

Asian Americans and the Law  
ASA 155

The law critically shapes Asian American community formation, everyday life and future possibilities. How Asian Americans earn a livelihood, where they can live, who they can love and even how they identify has been determined by legislation and administrative policies including those governing immigration and citizenship, employment and land ownership, residency and segregation, miscegenation (i.e., inter-racial marriage), and more. At the same time, Asian Americans have played a crucial role in shaping the law both individually and collectively. How U.S. law and Asian Americans mutually constitute each other will be examined in this course. We will read actual texts of laws, excerpts of legislative debates and judicial opinions as well as law review articles, academic texts and other readings on topics mentioned above as well as colonialism and self-determination, discrimination, internment and reparations, affirmative action and others. Though we will examine law from an historical perspective, we will also proceed thematically. Throughout the course, every effort will be made to connect key moments in Asian American legal history to contemporary concerns. Moreover, the course will connect and relate Asian American legal history to the legal history of other racialized minorities. The course will also be mindful of attending to questions of class, gender, sexuality and other forms of social difference and they also play a role in construction of law.

**Learning Objectives:**

- gain a basic familiarity with important policies, laws, legislative and judicial processes and decisions that have affected Asian Americans
- develop a critical understanding of the law using critical ethnic studies/critical race and cultural studies approaches
- connect and relate the experience of Asian Americans to other racialized minority groups
- acquire new research and other skills
- master the comprehension and critique of scholarly texts

**Event “Press Release” (10%):** Attend one event relevant to contemporary Asian American issues and write a one-page “press release” which is to be type-written, double-spaced and in 12pt-font. The event can be cultural, political, or social. Please use the following resource for tips on how to write a press release (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-to-write-a-press-release-with-examples/>). The purpose of this assignment is not only to get you engaged in learning beyond the classroom but also to develop rudimentary skills in press release writing, which is often required of people who work in community-based organizations, non-profits or the world of policy and politics. Groups often write press releases following an event so this is good practice for you. You are also to attach some kind of “proof” of event attendance (i.e. flyer, signature from organizer, etc.) to get the full credit. WITHIN ONE WEEK OF EVENT.

**Attendance and Participation (20%)** You are expected to attend every class. In addition, you are to submit **QuIP Cards** at the beginning of every class session, beginning in week 2. You are to submit 9 “QuIPs” over the course of the quarter. “QuIP” stands for “Question,” “Interest”

and “Problem.” All QuIPs are to be submitted on INDEX CARDS (no exceptions. I will not accept half sheets of paper or other kinds of submissions). You may submit a question of the assigned readings (perhaps you don’t understand the author’s argument, or perhaps you need more background information on the topic), you can identify something you find interesting in the reading (maybe you learned a fact that you didn’t know about before), OR you can raise a problem that you have with the reading (perhaps the author makes a claim that you don’t agree with or maybe the author’s claim makes you uncomfortable in some way). You are to write no more than a few (2-3) sentences. On each QuIP card write your name, section number, date, and cite the reading that you are discussing.

**Leading Class Discussion (20%)** You will be in charge of the class discussion of assigned readings on an assigned date. On your assigned day, you need summarize the readings, prepare questions for discussion, and lead the discussion. To prepare for your discussion you are expected to submit a 3-4 page reflection paper on the assigned readings for the day. This paper can also serve as your “script” for the class discussion (approximately 6-8 minutes worth of discussion). The reflection papers should not simply summarize the readings. Rather the papers should PRESENT QUESTIONS raised by the texts and students’ CRITICAL REFLECTIONS on the readings. As a result, each student must provide 2-3 discussion questions on the assigned readings as part of the assignment. These papers are not journal responses, so the writing should not be informal. The assignment involves both oral and written components. Your final grade for the assignment will be a combination of both components (50% each). The written reflection pieces must be emailed to me by 5PM on the day PRIOR to the class for which the reading is assigned. If your paper is submitted after the deadline, points will be penalized from your written grade for the assignment. Failure to complete this assignment will result in a “F” grade for this part of assignment. To receive credit for the oral component, you MUST attend the class in which we will discuss your reading selection AND be prepared to discuss the reading based on your reflection paper, in response to other students’ questions or comments, and/or questions from me about the reading. If you fail to attend the class session for this assignment, you will receive a “F” grade for this part of the assignment

**Group Work (20%):** You will be assigned a group for the quarter. You will be encouraged to sit near them during class. Your main task as a group will be to interview an Asian American activist who was active in campaigns to contest the series of anti-immigrant, anti-people of color ballot initiatives (i.e. 187, 209, 227 and the like) passed by the California electorate in the 1990s or engaged in anti-war or immigrant rights’ activism in the early 2000s. You will be assigned an individual to interview. In addition to conducting the interview and transcribing it, you are to submit at least five (5) newspaper articles related to the policies, legislation, issues, etc. that your interviewee discussed. You are to submit the audio (or video file) of the interview, the transcripts and the newspaper articles by **THE ASSIGNED DATE**. Further guidance for this assignment will be given to you no later than week 5.

Part of your group grade will include a peer evaluation. Each group member will assign other group members a grade for their participation. The average of those grades will form part your group work grade for the quarter so try to pay attention to the work your group members do!

You will get a "0" if you fail to submit an evaluation for your peers and that will bring your overall grade down.

**Policy Analysis Paper (30%):** By the end of the quarter, you are to submit a 10- to 12-page paper on any policy, legislation or law that impacts the Asian American community. The paper needs to be multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary meaning that you will have to use at least three different research methods (i.e. historical/archival research, interview, and media analysis) OR materials from three different disciplines (i.e. law, history, sociology, literature, etc.) to develop your argument. You should weave in analytic frameworks and concepts we discussed in class or that you encountered in your required readings. You should talk to me about your paper ideas before you start writing. This paper is due **ON THE ASSIGNED DATE**.

**Extra Credit:** You may earn extra credit if you participate in trip to the capitol. You will be introduced to the legislative and policy process at the state-level and link to either the API Legislative Caucus or the select committee on API Legislative Affairs:  
<http://apia.senate.ca.gov/calendarofevents>.

Please see me if you are interested in either extra credit opportunity.

### **Readings:**

Required Texts (to be purchased at UC Davis Bookstore)

- Ancheta, Angelo: RACE, RIGHTS AND THE ASIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
- Espiritu, Yen Le: ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND MEN
- Hing, Bill: MAKING AND REMAKING ASIAN AMERICA THROUGH IMMIGRATION POLICY

Articles to be posted on Canvas.

Look under "Modules" for weekly reading assignments.