

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

June 30, 2020

[Andrea Estrada](#)

## Researchers with GRIT

Specializing in topics that range from national currencies to exploding stars to neural circuits in the brain, they are among UC Santa Barbara's most accomplished faculty members. And in a series of lectures through the month of July they will introduce their current research to summer students and to the community.

The series, Ground-breaking Research & Innovative Technology — otherwise and better-known as GRIT Talks — is presented by the Office of Summer Sessions. The annual program gives notable university researchers an opportunity to share their vast and diverse expertise with a broader audience.

The talks are free and open to the public and will be delivered via Zoom. Click on the speaker's name for registration information and to receive the Zoom link.

"GRIT Talks introduce students in our summer programs, as well as other members of the UC Santa Barbara community, to the amazing breadth of research happening on our campus," said Leesa Beck, director of Summer Sessions. "They often inspire students to think beyond the bounds of the classroom — or Zoom call — and incorporate research opportunities directly into their own educational plans."

GRIT's new season continues Wednesday, July 1, with Kate McDonald, an associate professor in the Department of History, discussing "Foot Work: Making Sense of Human Power in the Age of the Machine."

The other presenting researchers, their departments and lecture titles and dates are:

- Benjamin Cohen, a professor of political science and an expert in international political economy, will speak on “Currency Wars: How National Currencies Compete,” Monday, July 6.
- Michael Goard, an assistant professor in the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, will discuss “The uncharted mind: A New Mapping Understanding of Brain Function by the mapping, measurement, and manipulation of neural circuits,” Wednesday, July 8.
- Carolina Arias, an assistant professor in the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology, will speak on “Testing ... testing: The story of how molecular biology, virology and a lot of swabs helped us respond to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Monday, July 13.
- Lars Bildsten, director of the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics and holder of the Frederick W. Gluck Chair in Theoretical Physics, will give a talk titled “Exploding Stars,” Wednesday, July 15.
- Javiera Barandiarán, an assistant professor in the Department of Global Studies, will give a talk titled “Markets for Scientific Advice Erode Trust and Threaten Democracy: Evidence from Chile,” Monday, July 20.
- Tobias Höllerer, a professor of computer science, will speak on “The World as Computer Interface: How Will Humans Stay in Control?” Wednesday, July 22.

Launched in 2013, GRIT Talks is now in its eighth year and is overseen by Lina Kim, director of pre-college programs in the Office of Summer Sessions. The audience for the lecture series ranges from UC Santa Barbara faculty, staff and students to the broader Santa Barbara community.

“We’re particularly excited about the lineup Lina has put together this year, which includes a wide variety of topics by renowned faculty from across the sciences and social sciences,” said Beck. “Many tackle topical issues, such as how science and technology are rapidly changing our world, or work being done by UC Santa Barbara researchers to develop more effective COVID-19 testing.”

Previous years’ GRIT Talks can be viewed at <https://www.uctv.tv/grit/>.

---

## **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.