



WALTER H. CAPPS CENTER
FOR THE STUDY OF
ETHICS, RELIGION, AND PUBLIC LIFE
UC SANTA BARBARA

Fall 2024 Newsletter

Greetings for the 2024-2025 academic year from the Walter H. Capps Center!

We are eager to welcome students and community members back to campus, including new cohorts of [Mendell Fellows](#) and [McCune Interns](#), and a new class in the [Civic Engagement Scholars Program](#).

This quarter we are excited to host several [events](#) that are free and open to the public:

- **October 15:** [Dodging the Sisters: Why Queer Nuns Keep Going Viral](#), with Melissa Wilcox (UC Riverside)
- **October 22:** [Election 2024 and Religion](#), a panel discussion with leading scholars
- **November 14:** [Falling in Love with Nature: The Values of Latinx Catholic Environmentalism](#), with Amanda Baugh (CSU Northridge)

We continue our efforts on various [initiatives](#). This year we are foregrounding our work in three areas: (1) repatriation at UCSB and beyond; (2) our emerging initiative on civil rights and religious freedom for AAPI communities; and (3) the continuing development of our project with partners at UC Irvine, the UCSB Reserve System, and several Native nations located in Payahuunadü (Owens Valley) concerning best practices in wildfire management and tribal consultation. Stay tuned for developments on these initiatives and other Center activities.

In addition, we have added many new documents and photos to our archival project, the [Walter H. Capps Archives Online](#). We are digitizing materials from the Walter Capps Papers at UCSB's Special Collections Library for viewing on our website. We will continue to add digitized archival materials regularly, with a focus on Walter's publications and materials from his famous courses on the Vietnam War and "Voices of the Stranger."

We have also added several videos to our [YouTube page](#), including from our Celebration of Walter Capps' Legacy. You can find other videos of past events on [UCTV](#) and [UCTV's YouTube Playlist](#).

We hope to see you soon, and we welcome your thoughts and suggestions!

Sincerely,
Greg Johnson
Director



Staff of the Capps Center

Dusty Hoesly is the Associate Director of the Capps Center. He earned a PhD in Religious Studies at UCSB in 2018. His research focuses on contemporary American religions, specializing in how new religious movements, Asian American religions, and the religiously unaffiliated shape modern American culture. He is co-chair of the Sociology of Religion Unit at the American Academy of Religion (AAR). Dusty joined the Capps Center in 2022.



Nonie Hamilton is the Academic Coordinator of the Capps Center's Sara Miller McCune Endowed Internship and Public Service Program. It is her privilege, each year, to work with a group of exceptional and civic-minded UCSB students, those with a passion for social change and an interest in public service. She has woven together her own public service career working at local, national, and international levels, in the nonprofit and government sectors, on issues of equity, justice, and public health. Nonie joined the Capps Center in 2013.



Gregory Jarrett is a Lecturer for the Capps Center and coordinates our Capps Forum on Ethics & Public Policy. He earned his PhD in Philosophy at USC, and studied environment law at Vermont Law School. He teaches a three-quarter series in applied ethics, including Environmental Ethics, Biomedical Ethics, and Ethics and the College Experience. Greg joined the Capps Center in 2009.



Mitchell Kauffman is a Lecturer for the Capps Center. He has an MBA and MSFP, and is a Certified Financial Planner and entrepreneur. He teaches courses in business ethics and managerial economics, including Wall Street Ethics, Have Ethics Gone Awry, and Ethical Investing to Impact Social Change. Mitch joined the Capps Center in 2016.



Nalika Gajaweera is a Research Affiliate at the Capps Center. She earned her PhD in Anthropology at UC Irvine in 2013, and served as the Senior Research Analyst at the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at USC from 2014-2023. Her research focuses on the intersections of Buddhism, race, ethnonationalism, and gender in the US and Sri Lanka. Nalika joined the Capps Center in 2024.



Advisory Board: Gerardo Aldana (Chicana and Chicano Studies), Joseph Blankholm (Religious Studies), Elizabeth Pérez (Religious Studies), Amrah Salomón J. (English), David Walker (Religious Studies), Mayfair Yang (Religious Studies and East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies).

About the Capps Center

The Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life at the University of California, Santa Barbara, promotes discussion of how ethical teachings and values relate to civic life -- at the local, national, and global levels. We are committed to the fundamental belief that public dialogue and an informed and engaged citizenry are vital to democratic society. Non-partisan and non-sectarian, the Center seeks to strengthen and extend the principles on which such diverse, modern society rests, namely, tolerance and respect for the views of others, the practice of civility, and efforts to achieve the common good.

Please follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [X/Twitter](#)!



<https://www.cappscenter.ucsb.edu/>

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Programs

The [Sara Miller McCune Endowed Internship and Public Service Program](#) is a year-long service-learning program for undergraduate students that brings students and community partners together for personal and social transformation. It provides students with opportunities to engage effectively with the local community on issues such as socioeconomic inequities, education, the environment, immigration, and more. Students connect their classroom learning with community service, translating theory into real-world experience. Local organizations benefit from the support of energetic, talented students who help them to fulfill their missions more effectively.

The [Steve and Barbara Mendell Graduate Fellowship in Cultural Literacy](#) supports fellowship stipends each year for outstanding graduate students in the College of Letters and Science at UCSB whose research or programs of study advance the goals of broad-based cultural literacy and high ethical standards in our participative democracy. Support may be provided for dissertation fellowships, supplemental fellowships, summer stipends, or for special research projects. The fellowships encourage discussion and debate relating to the compelling questions of ethics and values in contemporary public life, and with particular attention to how these questions might be informed by knowledge of history and cultural traditions.

We offer a variety of [Ethics Courses](#) throughout the academic year, including courses on environmental, biomedical, and business ethics; diversity and social justice; and civic engagement and deliberative democracy. This includes the [Civic Engagement Scholars Program](#), which fosters active citizenship among students.

A series of [Public Events](#) at UCSB and within the Santa Barbara community bring well-known speakers on a range of topics each year. Videos of many of our past events are available on our [website](#), [YouTube](#), [UCTV](#), and [UCTV's Playlist](#). Our next events include:

- Melissa Wilcox, Professor of Religious Studies at UC Riverside, presents "[Dodging the Sisters: Why Queer Nuns Keep Going Viral](#)" (Oct. 15 at 5:00pm, UCSB Henley Hall)
- "[Election 2024 and Religion](#)," an online roundtable feat. Anthea Butler (Penn), Julie Ingersoll (UNF), and Joseph Blankholm (UCSB) (Oct. 22 at 5:00pm, Zoom Webinar: <https://ucsb.zoom.us/j/88326468286>)
- Amanda J. Baugh, Professor of Religious Studies at CSU Northridge, presents "[Falling in Love with Nature: The Ethics of Latinx Catholic Environmentalism](#)" (Nov. 14 at 5:00pm, UCSB Henley Hall)
- Check our website for Winter and Spring events—coming soon!

We are also working on a range of [other initiatives](#), including:

- Helping to lead the [UC Disaster Resilience Network](#) (DRN) Campus-based Committee at UCSB
- Collaborating with the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation Project](#)
- Working with Chumash and other Native nations on [repatriation](#) of ancestral remains
- Connecting Indigenous communities with key decision makers in [wildfire science and management](#)
- Programs on civil rights and religious freedom for Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Americans

Make a Donation

A wide range of [giving opportunities](#) is available through the Capps Center for those friends, parents, community members, and UCSB alumni who wish to be a vital part of the Center's future. The Capps Center benefits from annual unrestricted support and major gifts designated for special purposes. Your generosity plays a critical role in our ability to fulfill our mission and is truly appreciated. Every gift counts.