

UC San Diego

# UC San Diego News Center

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## Free Lecture Series at UC San Diego Invites Community to Explore ‘The Good Life’ Jan. 22 to March 5

The third annual Making of the Modern World lecture series examines life as we would like to live it



What is happiness? How do we pursue it? How should we pursue it? And are there times we should refuse to make the pursuit of happiness a life goal? A series of talks from scholars at the University of California, San Diego will answer these questions and more in a free lectures series called “The Making of the Modern World: The Good Life,” running Wednesday evenings from Jan. 22 to March 5.

According to Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Alan Houston, “The good life involves the thoughts and deeds, ideas and actions that express our highest ideals: life as we would like to live it. Not food as nourishment, but food as delight and pleasure; not shelter as mere protection from the elements, but shelter as artistic expression.”

Houston added, “For some, the good life involves the pursuit of philosophy and theology. For others, it is about politics and economics, biology and psychology.”

The first talk on Jan. 22 from Houston will be on “Ben Franklin and the American Dream” and the series will conclude on March 5 with a lecture on “Engineering as a Force for the Public Good” by Albert Pisano, dean of the UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering. Other speakers include Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla, who will give a talk on “Remaking the Modern Research University” on Feb. 26.

The series of lectures is in its third year and is an expression of the ideals of Eleanor Roosevelt College’s Making of the Modern World multi-course general education sequence. The Making of the Modern World Lecture Series is designed to share some of UC San Diego’s greatest treasures—its extraordinary teachers, scholars and artists—with alumni and parents, faculty and staff, and members of the community. In its first season, the series explored answers to the question “what does it mean to be human?” The second year’s speakers and performers asked “what does it mean to be musical?”

The “The Good Life” lectures, beginning at 6 p.m., will take place at the Great Hall, located on UC San Diego’s campus. Speakers and their programs include:

- **January 22, Alan Houston, interim vice chancellor for student affairs and professor of political science: “Ben Franklin and the American Dream”**

Houston will discuss how Franklin and the American dream are often associated with the uninhibited pursuit of money. However, he argues, nothing could be further from the truth and will examine how “the good life” – a life of improvement – was spent by Franklin pursuing knowledge, cultivating friendship, advancing freedom and addressing human needs.

- **Jan. 29, Roger Reynolds, professor of music: “Musings on ‘Good Lives’: Relationships, Sustenance, Aspirations - Truth, Secrets, Boundaries, Purpose, Flight”**

Reynolds will touch upon some difficulties with the Greek philosopher Aristotle’s discussion of the “mere” life and the “good” life. Reynolds will also discuss the various factors that support the kind of life he has have sought, one guided by relationships, sustenance and aspiration. (Please Note: Roger Reynolds’ lecture will be held at The Department of Music’s Conrad Prebys Concert Hall).

- **Feb. 5, Gabriele Wienhausen, associate dean of biological sciences: “College as a Shake Table: Why Rattled Students are Better Prepared for The Good Life”**

Wienhausen will highlight how college can best prepare students to enter today's complex workforce. She will talk about how education should rattle and decenter a person so that it stimulates meaningful learning and measurable growth.

- **Feb. 12, Carol Padden, interim vice chancellor for equity diversity and inclusion and professor of communication: “Different Lives, Different Languages”**

Padden will discuss how human languages have astonishing diversity and how social and cultural conditions, at times, has led to humans spontaneously create sign languages even when they have spoken languages.

- **Feb. 19, Teddy Cruz, professor of visual arts, and Fonna Forman, professor of political science: “The Urbanization of Happiness and the Decline of Civic Imagination”**

Forman and Cruz will explore the idea of human happiness as it manifests in patterns of urbanization, from the public architecture of the ancient polis to the modern suburban sprawl of San Diego and Tijuana.

- **Feb. 26, Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla: “Remaking the Modern Research University”**

Khosla will discuss the evolution of UC San Diego from a fledgling campus to a world-renowned public research university, in addition to current opportunities and challenges in higher education. He will also discuss the strategic planning process currently underway on campus and how the initiative is propelling the university to develop a unified vision and shared goals for the future of UC San Diego.

- **March 5, Albert Pisano, dean of the UC San Diego Jacobs School of Engineering: “Engineering as a Force for the Public Good”**

In this talk, Pisano will describe a vision of abundance for the world, made possible by technological advances in engineering. These advances have promise to usher in an era of abundance in manufacturing, fresh water, food production and energy.

The seven-part “The Good Life” series will be viewable on UCSD-TV, which will air the series the first Monday of each month beginning Feb. 17.

For more information, go to <http://roosevelt.ucsd.edu/publicevents/>.

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