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Two UCSB Faculty Members Named to American Academy of Arts and Sciences

UC Santa Barbara faculty members Catherine L. Albanese, the J. F. Rowny Professor Emerita in Comparative Religions; and Anthony Zee, a professor of physics, have been elected fellows of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Their selection brings to 33 the number of UCSB faculty members who have been so named.

One of the nation's most prestigious honorary societies, the academy is also a leading center for independent policy research. Its members contribute to academy publications and studies of science and technology policy, energy and global security, social policy and American institutions, the humanities, the arts and education.

"The American Academy of Arts and Sciences is one of the oldest learned societies in the country, and to be elected fellow is a most prestigious distinction," said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang. "Our campus is honored and delighted that our colleagues Catherine Albanese and Anthony Zee have received such a meaningful recognition from their peers, and we congratulate them on their outstanding achievement. Professor Albanese's expertise and renown in American religious history reflects her distinguished contributions to teaching, to research and to our society. Professor Zee's extraordinary work in particle theory reflects his distinguished contributions to research, to teaching and to our understanding of physics."

The impressive 2014 list of fellows features winners of the Nobel Prize; the Wolf Prize; the Pulitzer Prize; the National Medal of the Arts; MacArthur, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships; and Grammy, Emmy, Oscar and Tony Awards.

The new class includes writers Annie Proulx, George Saunders and John Irving; actor and director Al Pacino; Nobel-winning chemist Dan Shechtman; computer scientist and Coursera co-founder Daphne Koller; archaeologist Timothy Earle; sociologist Sherry Turkle; and UC Berkeley Chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks.

The academy also elected 16 Foreign Honorary Members from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Israel, Mexico, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Albanese specializes in religion in 19th- and 20th-century U.S., religion and American culture, metaphysical religion in the U.S., and religion and healing. Among her many publications are the award-winning “A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion” (Yale University Press, 2007) and the textbook “America: Religions and Religion,” now in its fifth edition (Cengage, 2013). The president, in 1994, of the American Academy of Religion, Albanese is the organization’s American Lecturer in the History of Religions for 2014. She joined the UCSB faculty in 1987.

Considered a leader in particle theory, Zee also specializes in high energy physics, field theory, cosmology, biophysics, condensed matter physics, mathematical physics. The author of several books for the general public and a textbook on quantum field theory, he received a 2011 Humboldt Research Award in recognition of his contributions to and impact on his discipline. Zee joined UCSB’s Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics and the Department of Physics in 1985.

“It is a privilege to honor these men and women for their extraordinary individual accomplishments,” Don Randel, chair of the academy’s board of directors, said in announcing all the 2014 fellows. “The knowledge and expertise of our members give the Academy a unique capacity — and responsibility — to provide practical policy solutions to the pressing challenges of the day. We look forward to engaging our new members in this work.”

The new class will be inducted at a ceremony on Oct. 11, at the academy’s headquarters in Cambridge, Mass.

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.