

Joint Astronomy / EPS Colloquium

March 8, 2007

Tea: 3:30pm, Astronomy Lounge

Colloquium: 4:00pm, 1 Le Conte

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**PLANETS, PLANETESIMALS AND DUST:
PLACING OUR SOLAR SYSTEM INTO
CONTEXT**

The study of disks of dust around solar-type stars is helping us place our Solar System into context by shedding light into important questions about the origin and evolution of planetary systems, solar and exo-solar. In this talk, I will explain how observations (obtained mostly with the Spitzer Space Telescope) and theoretical models can be used to study: (a) the frequency and timing of terrestrial planet formation; (b) the nature and frequency of other major evolutionary events in the history of planetary systems (like the Late Heavy Bombardment in the early Solar System); and (c) the diversity of planetary systems, including medium-sized planets located far from the star and dusty planetesimal belts.