

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA
Department of Ethnic Studies
Fall 2007

ES 410: Race, Class and the Law

Instructor: Dr. Elisa Joy White
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Class Location: Webster 116
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 two analyses of current legal cases or court decisions 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-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 final paper will be presented mid-semester.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation – 10%

Discussion Questions/Outlines – 10%

Class Presentations (Analyses of legal cases) – 40% (20% each)

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 21, 2007

Introduction to class

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

Thursday August 23, 2007

Gordon-Reed Introduction

Tuesday August 28, 2007

Gordon-Reed Chapter 1

Thursday August 30, 2007

Gordon-Reed Chapter 2

Tuesday September 4, 2007

Gordon-Reed Chapter 3

Thursday September 6, 2007

Gordon-Reed Chapter 4

Tuesday September 11, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 5

Thursday September 13, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 6

Tuesday September 18, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 7

Thursday September 20, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 8

Tuesday September 25, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 9

Thursday September 27, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 10

Tuesday October 2, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 11

Thursday October 4, 2007
Gordon-Reed Chapter 12

Critical Race Theory

Tuesday October 9, 2007
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 1

Thursday October 11, 2007
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 2

Tuesday October 16, 2007
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 3

Thursday October 18, 2007
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 4

Tuesday October 23, 2007
Delgado and Stefancic Chapters 5 and 6

Thursday October 25, 2007
Delgado and Stefancic Chapters 7 and 8

The Framing of “Race” and Justice in Hawai‘i**Tuesday October 30, 2007**

Merry Chapter 1

Thursday November 1, 2007

Merry Chapter 2

Tuesday November 6, 2007

Merry Chapter 3

Thursday November 8, 2007

Merry Chapter 4

Tuesday November 13, 2007

Merry Chapter 5

Thursday November 15, 2007

Merry Chapter 6

Tuesday November 20, 2007

Merry Chapter 7

Thursday November 22, 2007**Thanksgiving Break****Tuesday November 27, 2007**

Merry Chapter 8

Thursday November 29, 2007

Merry Chapter 9

Tuesday December 4, 2007

Additional Reading (distributed in class week of 11/27)

Thursday December 6, 2007

Last Class – Final Discussion and Review

Final Research Papers Are Due On or Before Tuesday December 11, 2007