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Conference to Explore Scientific Origins of Universe, Life, and What it Means to be Human

Summary: “Freethinkers” student organization is organizing a conference entitled the Midwest Science of Origins Conference. National speakers will explore topics dealing with the scientific origins of the universe, life, and what it means to be human.

(March 28, 2012)-An upcoming conference entitled “The Midwest Science of Origins Conference” (MSOC) will be held March 30, 2012 to April 1, 2012 at the University of Minnesota, Morris. The conference, organized by the Morris Freethinkers student organization, seeks “to inspire the rural communities of the Midwest—its students, its parents and community leaders—to contemplate the scientific origins of the universe, of life, of humans and what it means to be human.”

This conference will begin on Friday night with an opening presentation by Dr. PZ Myers and will conclude on Sunday with a community service project led by Chris Stedman. The MSOC conference will feature lectures from a diverse panel of experts including:

Dr. Neil Shubin, a paleontologist at the University of Chicago, is author of *Your Inner Fish: A Journey in to the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body* in which he “tells the story of evolution by tracing the organs of the human body back millions of years, long before the first creatures walked the earth.”

Dr. PZ Myers is an associate professor of biology at the University of Minnesota, Morris and the author of the award-winning science blog *Pharyngula*.

Dr. Michael Wilson received his Ph.D. in anthropology at Harvard in 2001 and is an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Chris Stedman is the Interfaith and Community Service Fellow for the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard University, the founder of the Atheist-Interfaith blog *NonProphetStatus*, and columnist for the *Huffington Post*.

Dr. Marco Peloso is professor of physics at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities School of Physics and Astronomy whose research topics include astroparticle physics, the cosmology of extra-dimensions, and physics beyond the standard model.

Dr. Dan Demetriou is the assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He teaches ethics, political philosophy and the philosophy of law.

Lectures will be held primarily in the Science auditorium of the Morris campus. Dr. Shubin’s presentation will be held in the Morris High School auditorium to accommodate a larger audience.

The conference is free and open to the public. Registration is required. A complete itinerary for the conference is posted

online. Some parts of the conference itinerary are subject to change. For conference registration and to learn more information, visit the [conference website](#).

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