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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (805) 756-1511

Baldwin's 'Fire Next Time,' Current Politics To Be Topic of Nov. 29 Forum

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly English Professor Don Lazere will discuss the intersection between literature and politics in James Baldwin's essay "The Fire Next Time" in a public forum Nov. 29 on campus.

The presentation, part of the English Department's What Else We Do Forum series, will be from 11:10 a.m. to noon in Room 201 of the Science North Building.

Prefacing the talk as "Cultural Studies and Teaching Political Conflicts II," Lazere will continue making a case for "the legitimacy -- indeed the necessity -- of fostering critical thinking about politics, and of political debate, in teaching all areas of the humanities, without the imposition of 'political correctness' by teachers." The talk follows up a related presentation Lazere made Nov. 8 on Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman."

The presentation will sum up the perspective Lazere has developed in his books, articles and courses in relation to recent theoretical trends in English and the humanities. He will illustrate these points with an analysis of the literary dimensions of "The Fire Next Time," demonstrating what he calls Baldwin's "astonishing foresight into current American politics, nationally and internationally," including the events of Sept. 11.

Lazere joined the Cal Poly faculty in 1977. He is the author of "The Unique Creation of Albert Camus," published by the Yale University Press, and editor of "American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives," published by the University of California Press. He has written many articles for leading scholarly journals of literature and composition, and his reviews and opinion pieces have appeared in The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Baltimore Sun, the Chronicle of Higher Education, The Nation and Tikkun.

He is the editor of the newsletter "Teachers for a Democratic Culture" and is completing a textbook for argumentative writing titled "Reading and Writing for Critical Citizenship."

Now in their fifth year, the What Else We Do forums aim to expose a broad audience to the creative endeavors and professional activity of Cal Poly English faculty members. Short, informal presentations are followed by discussion.

For more information, contact the English Department at 756-2597 or series organizer Debora Schwartz at 756-2636.

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