

**PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY SEMINAR
SPRING 2009**

**BEYOND THE SPHERICAL CLOUD:
POLARIZATION AND SUPERNOVA
CLASSIFICATION**

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Supernova explosions were once rare occurrences that were easily classified into a few distinct types. However, as observational techniques have become more sensitive, astronomers are discovering more and more supernovae and realizing that they differ from one another in more complex ways than originally imagined. The discovery that most supernovae are polarized (indicating that the explosion and/or the surrounding circumstellar material is not spherically symmetric) has only complicated the issue. I will discuss the current state of our knowledge about supernovae and show how new advancements in both the observational and theoretical arenas are likely to overhaul the supernova classification system within the next few years.

Friday, April 17, 2009, 4:00 pm
Brown Hall 261

Refreshments served at 3:45 pm