

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA
Department of Ethnic Studies
Fall 2008

ES 410: Race, Class and the Law

Instructor: Dr. Elisa Joy White
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Office Hours: Wednesday 11-12 and by appointment
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Class Location: Webster 113
Class Time: TR 3-4:15

Course Description:

Contemporary discussions around legal issues range from the significance of Supreme Court decisions and the constitutional rights of citizens to more superficial popular discussions of celebrity court cases and leading sensational stories on the local evening news. Even as legal discourse varies, it is apparent that race and class are inextricably linked to the court cases and decisions that define American society. This course will examine the role of legal decisions and key court cases in reinforcing and shaping the experience of race, class and culture among ethnic communities in the continental United States and Hawai'i. Additionally, the course will introduce students to the critical and theoretical discussion of race and class in a legal context.

The course has a Contemporary Ethical Issues Focus Designation and will involve the discussion and examination of the forms in which a range of legal cases represent the ethical dilemmas that emerge when considering the often contradictory relationship that laws and legal decisions have with the moral imperatives represented in the United States Constitution. Such contradictions and challenges are particularly demonstrated by the experiences of ethnic communities in the United States. Through the course lectures, readings, discussions and presented media, students will gain a better understanding of the ways in which issues pertaining to ethics are both philosophically understood and applied according to contemporary social norms.

Students are expected to complete all readings and to fully participate in class discussions. Additional class materials (e.g. films, articles, and other related media) will be provided during class meetings. Attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences are permitted. Periodically, students will be asked to present assigned readings to the class to enhance discussion and further critical engagement with the texts. As well, discussion questions (generated by students and/or the professor) which examine ethical concerns will be assigned. Student answers to discussion questions should be outlined and submitted to the professor.

Students are required to prepare one analysis of a current or recent legal case or court decision to present to the class for discussion and debate. The analyses will examine the social and political context of a chosen case and the means in which it challenges, maintains or serves to advance societal standards of ethical treatment. Additionally, each student will be required to submit a 10-12 page (double-spaced, typed) research paper on a topic related to class readings, media materials and lectures (approved in advance by the professor). Further guidelines for the presentation and final paper will be handed out later in the semester.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation – 10%
 Discussion Questions/Outlines – 20%
 Class Presentation (Analysis of legal case) – 30%
 Final Research Paper – 40%

Required Texts:

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic (2001) *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. New York: New York University Press. ISBN: 0814719317

Gordon-Reed, Annette (Ed) (2002) *Race on Trial: Law and Justice in American History*. Oxford: Oxford Press. ISBN: 0195122801

Merry, Sally Engle (1999) *Colonizing Hawai'i*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 0691009325

Tuesday August 26, 2008

Introduction to class

Historical Moments: Race, Class and Justice in the United States

Thursday August 28, 2008

Gordon-Reed Introduction

Tuesday September 2, 2008

Gordon-Reed Chapter 1

Thursday September 4, 2008

Gordon-Reed Chapter 2

Tuesday September 9, 2008

Gordon-Reed Chapter 3

Thursday September 11, 2008

Gordon-Reed Chapter 4

Tuesday September 16, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 5

Thursday September 18, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 6

Tuesday September 23, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 7

Thursday September 25, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 8

Tuesday September 30, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 9

Thursday October 2, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 10

Tuesday October 7, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 11

Thursday October 9, 2008
Gordon-Reed Chapter 12

Critical Race Theory

Tuesday October 14, 2008
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 1

Thursday October 16, 2008
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 2

Tuesday October 21, 2008
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 3

Thursday October 23, 2008
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 4

Tuesday October 28, 2008
Delgado and Stefancic Chapters 5 and 6

Thursday October 30, 2008
Delgado and Stefancic Chapters 7 and 8

Tuesday November 4, 2008
Election Day

The Framing of “Race” and Justice in Hawai‘i

Thursday November 6, 2008

Merry Chapters 1 and 2

Tuesday November 11, 2008

Veterans Day

Thursday November 13, 2008

Merry Chapters 3 and 4

Tuesday November 18, 2008

Merry Chapter 5

Thursday November 20, 2008

Merry Chapter 6

Tuesday November 25, 2008

Merry Chapter 7

Thursday November 27, 2008

Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday December 2, 2008

Merry Chapter 8

Thursday December 4, 2008

Merry Chapter 9

Tuesday December 9, 2008

Additional Reading (distributed in class week of 12/2)

Thursday December 11, 2008

Last Class – Final Discussion and Review

Final Research Papers Are Due On or Before Tuesday December 16, 2008