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Lawrence D. Bobo, W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of Social Sciences at Harvard, to Deliver UCSB's Shirley Kennedy Memorial Lecture

Lawrence D. Bobo, a Harvard University scholar whose research focuses on the intersection of social inequality, politics, and race, will deliver UC Santa Barbara's Shirley Kennedy Memorial Lecture on Thursday, May 16, in the campus's MultiCultural Center Theater.

Bobo's lecture, "Postracial Nation: Blacks, Laissez Faire Racism, and a Changing American Population," is presented by UCSB's Center for Black Studies Research. It begins at 4 p.m., and is free and open to the public.

"Professor Bobo's talk will complement and supplement cutting-edge topics discussed in the classroom and in our research," said Roberto Strongman, associate professor of Black Studies at UCSB and acting director of the Center for Black Research Studies. "We are particularly interested in his views on the Obama presidency, not just as a political marker, but as a cultural phenomenon. I am very curious to see how he will address the changing racial demographics of the country and the ways in which he might use these figures and his evaluations to make projections about the future of the country and the prospects of Ethnic Studies in Academe."

Melvin Oliver, executive dean of the College of Letters and Science at UCSB and professor of sociology, said: "Professor Bobo is, indeed, one of the most astute observers and analysts of contemporary race relations in the academy. His groundbreaking research has enabled us to forge deep understandings of how race intersects with politics in the context of widening social inequalities. If anyone can make sense of race in 'post racial' America it is Larry Bobo. The UCSB and Santa Barbara community is in for an intellectual treat."

Bobo holds appointments in the Department of Sociology and the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard. His research has appeared in a host of important scholarly journals, including the American Sociological Review, the American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, the American Political Science Review, the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Social Psychology Quarterly, and Public Opinion Quarterly.

Founding editor of Cambridge University Press's "Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race," Bobo is co-author of the award-winning book "Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations" (Harvard University Press, 1997). He also is senior editor of "Prismatic Metropolis: Inequality in Los Angeles" (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000), which he co-edited with Oliver, James H. Johnson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Abel Valenzuela of UCLA.

Bobo's most recent book, "Prejudice in Politics: Group Position, Public Opinion, and the Wisconsin Treaty Rights Dispute" (Harvard University Press, 2006) was a finalist for the 2007 C. Wright Mills Award. Currently, Bobo is working on the "Race, Crime, and Public Opinion Project," which seeks to understand black-white differences in attributions for criminal behavior.

The Shirley Kennedy Memorial Lecture honors one of Santa Barbara's most outspoken advocates for women and people of color. A political and social activist and Black Studies lecturer at UCSB, Kennedy helped transform the Santa Barbara community with her commitment to social justice, activism, and democracy.

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