Instructor: Dr. Elisa Joy White  
Office: 341 George Hall  
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-2:30 and by appointment  
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Class Location: Moore 120  
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:**


**Tuesday August 25, 2009**
Introduction to class

**Thursday August 27, 2009**
Gordon-Reed Introduction

**Tuesday September 1, 2009**
Gordon-Reed Chapter 1

**Thursday September 3, 2009**
Gordon-Reed Chapter 2

**Tuesday September 8, 2009**
Gordon-Reed Chapter 3

**Thursday September 10, 2009**
Gordon-Reed Chapter 4
Tuesday September 15, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 5  

Thursday September 17, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 6  

Tuesday September 22, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 7  

Thursday September 24, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 8  

Tuesday September 29, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 9  

Thursday October 1, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 10  

Tuesday October 6, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 11  

Thursday October 8, 2009  
Gordon-Reed Chapter 12  

Critical Race Theory  

Tuesday October 13, 2009  
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 1  

Thursday October 15, 2009  
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 2  

Tuesday October 20, 2009  
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 3  

Thursday October 22, 2009  
Delgado and Stefancic Chapter 4  

Tuesday October 27, 2009  
Delgado and Stefancic Chapters 5 and 6  

Thursday October 29, 2009  
Delgado and Stefancic Chapters 7 and 8
The Framing of “Race” and Justice in Hawai‘i

Tuesday November 3, 2009
Merry Chapter 1

Thursday November 5, 2009
Merry Chapter 2

Tuesday November 10, 2009
Merry Chapter 3

Thursday November 12, 2009
Merry Chapter 4

Tuesday November 17, 2009
Merry Chapter 5

Thursday November 19, 2009
Merry Chapter 6

Tuesday November 24, 2009
Merry Chapter 7

Thursday November 26, 2009
Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday December 1, 2009
Merry Chapter 8

Thursday December 3, 2009
Merry Chapter 9

Tuesday December 8, 2009
Additional Reading (distributed in class week of 12/1)

Thursday December 10, 2009
Last Class – Final Discussion and Review

Final Research Papers Are Due On or Before Tuesday December 15, 2009