Faculty have been met with resistance; contentious classroom dynamics, left feeling emotionally taxed and in need of a support system
 - Many question if it is worth teaching
- Faced with academic violence (being demeaned or devalued in academic spaces), have their critical scholarship questioned, which affects their trajectory to promotion and tenure.

EFFECTS OF ANTI-LGBTQ RHETORIC

- Nearly three-quarters of the LGBTQ+ faculty said the current environment has taken a toll on their mental health.
- Anti-DEI laws have negatively impacted the LGBTQ+ faculty's teaching, research, and interactions with students.
- 36% of the LGBTQ faculty surveyed have considered leaving academia
- A decrease in enrollment, less people willing to participate in research, negative teacher evals, having to omit topics due to divisive laws





- “all meetings of free negroes or mulattoes, at any school house, church, meeting-house or other place for teaching them reading or writing, either in the day or night, under whatsoever pretext, shall be considered as an unlawful assembly.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

- **1. The Stakes for Students**

- What are students losing or gaining access to?
- How are they affected by fear, censorship, or disinformation?
- What do students need most from us right now?

- **2. The Stakes for Educators**

- How has your sense of freedom or safety changed?
- What emotional or ethical tensions are you carrying?
- How do you sustain courage and integrity in your practice?

- 3. The Stakes for the Profession

- How is public trust in teachers changing?
- What happens when teaching becomes politicized or deprofessionalized?
- What must we protect to keep teaching a respected, reflective, and ethical profession?

- 4. The Stakes for Democracy

- What's the relationship between truth, critical thinking, and civic participation?
- What risks emerge when we silence voices or histories?

BREAKOUT QUESTIONS

- What emotions come up when you teach about controversial issues?
- What kinds of support do teachers in our community most need right now — emotional, professional, political, practical?
- What strengths or resources already exist among us?
- How can we design lessons that honor truth without alientating our scholars?



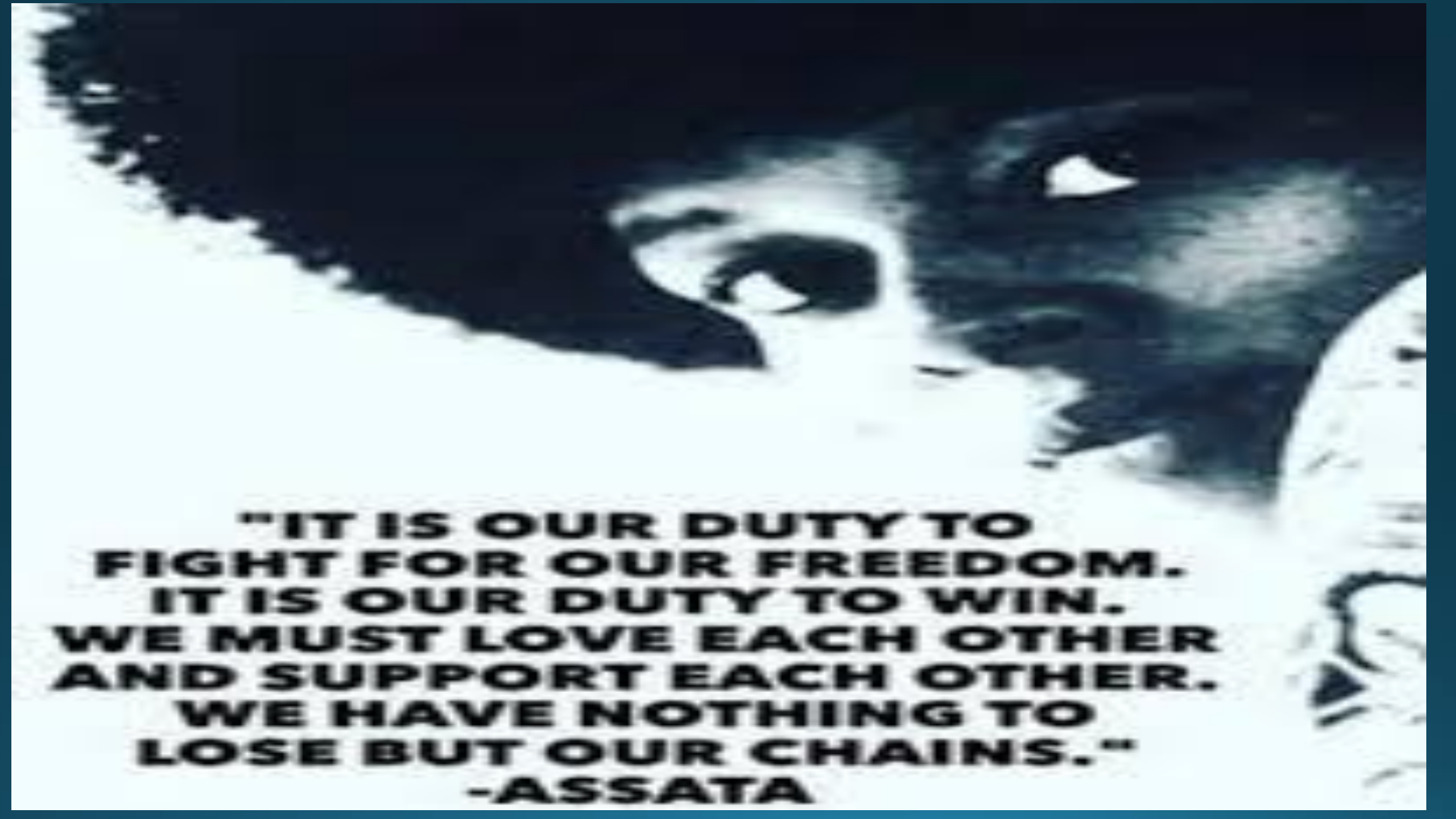
How do we build equity in community — not only in policy?

- Administrators must be ready to demystify claims and ensure the protection of faculty
 - This can be done at the department, college or legislative level
- Be committed to hiring more faculty dedicated to building critical pedagogical practices
- Be invested in building a community of scholars within programs that share commitments to challenging injustices
- What can you do?



Student Reflections

- I wasn't quite sure what to expect from this course. I was excited to learn more about the real history of the US, but what I didn't expect, was that I was going to gain tools that I will likely use for the rest of my life. I now have words and concepts to identify my thoughts. I've always understood that life was unfair. I've always been painfully aware of the unfairness and suffering in our world. Sometimes I felt like I was the only one paying attention or the only one that cared—I felt like an outsider. It feels good to know that I'm not. I feel like I understand the world around me just a little bit better, and that will help me lead a more empathetic, caring, and selfless life. I want to say thank you for giving me a bit of hope, and for giving voices to those who haven't had one in so long.



**"IT IS OUR DUTY TO
FIGHT FOR OUR FREEDOM.
IT IS OUR DUTY TO WIN.
WE MUST LOVE EACH OTHER
AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER.
WE HAVE NOTHING TO
LOSE BUT OUR CHAINS."
-ASSATA**