

“Cancel culture”

Cancel culture is a phrase contemporary to the late 2010s and early 2020s used to refer to a culture in which those who are deemed to have acted or spoken in an unacceptable manner are ostracized, boycotted, or shunned.

"Call-out culture" has been in use as part of the #MeToo movement. The #MeToo movement encouraged women (and men) to call out their abusers on a forum where the accusations would be heard, especially against very powerful individuals.

The phrase cancel culture gained popularity since late 2019, most often as a recognition that society will exact accountability for offensive conduct.

Into the 2020s, the phrase has become a shorthand employed by conservatives in the United States to refer to what are perceived to be disproportionate reactions to politically incorrect speech.

This shunning may extend to social or professional circles—whether on social media or in person—with most high-profile incidents involving celebrities. Those subject to this ostracism are said to have been "canceled".

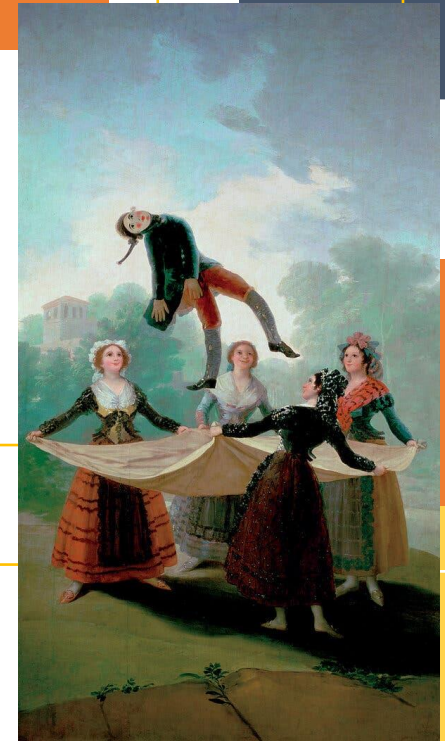
The expression "cancel culture" has mostly negative connotations, often used polemically by self-described advocates for free speech and against censorship. The term "call-out culture" is generally understood to be a more positive framing of the same concept.

Politics and critics

The term "cancel culture" is predominantly used when these responses are to right-wing actions or speech, but is rare when the responses are to left-wing actions or speech.

Some critics argue that cancel culture has a chilling effect on public discourse, is unproductive, does not bring real social change, causes intolerance, and amounts to cyberbullying. Others argue that calls for "cancellation" are themselves a form of free speech, and that they promote accountability, and give disenfranchised people a voice.

Still others question whether cancel culture is an actual phenomenon, arguing that similar forms of boycotting have long existed. While the careers of some public figures have been impacted by boycotts that have been widely described as "cancellation", others have complained of cancellation while continuing their careers as before.



Books on Cancel Culture

[Fahrenheit 451](#) Ray Bradbury

[Literature and the New Culture Wars](#) Deborah Appelman

[Cancel Culture: The Latest Attack on Free Speech and Due Process](#) Alan Dershowitz

[Dangerous Ideas: A Brief History of Censorship in the West, from the Ancients to Fake News](#) Eric Berkowitz

Controversy

The controversies surrounding cancel culture are between the ones who argue it gives a voice to those in marginalized communities, while the opposing side argues cancel culture is dangerous because it prevents free speech and/or the opportunity for open debate. Social media contribute to the rise of cancel culture: people are hesitant to voice their own minority views on social media sites in fear that their views and opinions, specifically political opinions, will be chastised because their views violate the majority group's norms and understanding (spiral of silence theory).

Call-out culture arises on college campuses from "safetyism" — a moral culture in which people are unwilling to make tradeoffs demanded by the practical or moral concerns of others. This contributes to political polarization in the United States but does not lead to changes in opinion. It also leads to self-policing of “wrong, oppressive, or inappropriate” opinions.



Examples of cancelled

Colin Kaepernick, the former NFL quarterback, became a controversial figure when he began to kneel during the national anthem as a form of protest against police brutality and racial inequality. This action sparked a nationwide debate, with many people arguing that Kaepernick was disrespecting the flag and the military. As a result of the backlash, Kaepernick was essentially “canceled” by the NFL, and never played another game.

J.K Rowling, the famed author of the Harry Potter series, has been accused of transphobia and bigotry, due to her comments on transgender rights and gender identity.

Up until the late 1990s, homosexuality was largely taboo, or ‘canceled’ in the US entertainment industry. Ellen DeGeneres came out publicly as a lesbian in 1997, and thus helped to pave the way for other LGBTQ individuals in the entertainment industry.

Donald Trump’s support of the January 6 riot led to widespread cancellation: Twitter and Facebook canceled the president’s social media pages, citing their platforms’ policies against endorsing violence.

Ben Shapiro has become one of the most controversial figures on college campuses. A self-proclaimed “facts don’t care about your feelings” conservative, Shapiro often spouts off inflammatory rhetoric that many students find offensive.

Culture and identity

English anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, who wrote in 1871 that “culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Tylor explains that culture isn’t biologically inherited. Rather, it’s the things you learn and do when you belong to a particular group.

A culture war is a cultural conflict between social groups and the struggle for dominance of their values, beliefs, and practices. It commonly refers to topics on which there is general societal disagreement and polarization in societal values. Its contemporary use refers to a social phenomenon in which multiple social groups, holding distinct values and ideologies, attempt to steer public policy in opposition to each other. Thus a culture war now describes "hot button" or "polarizing" social issues in politics. Culture wars often delve around wedge issues, often based on values, morality, and lifestyle which often lead to political cleavage.

Cultural appropriation takes place when members of a majority group adopt cultural elements of a minority group in an exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical way.



Identity politics: a tendency for people of a particular religion, ethnic group, social background, etc., to form exclusive political alliances, moving away from traditional broad-based party politics.

