

Professor Samuel P. Stafford
Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 5:30-8:30 pm
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352-273-2372 (Office)

Spring 2020

Race, Law and the Constitution
POS 4624, Section 18465
Leigh Hall 207
Period 1, MWF

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This survey course addresses the rapidly shifting landscape of perceived rights/entitlements contained in the Constitution for minority/color groups in America. Recent political occurrences and media treatment have called into serious question how major color/ethnic 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 knowledge of the perception and management of these color groups by the current justice, law enforcement and the detention systems. The relevant experiences of Hispanic/Latinx Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and African-Americans 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 minority groups, there will be a greater focus on the African-American experience as a microcosmic example of the course's tenets. By examining certain color groups' unique ethnic/cultural responses to initial and subsequent 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 color groups and the American civil and/or criminal justice system.

The course will be augmented through diverse intensive readings, historical-period videos, field trips 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 a particular color group, and how these restrictions have been treated by the American civil and/or criminal justice system, law enforcement, and the detention industry 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)

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)

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 meeting, and be prepared to discuss the reading assignments next class period.
2. Each student will be expected to read and thoroughly digest all Articles and the 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 only be given during the semester; the exams will 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/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 research 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 class discussion. {We will learn from each other.}
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.
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 the course syllabus, and any additional ones made in class.