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Race, Law and the Constitution
POS4624, Section 15953
Rm 207 Leigh Hall
Period 1, MWF

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This survey course addresses the rapidly shifting landscape of perceived rights/entitlements contained in the U.S. Constitution for minority/BIPOC/color groups in America. Recent political activity, governmental and media treatment have called into serious question how these groups are viewed and treated by law enforcement, the civil and/or criminal justice system and the detention industry in this country. With an emphasis on examining the historical and contemporary treatment of certain color groups in America, this survey course will provide exposure, rationale and historical knowledge of the perception and management of these ethnic/color groups by the current justice, law enforcement, social service and the detention institutions. The relevant experiences of Hispanic/LatinX Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans/First Peoples, African Americans, as well as various Immigrant groups will be examined, as time and course materials allow.

Although some aspects of the course will address societal treatment, economic and liberty concerns common to all of these minority groups, there will be a greater focus on the African American experience as a microcosmic laboratory to explore the central tenets of this course. By examining certain color groups' unique ethnic/cultural responses to initial and subsequent perception and treatment by governmental and economic institutions, it is hoped that a pragmatic "litmus test" can be fashioned to help the serious student appreciate the supposedly intractable positions between and among minority/color groups and the broader American cultural system, including what factors we have in common, and those that need healing & understanding.

The course will be augmented through revealing/intensive readings, historical-period videos and selected guest speakers. Additionally, diverse research papers and class projects will enable students to perform in-depth historical and contemporary research on

critical societal issues/concerns impacting minority/color groups, and how these evolutionary restrictions have been sustained/fostered/treated by America's institutional systems, over time.

REQUIRED READINGS AND MATERIALS

In the Matter of Color, Race and the American Legal Process: The Colonial Period, A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. (Oxford Press, 1978)

The Supreme Court, Race and Civil Rights, Abraham L. Davis and Barbara Luck Graham. (Sage Publications (1995) [or later/more recent Editions])

Mixed Race America and the Law, Kevin Johnson, (New York University Press, 2003)

Ethnic America, Sowell, (Harper Collins, 1981)

Racism Without Racists, Bonilla-Silva, 2nd Edition (Rowman & Littlefield 2006) [or more recent Editions]

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander (The New Press, 2012)

Stamped From the Beginning, Ibram X. Kendi (Nation Books, 2016)

(Additional photocopied cases, readings, interpretive materials.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student will complete and brief all assigned cases and fully complete any reading assignments prior to each class, AND be fully prepared to discuss the cases and reading assignments next class period.
2. Each student will be expected to read and thoroughly digest all Articles and Amendments to the United States Constitution.
3. There will be two (2) major examinations: a midterm and a cumulative final exam. All major exams will be only given during the semester; the exams will largely be essay-based.

4. There will be several, announced and unannounced quizzes during the semester. These focus-quizzes cannot be made up or taken again. No exceptions.
5. There will be one major class project during the semester. Each student will be required to participate and/or submit the written/class presentation project on time. No exceptions.
6. One long (27 pages) research paper will be assigned during the semester. One shorter research or class discussion paper may be assigned. The research papers must be turned in on time, or there will be a corresponding reduction in the grade earned by the paper for each calendar day the paper is late; **OR** the paper may NOT be accepted.
7. Due to the nature of the course, class attendance and participation is mandatory, and will count toward your final grade. There will be a heavy emphasis on student-teacher interchange and respectful class discussion. { We will learn from each other, as well as from the required/assigned materials. }
8. Class participation/attendance, assigned research papers, (class project), quizzes, etc., will reflect about 35% of the student's final grade; the midterm will count about 25%; while the cumulative final examination will comprise approximately 40% of the total grade in this course. {See <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/> for current University of Florida grading policies. }
9. Each student is invited to consult with the professor **prior** to dropping or withdrawing from the course. **This is an important requirement.**
10. Each student has the individual responsibility to read, comprehend and fully comply with all procedural requirements of the course as listed in this course syllabus, **and** any additional ones made in class.
11. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

ZOOM PRIVACY CONSENT STATEMENT

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with challenges or disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting our [Get Started Page](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
