

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

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## **UCSB Reads 2026 wraps up with Michelle Zauner's appearance on campus**

Culminating the latest season of UCSB Reads, bestselling author and Grammy-nominated musician Michelle Zauner, of indie pop band Japanese Breakfast, shares the story behind her memoir "Crying in H Mart," the program's pick for 2026.

In her debut book, Zauner explores her Korean-American heritage and her mother's enduring influence, evoking the tastes and textures that shape memory in a powerful meditation on family, food, identity and loss. Her talk on campus, co-presented with Arts & Lectures, will be held Thursday, May 7, at 7:30 p.m. in Campbell Hall. Registration is currently full, but there will be a standby line in case of no-shows.

Now in its 20th year, [UCSB Reads](#) is UCSB's award-winning common book program that brings the campus and Santa Barbara communities together each year to read a common book that explores some of the most compelling issues of our time.

Each year, an [advisory committee](#) composed of UCSB faculty, staff, students and community partners helps the library select an interdisciplinary book by a living author that appeals to a wide range of readers and can be incorporated into the UCSB curriculum.

With the selection of Zauner’s memoir, nearly 1,900 books were purchased for the program’s 2026 season. Of those, 1,800 were distributed on campus, including 524 copies distributed at the January book giveaway launch event.

Ranging from readings and panel discussions to cooking classes and craft workshops, 17 UCSB Reads events, with a combined attendance of 1,126 people, were held over the winter and spring quarters. Twenty-seven classes, with a combined enrollment of 724 students, incorporated the book into their curriculum.

“Crying in H Mart” spent 60 weeks on The New York Times hardcover non-fiction bestseller list. It received a 2022 American Book Award, the 2021 Goodreads Choice Award for Memoir & Autobiography, and was named a top book of the year by publications including TIME, The Atlantic and Entertainment Weekly.

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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.