

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Reads ‘Exhalation’

Blending speculative fiction with philosophy to imagine morally complex worlds, Ted Chiang’s short story collection “Exhalation” is rife with characters and dilemmas that, in the words of Joyce Carol Oates, “linger in the memory the way riddles may linger — teasing, tormenting, illuminating, thrilling.”

The book is the 2022 selection for UCSB Reads. Now in its 16th year, the program that brings the campus and Santa Barbara communities together to read a common book that explores compelling issues of our time.

“We’re looking forward to engaging the entire campus and community around the themes in Exhalation, which are relevant across the sciences and humanities,” said University Librarian Kristin Antelman. “The book’s exploration of humanity’s relationship with technology will have us all discussing, debating and pondering the many questions it raises.”

The program will officially get underway Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022 at 10 a.m., with a book giveaway for students at the UC Santa Barbara Library. From January through May, the Library will sponsor talks, panel discussions, film screenings, book clubs and other events to explore the book’s themes. Faculty are encouraged to incorporate “Exhalation” into their winter or spring courses.

UCSB Reads will culminate May 10 with a free, in-person lecture by Ted Chiang in Campbell Hall, presented in partnership with UCSB Arts & Lectures.

Exhalation is a collection of nine science-fiction short stories written in spare, yet dramatic prose that address essential questions about human life, including free will, fate, bioethics, time travel, virtual reality, cyborgs and artificial intelligence.

Chiang has won more than two dozen prizes for his work, including four Hugo, four Nebula and four Locus awards, and has been featured in The Best American Short Stories. The Oscar-nominated film “Arrival” was based on a novella by Chiang called “Story of Your Life.”

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.