

# ACADIA PHYSICS EVENT

## Space is a part of the Land: Moving from colonialism and space exploitation to Indigenous models of operating in Space

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**Thursday, October 30, 2025 at 7:00 pm**  
**Huggins Science Hall 010 (HSH 010)**

The colonization of outer space arguably began with the writings of Von Braun in the 1950's and his manual for sending people to Mars as a new land to conquer. That colonialism was not novel, but follows the same history of European powers colonizing the Americas and other parts of the world and, the same recent history of nations and consortiums developing telescopes on Indigenous Lands. In the future as private actors develop a new space industry we will see the export of this colonialism to Space, to the Moon and one day even to Mars. We are already seeing this today with the development of satellite constellations, some of which are visible by the unaided eye and with the multinational Artemis Accords for lunar exploration. In this talk I will review the relation between astronomy, outer space and colonization in the past, present, and future; and I will discuss different ways to relate to outer space and space exploration through the lens of Indigenous methods and knowledges.

Hilding Neilson, PhD, is an astrophysicist and professor in the Department of Physics & Physical Oceanography at Memorial University of Newfoundland & Labrador in St. John's Newfoundland where his research focuses on stellar and exoplanet physics and the stories we can learn from stars and planets. He is also Mi'kmaw from Ktaqmkuk and works integrate Indigenous knowledges in astrophysics research and how we relate to outer space exploitation and the future of large astronomical observatories. Dr. Neilson has been featured on numerous outlets including the CBC, Globe and Mail, the Guardian and more. He has also published over 50 research articles.