

Physics and Physical Oceanography Seminar

Indigenous knowledges and Western Astronomy: Indigenizing the Drake Equation

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DATE: Wednesday, May 26, 2021

TIME: 2:00 pm

Place: Webex (link will be sent out)

ABSTRACT: Astronomy has been practised on the land we call North America since time immemorial and the peoples across this land had and have their own ways of understanding the sky and the Universe. In this talk, I will discuss Indigenous methods of science and how sky stories reflect observations and knowledge of different peoples. I will show how these methods are related to constructing knowledge and apply these axioms to the current questions of where life is in the Milky Way Galaxy. I show how these methods add to our current understanding of the Drake Equation. I will conclude by discussing how these ideas impact the cultural discussion of space exploration and colonization.

Bio: Dr. Hilding Neilson is a CLTA assistant professor in astronomy at the University of Toronto where he studies stellar physics and exoplanets while working to integrate Indigenous knowledges and methodologies into the academic study of astrophysics. He is Mi'kmaw and a member of the Qalipu First Nation of Newfoundland.

ALL ARE WELCOME!