Fall 2013 Course Offering: HI ED 597F (Cross-listed with EDTHP & EDLDR)

Race, Law, and Education: Six Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Cases

This class is designed to introduce students to the legal standards used to examine “race-conscious” policies intended to address racial/ethnic inequities in K-12 and higher education. We will consider the justifications educators have presented to support these policies, which justifications have been convincing to the Court, and how these justifications intersect across K-12 and higher education. We will also focus on how social science research has informed the legal developments in these cases. Over the course, we will cover six landmark U.S. Supreme Court cases on race and education, including Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the Court’s most recent decision on K-12 voluntary desegregation policies, Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 (2007), and the Court’s forthcoming opinion on affirmative action in higher education, Fisher v. University of Texas (2013).

The course will inform graduate students who, as educators, administrators or researchers, will decide, implement, or otherwise be involved with the wide expanse of policies and practices that target racial inequity in K-12 and postsecondary education. The aim is to provide practitioners and researchers with an understanding of how to operate within current legal standards and the tools with which to inform future developments in law and educational practices.

The course is especially timely as the U.S. Supreme Court is scheduled to issue a decision this summer regarding the constitutionality of affirmative action in higher education in Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin. The class will offer you the tools to better understand the implications of the Court’s decision for your future practice as an educator, administrator, researcher, or policymaker.

Liliana M. Garces is a new faculty member with the Education Policy Studies Department as an Assistant Professor in Higher Education and a Research Associate in the Center for the Study of Higher Education within the College of Education. Her research lies at the intersection of social science fields and law to inform policies that may assist educators, address socioeconomic and racial/ethnic inequities in K-12 and postsecondary education. She has written on the use of social science evidence in court decisions and examined the impact of state law and court cases related to affirmative action on the representation of students of color in graduate education. She has also represented hundreds of social science researchers who have filed friend-of-court briefs in two separate U.S. Supreme Court cases that have examined the constitutionality of race-conscious policies in higher education (Fisher v. University of Texas) and in K-12 schools (Parents v. Seattle School District No. 1, 2007). Prior to faculty life in higher education, Dr. Garces worked as a civil rights lawyer and a judicial clerk in federal district court. She holds a doctorate in education from Harvard University and a juris doctor from the University of Southern California School of Law.