LAWYERS CANNOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE AMERICAN LEGAL LANDSCAPE without studying the impact of race.

The Law School founded the Center for the Study of Race and Law in 2003 to provide opportunities for students, scholars, practitioners and community members to examine and exchange ideas related to race and law through lectures, symposia and scholarship.

The center also coordinates with the Law School to offer a concentration of courses on race and law, and serves as a resource for faculty whose teaching or scholarship addresses subjects related to race.

CURRICULUM Virginia offers courses in civil rights and anti-discrimination law, but equally important is a wide array of courses in constitutional law and history. These offerings reflect the ways in which the struggle for civil rights shaped — and continues to shape — our country and institutions.

EACH YEAR THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RACE AND LAW BRINGS A VISITING PROFESSOR TO TEACH A SHORT COURSE. PAST VISITORS INCLUDE:

- RICHARD BANKS, Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor of Law, Stanford Law School
- DOROTHY BROWN, professor of law, Emory Law School
- DEVON CARBADO, professor of law and former vice dean of the faculty, UCLA School of Law
- ADRIENNE DAVIS, professor of law and vice provost at Washington University in St. Louis
- MICHAEL KLARMAN, Kirkland & Ellis Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

BEFORE BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION, the early civil rights movement explored avenues to create equality for African-Americans that have mostly been abandoned today, argues DEAN RISA GOLUBOFF in her groundbreaking book on the history of civil rights law.

"The Lost Promise of Civil Rights" explores the fight for black economic and labor rights from the 1930s until the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing "separate but equal" schools. The decision set the stage for looking at race through the lens of integration in education. The result of abandoning this path to civil rights, Goluboff claims, is an inability to resolve the troubling legacy of racial economic inequality that remains today.

"Brown isn’t only the end of segregation, it’s the end of an era of experimentation. In pushing us in that one direction, we lose the other possible directions that had existed before Brown. And in particular we lose images of civil rights and civil rights claims that were more concerned with economics, that were more concerned with material inequality than with stigma or classifications on their own."

PROFESSOR KIM FORDE-MAZRUI leads the CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RACE AND LAW. His scholarship focuses on equal protection, especially involving race and sexual orientation, and has addressed issues such as affirmative action, remedies for past discrimination, racial profiling, and the role of race in juries and adoption.

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EXPLORING RACE THROUGH DISCUSSION

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RACE AND LAW and other Law School organizations often host speakers and discussions that touch on race and law.

COURSES AND SEMINARS

- Constitutional History I: American Revolution to 1865
- Constitutional History II: The Twentieth Century
- Crime and Punishment
- In American History
- Criminal Adjudication
- Criminal Investigation
- Criminal Procedure
- Survey
- Employment
- Discrimination
- Family Law
- Immigration Law
- International Human Rights Law
- Judicial Role in American History
- Land Use Law
- Native American Law
- Race and Law
- Racial Justice and Law
- Social Science in Law
- Urban Law and Policy

CLINICS

- Immigration Law Clinic
- International Human Rights Law Clinic

As president of the SOUTHERN POVERTY LEGAL CENTER, alumnus RICHARD COHEN ’79 has confronted the most challenging problems in civil rights and social justice. Since joining the center in 1986 as its legal director, Cohen has battled hate groups fueled by changing demographics and immigration, and has defended legal measures designed to promote racial equality before the U.S. SUPREME COURT.

“A lawsuit summons people before a neutral arbiter and forces them to answer,” Cohen said. “That is an incredible thing, and lawyers are incredibly powerful people by virtue of being able to summon people and make them accountable to the law, it’s the thing that makes our country great and has moved the social agenda.”

“ALMOST ANYTHING THAT’S HAPPENED IN CIVIL RIGHTS TOUCHES ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1866.”

LOOKING BACK
TO THE NATION’S FIRST
LAW PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS

After the end of slavery offers fresh insight into lingering questions still debated today. PROFESSOR GEORGE RUTHERGLEN says in his book, “Civil Rights in the Shadow of Slavery” examines the legacy of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, a law passed by Congress soon after the Civil War ended.

“One of the things that really surprised me in working on this book is how central provisions of the act are to continuing controversies,” Rutherglen said. “Almost anything that’s happened in civil rights touches on the Civil Rights Act of 1866.”

As an expert in critical race theory, UCLA LAW PROFESSOR CHERYL HARRIS recently discussed how race and class became competing legal arguments for addressing inequality.

CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEER MORRIS DEES, founder of the SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER, discussed the fight for racial and social justice in the South during the 1960s and 1970s, and challenges that remain today.

H. TIMOTHY LOVELACE, an Indiana University law professor and 2006 UVA Law graduate, recently spoke in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

UCLA LAW PROFESSOR CHERYL HARRIS

CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEER MORRIS DEES

H. TIMOTHY LOVELACE

As a Civil Rights pioneer and co-founder of the SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER, Morris Dees has worked tirelessly to fight for racial and social justice. He is joined by UCLA Law professor Cheryl Harris. Harris recently discussed the importance of critical race theory in addressing inequality.

H. Timothy Lovelace, an Indiana University law professor and 2006 UVA Law graduate, recently spoke in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.