

Fall 2017 Seminar: Special Topics in Law & Courts: Race & The Law**Instructor:** Krystle Cobran, JD, M.P.P.

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Course Meetings: T & TR 11:00 am – 12:15 pm, New Baldwin 102**Office Hours:** Available by appointment, Bank of America Building 404

I encourage you to ask questions during class, via email, and during scheduled office hours. Plan to discuss the material we cover with your classmates during and outside of class, and email me in advance with questions you would like to discuss during class or office hours. Consider attending office hours in groups with your classmates so that you can learn from various perspectives.

What is Race and the Law About?

Race is a prominent fixture in our social dialogue. Opinions abound, and discussion frequently devolves into “either-or” or “I’m right, you’re wrong” dichotomies. Within our checks and balances system of government, it is worth exploring the role courts play in how we think about, discuss, and view race within the context of education.

In this course, we will focus on how courts have shaped the role race plays in primary, secondary, and higher education. The purpose of this course is to equip you with the knowledge of Supreme Court (“Court”) case law required to begin critically examining the pivotal relationship between landmark Court cases and role of race within American education.

In the first section of the course, we will examine the Equal Protection Clause and the development of the legal framework established by the Supreme Court for judicial review of legal questions involving race in primary, secondary, and (to a limited extent) higher education. In the second portion of this course, we will examine the dynamic and evolving approach of the Supreme Court towards questions of race in higher education admissions. Throughout this course we will explore connections between Supreme Court jurisprudence (law), politics, and the role of race in education.

What will you get out of Race and the Law?

Foundational knowledge of the Supreme Court’s landmark cases at the intersection of race and primary, secondary, and higher education. Critical thinking skills, exposure to constitutional law theory, and sharpened communication skills.

What will you need to thrive in Race and the Law?

Always be willing to ask, “Why?” Listen carefully to course discussions, including the contributions of your classmates. Please rely heavily on course materials when participating in classroom discussions and submitting course assignments. Commit to reading, writing, analyzing, and thinking critically about the relationship between race, education, and the Supreme Court.

How will your grade be evaluated in Race and the Law?

This course combines written evaluation with oral evaluation and class participation as outlined below:

Exam I – worth 20% of your course grade

Exam II – worth 20% of your course grade

Exams – 40% of your final grade

Paper I – worth 17.5% of your course grade

Paper II – worth 17.5% of your course grade

Papers – 35% of your final grade

In-class Policy Discussion/Debate I – worth 10% of your course grade

In-class Policy Discussion/Debate II – worth 10% of your course grade

In-class Policy Discussion/Debate I – worth 20% of your course grade

In class contributions to daily discussions – worth 5 % of your final grade

Attendance

Attend class prepared to engage and connect. Your presence is a necessary prerequisite to your contribution. Throughout this course, you will be evaluated based on the quality of the content you present rather than the quantity. As much as possible, rely on the course content we have covered to inform your contributions. Exams, course papers, discussions, and class contributions will be evaluated primarily on the comprehensive quality of the research and/or analysis you present. Throughout course assignments, please pay close attention to advance preparation, structure, logic, tone, spelling, and grammar.

Please provide official documentation to excuse unavoidable absences (e.g. doctors note).

Required Reading

Readings come primarily from assigned cases, articles, and media. When possible, I will email links to assigned readings via the eLC. This will be the primary method of my informing you about materials that need to be covered prior to each upcoming class. Additional readings, materials, and media covered in class, or sent via the eLC but not listed in the syllabus are considered part of the required reading for this course.

A Special Note about Readings

Due to the rapidly changing landscape of race in education (particularly within higher education admissions), pending litigation, and ongoing public debate, the readings listed in this syllabus are not comprehensive. This is done intentionally, in order to create room for discussion of current events within the context of the Supreme Court cases we dissect and analyze. As such, please pay close attention to the eLC. I communicate extensively via email, and will include links to readings, and add to the list of required readings where necessary. I will do my best to provide these links in advance of class.

I will also be incorporating excerpts and snippets that will not be assigned in advance but which we will review and discuss in class. As noted above, these excerpts are considered required course materials.

Exams, Papers, and Briefings/Discussions

No less than two weeks prior to the due date of each paper and policy dialogue/debate, I will provide you with the assigned paper or briefing/discussion topic. I will provide specific instructions or additional course details as needed via the eLC.

Grading Scale

The grading scale reflects the official University of Georgia grading scale as follows:

A	93 points or higher
A-	90 – 92 points
B+	87 – 89 points
B	83 – 86 points
B-	80 – 82 points
C+	77 – 79 points
C	73 – 76 points
C -	70 – 72 points
D	60 – 69 points
F	59 points

Race and the Law Seminar Notices**What do I expect from students?**

I expect you to engage in respectful yet vigorous classroom discussion, having prepared in advance by reading the course materials.

I expect that throughout the course, your ability to critically examine and discuss course materials will expand as you build on the material we've covered to make substantive contributions to our classroom discussions.

I expect you to ask difficult questions, and that together, we will look to the material to work through those questions, avoiding the trap of looking for quick answers.

Throughout this course, students will be rewarded for the content of the thoughts they contribute.

The Honor Code

I expect you to abide by the Honor Code throughout each activity and assignment during this course.

Additional Course Details

I reserve the right to update this syllabus as needed throughout the duration of this course. If I do so, I will notify you and provide access to the updated syllabus via the eLC.

Exams and papers will be blind-graded.

To the extent that I am able, course readings and materials (articles, book chapters, video links etc.) will be uploaded or directly linked to for electronic access via the eLC. In the event that a reading is not available electronically, each student is responsible for locating and reading the assigned text prior to each class session.

Course handouts may be provided over the course of the semester. These handouts are part of the course materials.

Where appropriate, I will provide specific pages to focus on within larger readings. These page numbers will be provided via the eLC.

Special Note: This course is heavily discussion oriented. Due to the subject matter covered by this course, it is likely that we will encounter words/dialogue/writing that is derogatory and/or inflammatory. Though we may refer to this material, under no circumstances will insults or inflammatory terms be used when discussing these materials.

Race and the Law Course Schedule

Thursday January 5

TED Talk The danger of a single story

TED Talk The beauty of human skin in every color

TED Talk The power of vulnerability

The New York Times: The Upshot – Money, Race, and Success: How Your School District Compares

The Atlantic – When Class Became More Important to a Child's Education Than Race

The Washington Post – Yale study suggests racial bias among preschool teachers

Tuesday January 10

TED Talk Skin color is an illusion

TED Talk Listening to shame

The New York Times – Readers' Stories about Race and Education

The New York Times – The Good News About Educational Inequality

The Atlantic – The Problem with How Higher Education Treats Diversity

Slate – Appeasing the Ones Who Feed You

Thursday January 12

The 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution (Section 1)

Federalist Paper #78

Executive Order 10730

Thursday January 17

Continued coverage of January 5 – 12 materials

Thursday January 19

Dred Scott

Plessy v. Ferguson

Cumming v. Board of Education

Tuesday January 24

Gong Lum v. Rice

Thursday January 26

State of Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada

Tuesday January 31

Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma

Thursday February 2

Sweatt v. Painter

Tuesday February 7

McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents

Thursday February 9

Brown v. Board of Education

Tuesday February 14

Brown v. Board of Education

Thursday February 16

Brown II

Tuesday February 21

Brown II

Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1

Thursday February 23

In-Class Policy Discussion/Debate I

Tuesday February 28

Paper I

Thursday March 2

Exam I

Tuesday March 7

Spring Break

Thursday March 9

Spring Break

Tuesday March 14

Continued discussion of materials covered in Section 1

Thursday March 16

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke

Tuesday March 21

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke

Thursday March 23

Grutter v. Bollinger

Tuesday March 28

Grutter v. Bollinger

Thursday March 30

Grutter v. Bollinger

Tuesday April 4

Grutter v. Bollinger

Thursday April 6

Fisher v. Texas

Tuesday April 11

Fisher II

Thursday April 13

Fisher II

Tuesday April 18

In-class Policy Discussion/Debate II

Thursday April 20

Paper II

Tuesday April 25

**Exam II
Last Day of Class**