Undergraduate Research Opportunity

PROJECT

Aliens and Empire: Immigration and the Expansion of U.S. Borders

Prof. Julian Lim
History

This project, “Aliens and Empire: Immigration and the Expansion of U.S. Borders,” will explore and denaturalize key assumptions about U.S. sovereignty and the sanctity of borders that many take for granted today. Focusing on a particular Supreme Court case from 1889 that established Congress’ power to set immigration law as it sees fit, this project analyzes the broader historical context in which U.S. immigration law was federalized. It examines questions of territory, sovereignty, and borders that Americans debated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and places the development of federal immigration law in conversation with federal Indian law and the expansion of U.S. borders and empire at the turn of the twentieth century. Geographically, the project connects the U.S.-Mexico border region to the American West more broadly, as well as to the Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba.

STUDENT

Research assistant’s duties:
The student research will help organize, convert, and index images of archival sources that have been collected from research travel. The student will produce a detailed index and report of the sources and make them easily accessible for use by Dr. Lim. Depending on progress and language skills, the student may also be asked to conduct research online and in libraries for additional sources.

Required skills or qualifications:
Must be organized, moderately comfortable working with common Mac software (Notes, Adobe, etc.). Spanish, French, or Chinese language skills a plus, but not required.

Skills student will acquire:
Training in legal and social history; experience working with primary sources; a deeper understanding of U.S. history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; deeper understanding of U.S. immigration law; exposure to federal Indian law and territorial law in the Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. The student will also be encouraged to make use of any reviewed sources for their own research projects.

TEMPE

Hours required p/week: 9
Credits anticipated: 3