By John Adams

Staff Reporter

Award-winning poet Rick Barot likes the messiness in his writing.

There is a common perception that poetry has a certain purpose to make people feel good, Barot said. With so much conflict in the world, Barot said he wants to represent the realness of it.

“Our world is fucked up,” he said, and his goal it to reflect that.

Barot visited Highline last week for a poetry reading and workshop in partnership with National Poetry Month as well as Unity Through Diversity Week.

“Poetry should be disruptive,” Barot said.

His poetry is an extension of his individual self as a voter, citizen and writer.

“My poetry is like an organic arm of everything else I do,” Barot said.

Barot said he believes being a multi-cultural writer makes him evaluate things and their “ethical relationship with the world.”

By looking at things trough a political lens, Barot is able to see things in context to the world around it.

“Beautiful next to not beautiful,” he said.

Looking at his poems critically, they are “full of junk,” he said, but he wants to have poems that have everything in them – he wants them to be messy.

Having poems with everything in them is a reflection of his want to have tension that portrays the reality of the world’s multi-cultural nature, he said.

Barot has been a teacher at Pacific Lutheran University for 12 years. He works in the English department and teaches Creative Writing and Literature courses and is the director of the Master in Fine Arts and Creative Writing program.

He has published three books including The Darker Fall, which received the Kathryn A. Morton Prize in Poetry. His book Want won the 2009 Grub Street Book Prize. His most recent book Chord just came out last year won the PEN/Open Book Award.