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[Keith Hamm](#)

Faculty Research Lecturer Alan Liu ponders 'good' knowledge in the age of AI

As artificial intelligence rapidly permeates the modern world, questions surrounding its merits — Is AI true, accurate and creative? — remain at the center of ongoing debate.

"Right now, so many of us are rushing to form an instant, polarized judgment about whether AI is good or bad, true or false, creative or 'homogeneous slop,'" said [Alan Liu, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English](#) at UC Santa Barbara. "As a society we will need to have the patience to wait for these new communication technologies to be normalized after at least a generational interval. The question is not whether AI is good or bad now; it is how it will be good and bad when it is woven into the fabric of society as normal in personal, work and public life."

Liu will discuss "[AI Virtue: What's 'Good' Knowledge in the Age of Artificial Intelligence?](#)" at 4–6 p.m. on Feb. 9 at the Corwin Pavilion. The event is free and open to the public.

"My talk is about how our judgements about the value of AI, for good or bad, are part of a broad tapestry of knowledge values and social values that is constantly being rewoven," he said. "As the social and workplace formations that hold people

and technologies together evolve, what we value and what we call those values — truth, rigor, efficiency, transparency, fairness, creativity and thousands of other values — also evolve like a constantly changing cat's cradle of strings around the particular social unit."

Liu's talk highlights his award as UCSB's 2024–2025 Faculty Research Lecturer. Established in 1954 and selected by the Academic Senate, the designation is the highest honor UCSB faculty members can bestow on one of their own, recognizing a fellow scholar for outstanding academic and creative achievements.

Previous recipient David Valentine, a distinguished professor in earth sciences and the College of Creative Studies, described Liu as "a leader in the field of [digital humanities](#) for over 30 years, advancing research through his innovative digital projects and his inspiring meditations on new media technologies and information cultures. His scholarship and large-scale research projects have helped to shape and define this field, which applies computational tools and techniques to traditional humanities research questions."

Liu taught in the English Department for more than three decades before retiring in 2025. He was also an affiliated faculty member of the university's Center for Information Technology and Society (CITS) and Media Arts & Technology program (MAT) and the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities and American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS).

In the realm of public humanities, Liu founded [4humanities.org](#), a digital humanities advocacy initiative; led the Mellon Foundation-funded "WhatEvery1Says" project, which applies computational methods to study how the humanities are perceived in public; and cofounded the Center for Humanities Communication to train and provide resources for humanities communicators.

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