

**WHO?**

High school teachers and administrators interested in learning more about integrative thinking, interdisciplinary curriculum design, and exploring the *Journey of the Universe* PBS film and book as an organizing framework for secondary school learning. ([www.journeyoftheuniverse.org](http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org).)

**WHAT?**

How do our students make sense of our rapidly changing world amidst the knowledge explosion at their fingertips through digital media and the myriad ways of experiencing the world it presents? One important challenge of educating for the future will be teaching students to not only access but also to evaluate and ultimately integrate knowledge and insights from multiple perspectives and ways of knowing. So how we do design curricula that allow our students to experience and practice integrative thinking around cohering themes and organizing frameworks? During our three days together we will examine best practice interdisciplinary design and assessment, and explore the Emmy award-winning *Journey of the Universe* story as a powerful example of a way to integrate a wide array of disciplinary perspectives.

**WHEN?**

Participants will arrive Thursday, October 9 by 5 pm and depart Sunday, October 12 after lunch.

**WHERE?**

The conference takes place at the Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey ([www.lawrenceville.org](http://www.lawrenceville.org)), about an hour from New York City and Philadelphia. Room accommodations for conference participants will be at a nearby hotel ten minutes from the Lawrenceville campus and transportation to and from the hotel will be arranged. Meals will be provided at the school.

**COST?**

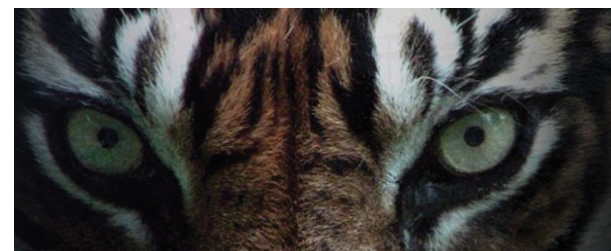
The fee for the conference is \$100 and includes room accommodations, meals, and all materials. The conference costs are supported by the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale, the Lawrenceville School, and the Kalliopeia Foundation.

**Conference Goals**

Our conference aims are twofold. The first is to learn about current thinking in interdisciplinary curriculum design and assessment, and to hear from educators currently practicing it. We will look at different models of interdisciplinary course design (including the seminal work of Veronica Boix-Mansilla, Allen Repko, and William Newell, among others), consider the types of integrative student thinking it requires and cultivates, and discuss examples of interdisciplinary assessment and rubrics. In addition, we will examine the pedagogical strategies informed by research in cognitive science that will create enduring student learning (after *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*, Belknap Press of Harvard). Our aim is to translate theory and ideas into useful classroom practice.

The second conference goal is to learn about the highly acclaimed *Journey of the Universe* film, book, and conversation project as a way to develop and cohere interdisciplinary curriculum at the high school level. *Journey* is a collaboration of evolutionary cosmologist Brian Thomas Swimme and Yale historians of religions, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim. Their integrating and multi-disciplinary narrative of the development of the universe, Earth, and humans draws together scientific discoveries in astronomy, geology, and biology with humanistic insights, and explicates the emerging scientific

worldview concerning the nature of the universe. Discussions with conference presenters will provide a deeper understanding of the *Journey's* epic story of evolution as we explore and imagine a sense of the possible regarding its use and meaning for high school education. One long-term aim is to seek out, create, and disseminate best practice approaches for using the *Journey of the Universe* story in high schools around the country in the form of individual courses, coordinated curricular sequences, and/or interdisciplinary learning experiences.



A paradigm shift is happening in secondary school education and this will only accelerate in the coming years. Important factors fueling this include the burgeoning influence of digital media and Web 2.0 tools, which is already facilitating inquiry-based, self-guided and self-paced student learning. In addition, potent insights from cognitive science about how children best learn is transforming the way we teach. Finally, new insights about effective interdisciplinary teaching and learning are beginning to address the need for integrative learning and thinking. The *Journey of the Universe* story provides a powerful synergistic framework for integrating these emerging possibilities in our high schools.

**QUESTIONS?****EMAIL**

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**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

[www.journeyoftheuniverse.org](http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org)

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