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Panel Discussion at UCSB to Focus on How Economic News Is Reported

From the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (aka the Stimulus Package), editors and reporters covering the economy have no shortage of topics to explore. Why is it, though, that while one item becomes front-page news, another gets barely a mention?

A trio of panelists will address that question -- and others -- in a discussion on Friday, May 1, titled "From Main Street to Wall Street: What News Gets Reported and What Does Not." Presented by the Center for the Study of Work, Labor, and Democracy, the panel begins at 1 p.m. in the University Center's State Street Room. It is free and open to the public.

Among the participants are New York Times reporter Steven Greenhouse, one of the nation's most authoritative reporters on labor and employment issues and the author of "The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker"; Ann Louise Bardach, an award-winning investigative reporter; and Peter Dreier, the Dr. D.E. Clapp Professor of Politics at Occidental College and director of the college's Urban and Environmental Policy Program.

The panel is a follow-up to Greenhouse's free talk in Campbell Hall at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 30.

"We want to look at subtle constraints," said Nelson Lichtenstein, professor of history and director of the Center for the Study of Work, Labor, and Democracy. "I'd like the panelists to talk about how they project their ideas of the social and economic problems we're facing and what kind of pushback they get from their respective editors and publishers. What articles can they get in and what can't they? And in the context of all of the reporters being laid off at faltering newspapers, what's happening to the news?"

The discussion will explore reporting in a variety of media, including traditional newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. Bardach, the author of several books on Cuba, is also a magazine writer, and she will offer her perspective on that forum as a venue for labor- and economy-related news. Dreier, who has co-authored three books on cities and urban planning, is also a contributor to The Huffington Post, an online news source.

"Dreier will discuss some of the freedoms he has writing for the Web that Greenhouse and Bardach don't have writing for a newspaper and magazine," Lichtenstein said. "He'll also talk about whether he thinks the proliferation of Web outlets makes up for the fact that so many newspapers are shrinking or shutting down entirely."

The panel is co-sponsored by the Carsey-Wolf Center for Film, Television, and New Media and the Capps Center or the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life.

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