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THE Current

Campus + Community

Summer presentations on groundbreaking research are open to all

Harrison Tasoff
June 26, 2024

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Although many students leave campus, UC Santa Barbara is bustling throughout the summer. Among other activities, the sunny season features the lecture series “Ground-breaking Research/Innovative Technology,” or GRIT Talks, which are free and open to the public.

The long-running series invites notable faculty on campus to share their innovative research in a way that grabs the interests of a general audience as well as experts in their field. Each talk is a concise 28 minutes, followed by a half-hour Q&A where attendees can engage with the presenters directly.

This year the lectures will all be held in Campbell Hall, a much larger venue that provides more capacity for the public to join. “This is the first year where we can really blow it up to the entire community,” said Lina Kim, director of academic programs at UCSB’s Office of Summer Sessions, who organizes and oversees the series.

Over the years, GRIT Talks have featured faculty from all areas of research, including STEM subjects, social sciences and the humanities. “We celebrate the fact that research is extremely interdisciplinary,” Kim said.

This year’s lineup spans disciplines from chemistry to sociology to philosophy:

Wednesday, June 26 Joan-Emma Shea, chemistry

“Protein Self-Assembly and Neurodegeneration: Insights from Computational Modeling”

Monday, July 1 Emilie Dressaire, mechanical engineering

“From Ground to Space: Studying Wicking Aboard the International Space Station”

Monday, July 8 Waverly Duck, sociology

“How I Learned What I Learned: Using Interaction Orders to Study ‘Troubled’ Interactions”

Wednesday, July 10 Clifford Johnson, physics

“Black Holes, Spacetime, and You”

Monday, July 15 Aaron Zimmerman, philosophy

Pragmatism

Wednesday, July 17 **Michael Gurven, anthropology**

“Is the U-shaped happiness trajectory a human universal?”

Monday, July 22 **Tresa Pollock, materials**

“Reaching for the Sky – Materials in Extreme Environments”

Wednesday, July 24 **Christopher Kruegel, computer science**

“AI for Security, Security for AI”

The GRIT Talks series was initially developed for high school students engaged in research and coursework in UCSB’s Research Mentorship Program. The highly selective program admits 75 students from all over the world each summer, and Kim wanted to give the students an opportunity to learn about other research on campus.

As the talks grew in popularity, the university decided to open them to the community the second year. They also began recording them for UC TV. Kim is excited that the public will once again be able to attend after participation was restricted during the pandemic.

“We want people to come discover how UC Santa Barbara is pushing boundaries in research,” she said.

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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.