UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

April 5, 2016
Julie Cohen

The Elixir of Life

Water. It comprises 60 percent of all human beings, and virtually no living thing can survive without it. However, according to author Charles Fishman, most people take this basic necessity for granted.

At the 35th Annual Manley Memorial Lecture at UC Santa Barbara, Fishman, a noted journalist, will discuss a host of water-related issues. His talk, “The Big Thirst: Creating the Water Future We Need in California and Around the World,” will examine how people use water, how they get it, what they pay for it, how they think about it and changes that lie in store in the not-too-distant future.

The Manley Memorial Lecture will begin at 3:30 p.m. Monday, April 11, in 1414 Bren Hall. Fishman’s talk is free and open to the public, although seating is limited.

“The topic of water is so critical, especially in California with its ongoing extreme drought and over-allocated water resources,” said Carla D’Antonio, chair of the environmental studies department, which is sponsoring the lecture along with the campus’s Bren School of Environmental Science & Management. “Yet many people don’t recognize water as an environmental problem. They take it for granted and don’t do enough planning around it. Charles Fishman has done an enormous amount of research on water from a wide range of perspectives.

“He will talk about his experiences around the globe and the need for more data, better management and innovative solutions to the multiplicity of water problems,” D’Antonio continued. “He has raised a lot of awareness about water and as a result

has become a major public figure. In fact, he was invited to the first-ever Roundtable on Water Innovation at the White House last December."

Fishman believes the next decade will see a revolution in water akin to the dramatic changes that have transformed computing, medicine and communication in the past 10 years. "Many civilizations have been crippled or destroyed by an inability to understand water or manage it," Fishman wrote in his book "The Big Thirst: The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water." He added that contemporary society has a huge advantage over previous generations because we have a better understanding of issues related to water and how to use the resource more intelligently.

A Harvard University alumnus, Fishman is the author of two additional books, "The Wal-Mart Effect," about the store's impact on the way people live, and "A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life," which focuses on the power of curiosity, and which he co-authored with Hollywood producer Brian Grazer.

A contributor to the business magazine Fast Company, Fishman was a reporter for the Washington Post and a reporter and editor at the Orlando Sentinel and the News & Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina. He has received numerous honors, including UCLA's Gerald Loeb Award, which he has won three times.

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.