

FINDING THE COOL PLANETS WITH GRAVITATIONAL MICROLENSING

Prof. David Bennett

Department of Physics, University of Notre Dame

Wednesday, August 31, 2011

4:00 P.M. NSH 118

(Refreshments at 3:30 P.M. NSH 202)

In 1936, Einstein wrote a paper so embarrassing that he felt it necessary to apologize about it to the editor afterwards. This paper described gravitation lensing, a phenomenon that he thought would never be observed. I explain how a world-wide team of astronomers have used gravitation lensing to find new classes extrasolar planets that cannot be found by other methods, including a large number of planets that don't seem to be orbiting stars. Finally, I explain how this method will be used to complete a statistical census of planets with the NASA's WFIRST mission—a mission that also probes another of Einstein's “blunders”.

Colloquium

All interested
persons are
cordially
invited to
attend.