

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE *Current*

January 27, 2012

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UCSB Lecture Series to Examine the Juvenile Justice System

The second in a series of lectures examining the juvenile justice system in the United States will take place at UC Santa Barbara on Wednesday, February 1. The series, which will continue through the month of February, is part of an interdisciplinary collaboration of photojournalism, writing and journalism, and sociology courses taught by Richard Ross, Cissy Ross, and Victor Rios, respectively.

Among the speakers are Mauro Bedoni, photo editor at COLORS magazine; Amos Kennedy, an activist printer and owner of Kennedy Prints!; Bart Lubow, director of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Justice Strategy Group; Dustin Olson, chief of the UCSB Police Department; and award-winning documentary filmmaker Karen Grau.

The lectures, which begin at 5 p.m., are free and open to the public. Bedoni and Grau will speak in UCSB's Pollock Theater; and the talks by Kennedy, Lubow, and Olson will take place in Theater and Dance, Room 1701.

The interdisciplinary collaboration itself developed from Richard Ross's photojournalism project "Juvenile-In-Justice," which documents the placement and treatment of juveniles in detention centers and other facilities around the country. Over the last five years, Ross, a professor of photography in the art department at UCSB, has interviewed and photographed over 1,000 juveniles and administrators in the juvenile justice system. Some had been convicted of criminal offenses, while

others were awaiting adjudication.

Ross photographed in 30 states and visited more than 300 facilities, including group homes, police departments, youth correctional facilities, juvenile courtrooms, high schools, shelters, Children's Protective Services interview rooms, and maximum security lock-down and non-lock-down shelters.

"I was working on this project and one of my students told me about a class taught by Victor Rios in sociology," Ross said. "It's all about juveniles in the justice system. So I called Victor, we talked, and I realized we could do something interesting."

The course, which was created through a UC Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA) Open Classroom Challenge, has proved so interesting that PBS recently filmed the instructors and students in action for an upcoming two-part News Hour special on education.

What makes the course a truly collaborative effort is the interaction the instructors have with one another's students. Cissy Ross, a lecturer in the campus's Writing Program, has two courses involved in the collaboration -- journalism and writing for the social sciences. Her students have benefited from lectures by Rios, an associate professor of sociology at UCSB, and by Richard Ross. She, in turn, has drawn on her experience as a former journalist and editor, to speak to Richard Ross's students about the rhetorical interaction of text and photos in their blogs. She also has consulted with Rios and his teaching assistants about the design of writing assignments for the social sciences.

In addition, Rios has met with students in Richard Ross's photojournalism class to discuss sociological research and methodology, and Richard Ross has spoken to Rios's students about his research and the power of the photograph. "It's pretty remarkable," Richard Ross said.

"So many of these kids are interested in gender issues, economic issues, and race, and they're bringing everything to the table," Richard Ross said. At the end of the quarter, the students will publish a book or magazine that will feature their images, text, and research. "One of the important things we're teaching is that if you care about something, you can do it. You can investigate it. You can change something and you can make a difference."

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.