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UCLA History Professor to Discuss Arab Uprisings March 5 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – In honor of the first anniversary of the “Arab Spring,” UCLA history Professor James Gelvin will present “The Arab Uprisings One Year Later” from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, March 5, in the Spanos Theatre at Cal Poly.

Beginning in December 2010 a popular revolt swept through the Middle East, shocking the world and ushering in a period of unprecedented unrest. Protesters took to the streets to demand greater freedom, democracy, human rights, social justice and regime change.

Gelvin’s presentation is based on his new book, “The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know” published by Oxford University Press in February 2012.

Professor Gelvin will identify key differences between the various regimes affected by the uprisings in the region and why some movements are more likely to succeed than others. He will examine the role of youth, labor and religious groups in Tunisia and Egypt and discuss why the military turned against rulers in both countries. Exploring the uprisings in Libya and Yemen, Gelvin explains why these two states are considered weak, why that status is important for understanding the upheavals there, and why outside powers intervened in Libya but not in Yemen.

He will also compare two cases that defied expectations: Algeria, which experts assumed would experience a major upheaval after Egypt’s, and Syria, which experts failed to foresee. He will discuss the monarchies of Morocco, Jordan and the gulf, exploring the commonalities and differences of their protest movements.

Finally he will discuss the implications of the uprisings: What do they mean for the United States? For Iran? Has al-Qaeda been strengthened or weakened? What effects have the uprisings had on the Israel-Palestine conflict? What conclusions might we draw from the uprisings so far?

Gelvin is the author of top-selling interpretive histories “The Modern Middle East: A History” and “The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War,” both published in 2005.

The free presentation is the final event in a series sponsored by Cal Poly’s College of Liberal Arts and History Department. For more information, visit http://cla.calpoly.edu/hist_events.html.

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