

# Pugh, Coker analyze Intelligent Design theory

*Luncheon will discuss controversy*

**Colby Pierce**  
Reporter

A discussion surrounding the larger cultural debate regarding nature as it pertains to Intelligent Design is on Nov. 16 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Belk Library 206.

Intelligent Design is the controversial claim that an intelligent cause or agent created certain parts of the universe and living things, not by natural selection. Nearly all proponents believe the designer to be the Christian God.

The first 20 people who R.S.V.P. to Professor Jeffrey Coker at [jkoker@elon.edu](mailto:jkoker@elon.edu) will receive a free lunch with Coker to discuss intelligent design.

He expects 20 to 25 people to attend. "We purposely chose a small luncheon instead of a large forum to facilitate an intimate, thoughtful discussion," Coker said.

"This event is not about arguing for or against the validity of design, but looking how Intelligent Design and evolution interpret nature."

—Jeffrey Pugh, professor of religious studies

"Most people, including most students at Elon, do not have strong views about the origins of life and simply want to learn more about it," Coker said.

This discussion is targeted at any person who would like to attend and analyze the diverse perspectives.

The scientific community disagrees with Intelligent Design. The National Academy of Sciences has said that Intelligent Design "and other claims of supernatural intervention in the origin of life" are not science because their claims cannot be tested by experiment and propose no new hypothesis of their own.

The Metanexus Institute on Religion and Science gives grants to different places called "Local Society Initiatives." Elon was awarded this grant, and formed the

Terra Nova Society, which is hosting the event.

The society encourages a community dialogue about science and spirituality in the context of environmental issues.

The discussion will be led by Dr. Jeffrey Pugh, professor of religious studies and author of the recent book, "Entertaining the Triune Mystery: God, Science, and the Space Between." Coker, professor of biology, will take part in the discussion as well.

"This event is not about arguing for or against the validity of Design, but looking (at) how Intelligent Design and evolution interpret nature," Pugh said.

Professor Coker hopes to engage the audience with thoughts such as these: "Inevitably, our chosen story

**Intelligent Design and natural selection**

**Day: Nov. 16**

**Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Place: Belk Library 206**

**Contact Jeffrey Coker**  
**at [jkoker@elon.edu](mailto:jkoker@elon.edu) for a free lunch**

about the origins of life affects how we view the natural environment and therefore how we treat it. Science tells us very clearly that life evolved over millions of years, but science cannot answer larger philosophical and spiritual questions about its purpose or meaning."

Andrew High, a junior, has taken two classes with Pugh, who lead him to minor in religions.

"He is a teacher whose individual beliefs or principles cannot be determined until the last day of class,"

High said. "He will present you with information and ways to learn it."

This luncheon hopes to create a place for discussion and thinking in a non-threatening environment, for individuals who wish to learn more about the origins of life, Intelligent Design and evolution of nature. The discussion will be open for anyone interested to participate.

Contact Colby Pierce at [pendulum@elon.edu](mailto:pendulum@elon.edu) or 278-7247.

## The Elon Career Center CAREER EVENT

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Manager of Employee Relations & Compliance  
SAS Institute

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