A Reader on Race, Civil Rights, and American Law



A Reader on Race, Civil Rights, and American Law

A Multiracial Approach

Edited By

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Prologue and Acknowledgments

This reader offers a range of legal literature analyzing major issues of race and civil rights in the modern United States. Previous scholarship in this field has tended to focus on the relationship between whites and African Americans. Modern social life, however, has become considerably more complex, particularly with the changing demographics of the twenty-first century. As this book goes to press, for example, Census 2000 showed that Latino numbers approximate that of African Americans, and they soon will become the largest minority group in the United States.

As influential sociologist Nathan Glazer has emphatically declared, "we are all multiculturalists now." NATHAN GLAZER, WE ARE ALL MULTICULTURALISTS NOW (1997). Premised on this principle, the anthology considers race and civil rights issues from a wide range of minority perspectives and offers readings from African American, Asian American, Latina/o, and Native American perspectives on the pressing civil rights issues of our day.

This book is geared toward law school classes focusing on civil rights and race relations. We have prepared the anthology with the intent that it could be appropriate as a reader for a seminar or as a supplement to a constitutional law, civil rights, or race and the law casebook. It also aims to appeal to a more general audience in Sociology, Ethnic Studies, African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Chicano/a and Latino/a Studies, Native American Studies, and other courses focusing on issues of law, race, and civil rights.

The anthology includes the following chapters:

- 1. Concepts of Race: Biological Reality or Social Construction?
- 2. Histories of Race and Racism: The Constant of White Supremacy
- 3. The Anti-Discrimination Laws
- 4. Affirmative Action
- 5. Criminal Justice
- 6. Hate Speech
- 7. Race and Immigration Law
- 8. The Intersection of Race and Gender
- 9. Racial Complexities
- 10. The Pursuit of Racial Justice: What Can Be Done?
- 11. Racial Minorities in Legal Academia

To guide the reader, each chapter includes an introduction outlining that section's subject matter. Questions after the sections focus attention on difficult issues and problems identified in the readings.

Unfortunately, page constraints made it impossible to offer more extensive coverage of the many fascinating issues in the field of race, civil rights, and the law. Nor could we include excerpts of the scholarship of all of the many prominent authors in the field. Nonetheless, the selections introduce current issues and identify the perspectives of different minority groups. In addition, the chapters include lists of suggested readings that allow the reader to pursue studies of particular issues, and related topics, in greater detail.

The authors thank the many authors and copyright holders who granted permission to reprint edited versions of their work. We also acknowledge the research assistance provided by the following dedicated students at Southern Methodist, Jessica R. Brown, class of 2002; at UC Davis, Kristi Burrows, class of 2002; and at Wake Forest Ahmad Washington, class of 2000, and Kelly E. Motycka, class of 2002. We also express gratitude for the secretarial and computer support provided by Carolyn Yates, Deborah Seiter, and R.J. Smith of Southern Methodist; by Brigid Jimenez, Glenda McGlashan, Beth House, Kristi Case, Paula Buchignani, Sue Williams, Ann Graham, and Sara Buck of UC Davis; and by Beverly Marshall of Wake Forest.

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