

# *Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecture*

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# The Scientific Quest to Understand the Origin of Life

by

## Nicholas Hud

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at Georgia Tech  
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for Chemical Evolution

**April 4, 2017**

**4 p.m.**

**Engineering Hall Auditorium**

**(DUE 1109)**

***Reception to follow.***



## Abstract

Charles Darwin once speculated that biological molecules might spontaneously form in a "warm little pond," but then concluded it was "mere rubbish" to think about the origin of life during his time. Now 150 years later, tremendous advances in biology and chemistry have now made it possible to explore, using model reactions and genomic data, the chemical origins and early evolution of life. This combination of so-called bottom-up (i.e., chemical) and top-down (i.e., biological) approaches to uncovering the origins of life are helping to write the "missing first chapter" of Darwin's book *On the Origins of Species*.

Nicholas Hud is Regents' Professor of Chemistry at Georgia Tech and director of the NSF-NASA Center for Chemical Evolution. He has studied the physical properties of DNA and RNA for more than 25 years. His current research is focused on questions related to the origins and early evolution of biopolymers. Hud received his B.S. from Loyola Marymount University and his Ph.D. from UC Davis. He conducted postdoctoral research at UCLA.



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