

UC SANTA BARBARA

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## **UCSB Conference Examines Sectarianism in the Middle East and South Asia**

Dahr Jamail, one of only a few independent United States journalists in Iraq, is among a group of scholars from across the country that will gather at the University of California, Santa Barbara this month for the 10th Annual Center for Middle East Studies Conference.

Titled "Constructing Sectarianism in the Middle East and South Asia," the daylong conference will examine the concept and evolution of sectarianism. It will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 19, at the Mosher Alumni House on the UCSB campus. It is free and open to the public.

Jamail will give the keynote address in a talk titled "Five Years and Counting: Defining Progress in Iraq." Other speakers include Julie Peteet, University of Louisville; Anne Betteridge, University of Arizona; Laure Bjawi-Levine and Mary Elaine Hegland, Santa Clara University; Aun Ali and Kamran Ali, University of Texas, Austin; and M. Hakan Yavuz, University of Utah.

A fourth-generation Lebanese American who grew up in Houston, Jamail traveled to occupied Iraq in 2003 where he has spent a total of eight months reporting on the war. Currently, he contributes to the Inter Press Service and The Asia Times, among other outlets. His reports also have been published in The Nation, The Sunday

Herald, Islam Online, the Guardian, Foreign Policy in Focus, and the Independent. His dispatches and hard news features have been translated into French, Polish, German, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Arabic, and Turkish. On radio and television, Jamail reports for Democracy Now!, a daily independent news program that airs on over 300 stations in North America; the BBC, and other stations around the world. He also is a special correspondent for the investigative news radio magazine Flashpoints.

A schedule of events follows:

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9 a.m., Panel discussion: "Gender, Power, Ritual, and Sectarian Difference." Alumni Hall, Mosher Alumni House.

· 11 a.m., Panel discussion: "Media, War, and Politics: the Significance of Sectarian Identity." Alumni Hall, Mosher Alumni House.

· 1:45 p.m., Concert featuring the UCSB Middle East Ensemble.

Theater and Dance Building Courtyard.

· 3 p.m., "The 'New' Middle East and its Social Categories: Producing Knowledge, Space and Identities," Julie Peteet, University of Louisville; keynote address, Dahr Jamail. 1701 Theater and Dance Building.

For more information about the conference, contact Kathleen Moore, professor of law and society and director of the Center for Middle East Studies at [kmoore@lawso.ucsb.edu](mailto:kmoore@lawso.ucsb.edu) or (805) 893-7537.

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## **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.