UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

November 13, 2001
Bill Schlotter

UCSB Historian to Discuss Race, Gender, and Culture as Portrayed in Western Movie Classic 'The Searchers'

It has been lauded as Hollywood's greatest western movie and blasted as a highly inaccurate misrepresentation of the historical Southwest.

To James Brooks, a University of California, Santa Barbara professor of history, "The Searchers," director John Ford's 1956 western classic -- which starred John Wayne -- is a vehicle by which 21st Century viewers can examine in a new light the issues of race, gender, culture and kinship in 19th century America.

Brooks will discuss his views of the film in a lecture titled "That Don't Make You Kin: The Searchers and Borderlands History," at 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17, in the McCune Conference Room on the sixth floor of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building at UCSB.

The discussion, sponsored by the UCSB History Associates, will follow a 1 p.m. showing of the film.

Cost is $10 for History Associates members, $12 to all others, and includes refreshments.

"The Searchers" is the story of Ethan Edwards (John Wayne), a Civil War veteran who comes to Texas to live with his brother's family.

No sooner does he arrive, than the family is all but wiped out by an Indian raid and Edwards' young niece is abducted by the native Americans.

The conflicted Edwards is an Indian-hater who must come to grips with a nephew who is half native American and a niece who, after five years in captivity, has assimilated into the tribe.

The movie contains revealing portraits of white, native American and Mexican characters, each trying to preserve family, community and identity.

Reservations are recommended and can be made by calling the UCSB Office of Community Relations at (805) 893-4388.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.