UC SANTA BARBARA

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Jim Logan

Major Achievements

When you study the history of public policy, it helps to have a living laboratory in your neighborhood. For UCSB, that lab is Isla Vista, the teeming, tiny community attached at the hip to campus. The scholar is Elizabeth Schmitt, a senior in the History of Public Policy program in the Department of History.

Schmitt will be one of 12 students to present their senior theses at the annual Undergraduate Policy History Research Symposium Friday, June 2, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in room 4020 of the campus's Humanities and Social Sciences Building. The symposium is free and open to the public.

Alice O'Connor, a UCSB professor of history, said the symposium highlights original scholarship, like Schmitt's, that takes a rigorous approach to exploring relevant issues in public policy. Schmitt's thesis, "Representation Without Taxation: Isla Vista and the Tax Revolt in California," examines student engagement in IV's winding path to self-governance. The unincorporated community voted to create a Community Services District in 2016, its first successful bid to gain a measure of independence.

"Given all the things going on in Isla Vista," O'Connor said, "and the extraordinary degree of student engagement now in the local governance of Isla Vista as well other aspects of Isla Vista life, I thought it was an interesting capstone for a lot of what's been happening this year."

Isla Vista is also the subject of a group project put together by students in History 197IV, a special topic course that centered on the development and analysis of a

survey of residents' economic circumstances. "Isla Vista Students Under Stress" will be presented by Billy February, Andrew Good and Mike Hui.

Other theses were inspired by personal connections, O'Connor noted. Hugo Valdovinos draws on family history in his thesis on "The Bracero Program and IRCA: Agency in a Rural Mexican Town," which focuses on themes of migration, mobility and community-building.

Spenser Eliades Sayre developed an interest in antiwar resistance after talking about the Vietnam War era with his father. His paper, "The Right Not to Fight: Draft Resistance and American War in Vietnam," will be presented in the same session with Nick Jauffret's thesis, titled "The 26th: How America's Youth Reshaped Politics and Won the Right to Vote."

O'Connor noted that the symposium features three students who have won prestigious public service internships from the state of California. Ashcon Minoiefar will go to work for the Alameda County District Attorney's office as an Earl Warren Fellow. Schmitt received a Jesse M. Unruh State Assembly Fellowship and will work in an Assembly office for 11 months.

Paola de la Cruz received a Judicial Administration Fellowship and will work in the Superior Court of Alameda County, also for 11 months. These two fellowships are paid and administered through Cal State Sacramento. De la Cruz also received the Thomas More Storke Award for Excellence, UCSB's highest student honor for outstanding scholarship and service to the university, its students and community.

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.