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Pioneering author of Asian American literature to speak at Multicultural Center

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Nationally acclaimed California author Maxine Hong Kingston, who inspired feminist thought as she shaped decades of Asian American literature, will visit UC Santa Barbara to talk about writing, family and activism.

The event will be “a special glimpse into the backstories and also the afterlives of her work,” particularly “The Woman Warrior” (1976) and the National Book Award-winning “China Men” (1980), said Erin Ninh, a Kingston scholar and chair of UCSB’s Department of Asian American Studies. “Her memoirs are such landmarks in Asian American literature that her family has become legendary along with her. It’s rare we get to see pictures of them and hear more about her relationships with family and writing off the page.”

Kingston said her talk will also cover “some crucial events” in her life, including immigration, the shift of her primary language from Chinese to English and the 1991 Oakland Hills firestorm that killed 25 people and destroyed more than 3000 homes

near UC Berkeley, where she was teaching at the time.

In discussion with Ninh, she will also present photographs of “the old country and the new,” she said. Kingston, now 83, was the third of eight children born to first-generation Chinese immigrants and the eldest of the six born in the U.S.

“Talk Story with Maxine Hong Kingston” begins at 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, in the UCSB MultiCultural Center. The event is cosponsored by UCSB Library and is the first installment of a planned series of [high-profile speakers](#) hosted by the Department of Asian American Studies. [Tickets are free but limited](#); students and alumni of sponsoring departments (Asian American Studies, College of Creative Studies, Feminist Studies and English) will receive priority.

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