



Talk:

OPENING THE GATES OF HEAVEN: Religious and Philosophical Implications of Space Exploration

JAN
11
THU

4:00–6:00 pm
McCune Conference Room, 6020 HSSB

MICHAEL WALTEMATHE
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Religion and philosophy have always been present in human space exploration, in the form of religious rituals practiced during space missions, placement of sacred objects in space, and astronauts' descriptions of transcendental changes in perspective when looking back on Earth. Space exploration also poses ethical, religious, and philosophical challenges. How, for example, do we protect other celestial bodies from contamination by human space exploration? How do we protect the Earth from contamination by extraterrestrial samples brought back on spaceships? How will human society be represented to extraterrestrial beings? What are the wide-ranging implications of finding life in the universe?

In his talk, Waltemathe will discuss these issues, exploring questions that seem to belong to the realm of science fiction while focusing on scientifically plausible exploration scenarios.

Michael Waltemathe is senior lecturer in the Department of Protestant Theology at Ruhr-University Bochum in Germany. He also serves as an officer of the Astrosociology Research Institute, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the development of astrosociology as a multidisciplinary academic field. Dr. Waltemathe is also a founding member of IASGAR, the International Academy for the Study of Gaming and Religion.

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