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[Keith Hamm](#)

Talk on California's wildfire crisis kicks off IHC public series

Megafires, minority politics and Indigenous wisdom are among wide-ranging yet intertwined topics highlighting an annual speaker series curated and hosted by the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (IHC) at UC Santa Barbara.

This year's series, *On Fire*, opens with Jordan Thomas — a doctoral candidate in UCSB's Department of Anthropology — as he unpacks California's wildfire crisis in his National Book Award-nominated "[When It All Burns](#)," published earlier this year by Penguin Random House. His talk begins at 4 p.m. on Oct. 9 in the McCune Conference Room, located on the sixth floor of the Humanities and Social Science Building, and will include an audience Q&A and reception. [The event](#) is free and open to the public.

"The goal of *On Fire* is to center political, social and environmental events that have impacted all of us in the past year and made it seem like our existing ways of managing and responding to crises have gone up in flames," said IHC Director Susan Derwin. "We are thinking of the fallout of the California fires and other climate catastrophes and how the inviolability of our democratic institutions has been called into question. Assaults on higher education, the rights of immigrants and reproductive health are having a deleterious impact on our society. In exploring these and other issues, our speakers this year will also consider how we can leverage our collective strengths and principles to move forward into a more just and livable future."

In January, another wildfire-related talk brings UC Davis Native American studies professor and author Beth Rose Middleton to campus to discuss [Keepers of the Flame](#), an initiative between Indigenous fire practitioners, students and community members to recognize wildfire as an integral part of cultural and environmental landscapes. Her talk runs 4–6 p.m. on Jan. 22 in the McCune Conference Room.

This spring, ethnographer Laura McTighe and activist Deon Haywood will discuss the 2012 arson attack that destroyed the offices of [Women With A Vision](#) (WWAV) in New Orleans, and how the nonprofit organization regrouped to continue its mission of improving the lives of marginalized women, their families and surrounding communities. Award-winning author McTighe is an associate professor of religion at Florida State University. Haywood is an activist and advocate for Black women and girls, the poor and working class, sex workers, substance users, and LGBTQ+ communities in the Deep South; she has been leading WWAV since 2005. Their talk, [“Working with Fire: Making Black Feminist Liberation in the South,”](#) takes place on April 30.

On Fire marks the 19th installment of the IHC’s annual speaker series. A full list of confirmed On Fire talks are listed [here](#).

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