

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

March 10, 2009

Eileen Conrad

UCSB Appoints Three Leading Scholars to Cluster of Endowed Chairs in Global Studies

As part of a major new initiative to build on its strengths in global studies, the College of Letters and Science at UC Santa Barbara has appointed three leading interdisciplinary scholars to a cluster of new endowed professorships focused on the study of global society, history, and culture.

Janet Afary, a distinguished professor of history and women's studies at Purdue University, will be the first holder of the Duncan and Suzanne Mellichamp Chair in Global Religions and Modernisms in the Department of Religious Studies.

A prolific scholar, she studies the national history of Iran and the modern history of Shi'ism from a perspective that encompasses global processes and practices, linking religion and modernity to a broad social context.

Michael Curtin, a renowned media and cultural studies scholar and director of global studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has been named the Mellichamp Professor of Global and Media Representation in the Department of Film and Media Studies. Curtin's groundbreaking research explores how globalization has impacted media industries and cultures.

His recent books develop a new model for conducting transnational investigations in the field of global media studies that moves beyond the national analysis that have prevailed for more than a century.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse, a professor of global sociology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will hold the Mellichamp Chair in Transnational Civil Society Networks with a joint appointment in sociology and global studies.

Nederveen Pieterse is internationally recognized in several fields related to the study of global civil society, including the sociology of development, the political economy of globalization, the cultural dimensions of globalization, and race and ethnicity.

"These scholars are each important and exciting individually, but together they represent a powerful cluster in the area of global civil society that will help us to understand the present and the future of globalization," said David Marshall, dean of humanities and fine arts and executive dean of the college.

The faculty appointments are effective July 1.

Recruitment is under way to fill a fourth Mellichamp Academic Initiative Chair focusing on global authority and governance.

Melvin Oliver, SAGE Sara Miller McCune Dean of Social Sciences, praised the process by which interdisciplinary and interdepartmental groups of faculty from many different departments in the humanities and social sciences organized the cluster recruitment that resulted in attracting such distinguished scholars to the campus.

Afary, who holds a Ph.D. in modern Middle East history from the University of Michigan, is the author of "Sexual Politics in Modern Iran" (Cambridge University Press, 2009), which focuses on gender and sexuality and draws on her experience of growing up in Iran and her involvement with Iranian women of different ages and social strata.

She is also the author of "The Iranian Constitutional Revolution: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism" (Columbia University Press, 1996), which is considered the definitive book on the 1906 Iranian Constitutional Revolution; and with co-author Kevin Anderson, the award-winning "Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism" (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Curtin compares the histories and fortunes of Hollywood, Hong Kong, Lagos, Miami, and Bombay in his upcoming book titled "Media Capital: A Cultural Geography of Globalization."

He is also the author of "Playing to the World's Biggest Audience, the Globalization of Chinese Film and TV" (University of California Press, 2007), an examination of the Chinese television industry; and co-author, with Jane Shattuc, of "The American Television Industry," which is under review.

Curtin has a doctorate in communication arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Nederveen Pieterse's scholarship spans a wide range of central issues posed by global studies.

His most recent books are "Is There Hope for Uncle Sam? Beyond the American Bubble" (Zed Books, 2008); "Ethnicities and Global Multiculture: Pants for an Octopus" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); "Globalization or Empire?" (Routledge, 2004); and "Global Melange: Globalization and Culture" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

He has a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

The Mellichamp professorships were established with an innovative gift from Duncan Mellichamp, an emeritus UCSB professor of chemical engineering, and his wife, Suzanne, to build centers of excellence in strategically selected programmatic areas of rising importance.

Endowed chairs are highly prized academic positions that enable a university to develop more fully a field of study through the recruitment of top scholars and to provide ongoing financial support for enhanced research and instruction.

Related Links

[Mellichamp Academic Initiative Professorships](#)

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.