Race and Sex in the Origins of Federal Immigration Law

Prof. Julian Lim
History

I am currently working on a book about marriage priorities in U.S. immigration law. I would like assistance with research about the 1875 Page Act, which included a restriction on the immigration of women coming for "lewd and immoral practices." The Act is typically understood as a minor precursor to the more infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, but I am interested in exploring how debates over Chinese marital practices (which included second wives and concubinage) shaped the passage of the Page Act, and the kinds of marital claims that Chinese women and men made to gain entry into the United States.

Research assistant’s duties:
The student will help with literature review and primary research of documents tracing the legislative history of the act, the language of the act itself, and how immigration officials enforced the act to exclude Chinese women (and eventually European and Mexican women). The duties may include significant time spent in the Hayden library, or the law library downtown (if transportation is available).

Required skills or qualifications:
Intellectual curiosity, ability to receive directions and work independently; Chinese or Spanish language skills a plus

Skills student will acquire:
Students will acquire a deeper understanding of immigration history and law. Student will gain skills in historical and legal research, critical analysis, and written and oral communication. Previous undergraduate research assistants have gone on to present their own research posters at university research events, and have gone on to law school.