

# Asian American Storytelling in the Santa Clara Valley

## The “Taking Up Space” Project

### Overview

This unit invites us to think about the ways that specific places--that is, actual, physical locations--connect to our ideas of Asian American culture. For this assignment, you will work in groups to create a set of resources on a specific Asian American cultural space.

### Background Context

The term “place-making” often connects to urban planning, more specifically envisioning and developing quality public spaces. In short, it refers to the process of creating spaces where people want to be. In this context, it’s important to note that all planned spaces are organized *with intention*. Though many public spaces are designed to invite people in and build community, urban planning projects have also been highly exclusionary to various groups in different historical periods.

To understand the history of AA place-making and AA cultural spaces, we should note that the very place-based terms "orientation" or "to orient" are based on Western perspectives of "the east." For example, here is the definition of *Orient* from Merriam-Webster:

#### ***Orient* :**

--regions or countries lying to the east of a specified or implied point : the eastern regions or countries of the world : east sense 2

—formerly understood to include regions (such as the Middle East) lying to the east and southeast of southern Europe but now usually understood to refer to regions and countries of eastern Asia

For this assignment, consider how AAs *orient themselves* toward specific places and/or how certain places are *oriented toward* the AA community. This is an opportunity to

disrupt and reclaim labels and orientations that other cultures have placed on the AA community.

## Minimum Expectations for the Project

- Complete all required assessments for the project:
  - Preliminary research
  - Oral history interview
  - Narrative
  - Zine
- Thoughtfully connect the project to assigned course materials and discussions
- Work collaboratively with other students from class
- Exercise metacognition by reflecting on your strengths and areas for growth within group settings

# Module 1 Assessment

## Preliminary Research and Oral History Ideas

### Overview

As we continue to dive into the Taking Up Space project, I'd like to stay informed of each group's progress. By the end of this week, you should have completed some initial research and identified some potential interviewees for the Oral History. Please use this Discussion to share that information with me and with the rest of your group.

### Instructions

Each group should submit the following:

1. A list of important facts about your location that your group has found so far and that will inform your narrative about the location.
2. At least 2-3 possible interviewees for the Oral History and why you think they would be good to interview.
3. A list of preliminary questions for your interviewees.

As a group, you should decide which group member will post the response. You will all be graded as a group, regardless of who submits (or doesn't submit) the requested materials.

# Module 2 Assessment

## Oral History Notes and Write-Up

### Overview

At the end of this module, students should have completed their oral history interview(s) of people associated with their assigned place. This assessment gives each group the opportunity to analyze their experience and synthesize what they learned from the interview(s) with their independent research and the assigned course materials.

### Requirements

Each group should submit the following:

- Signed release forms from all interviewees
- A link to the recording or the file of the recording. If you did not record, please copy and paste your notes from the oral history; you can post a photo of your notes if you hand wrote your notes.
- A 3-page write up explaining:
  - Who you interviewed and why you chose them
  - Your major takeaways from the person's oral history that you want to incorporate into your (you should have at least 3-5 main takeaways).
  - Some important themes from the interview(s) and how they connect to your research and/or course concepts

# Module 3 Assessment

## Narrative Portion

### Overview

Now that you've completed your Oral History and done some preliminary research, it's time for the researcher and writer to do a bit more digging. You will need to develop your ideas and create a more comprehensive story of your AAPI place. You should use all the materials we've engaged with in this unit, including the films, images, short stories, and academic articles.

## Prompt

Based on the personal story (or stories) from the Oral History portion and the careful research you've conducted on your assigned place, write a short narrative that explains the history and deeper significance of your place for the AAPI community.

Some important questions your narrative should address:

- Which AAPI community/communities have been predominantly represented here?
- What historical, social, political, economic conditions made it that way for the community?
- What are some important milestones in the history of this place?
- What *deeper meaning* does this place have for the AAPI community?
- How are AAPIs *personally connected* to this place?

## Requirements

Minimum 3-4 pages

Typed, double-spaced with 12pt font and 1-inch margins

All outside research, including the Oral History, should be properly cited in APA format

You only need to submit ONE document per group.

## Zine Portion

The zine is due in person during the last class meeting. The zine will be evaluated on how informative and visually engaging it is.

Each group will give a brief presentation to the class about their zine. For your presentation, they should summarize their place and any relevant context from the narrative portion of the project. They should also explain why they made the choices they did regarding content and aesthetics. For example, what inspired them to put this information in the zine in this way?

Students can present as a group or nominate some people from the group to present the zine.

