Ethnic Studies 456
Racism and Ethnicity in Hawai‘i

2014 Summer Session II
July 7, 2014 – August 14, 2014
Instructor: Willy Kauai
Cross-listed w/ SOC 456
MTWRF, 10:30AM – 11:45AM
MIL 101
CRN: 96795

Course Description:
The complexities of race and ethnicity in the Hawaiian Islands are unlike anywhere else in the world. Yet despite such complexities, societal relations in the islands are often portrayed simply as a multi-ethnic paradise, a place where everyone gets along and racial harmony prevails amidst a diverse range of cultures and peoples. While certain aspects of this narrative may seem convincing, it does not take much to see that this prevailing view is hampered by many contradictions and long standing problems that reach far back into the history of these Islands. With this in mind, the aim of this class is to provide a historical survey of the changing terrain of racism and ethnicity in Hawai‘i in order to better understand the dominant role that these social constructs have played in shaping Island life. To do this, we will examine the local and global institutions that contributed to the formation of racism and ethnicity in the islands, including the role of Hawai‘i as a central fixture within the Asia-Pacific region since the turn of the 18th century. The course will emphasize the experiences of Hawai‘i’s Aboriginal, Asian and White populations. These ethnic groups and their relations are examined because each experience represents a non-traditional pattern of ethnic and race relations in the world. We also focus on these ethnic groups to understand the system of social inequality that persists in the Hawaiian Islands today and to see how these inequalities are disproportionately distributed. Particular attention is paid to the intersections of law and its role in ordering race and ethnic relations during two distinct eras in Hawaii’s history—before and after the imposition of US rule in 1898.

For more information, contact Willy Kauai at kauai@hawaii.edu