

Topic: God & Darwin in American Life  
Facilitators: Greg Robbins and Dean Saitta  
Sessions: Thursdays, March 26, April 2, 2009  
Time: 7-9 p.m.  
Cost: \$55 per person for both sessions

Nearly eighty five years after the Scopes Monkey Trial, God and Darwin are at it again. America remains deeply divided over the teaching of evolution, and the proposed teaching of “intelligent design” in public school science classes. The 2005 court decision against design in Pennsylvania (dubbed “Scopes II” by some observers) did little to quiet the debate. Recent publication of several books by the so-called “New Atheists” (e.g., Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, and others) plus this year’s passage of a “Science Education Act” in Louisiana inviting teachers to explicitly challenge theories of evolution have further inflamed the debate. At play are the same issues that pitted Clarence Darrow vs. William Jennings Bryan in 1925: the nature of man and history, the limits of faith, reason, and common sense as ways of understanding the world, and the impact of knowledge on the moral fiber of the citizenry. This Salon will explore these and other issues around science and religion in American life, and why settling the debate matters in more ways than we might imagine. Discussion will be framed by an examination of Kenneth Miller’s book, *Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul*.

Gregory A. Robbins, PhD, is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Denver. In 1990 he won the Burlington-Northern Distinguished Teaching Award, and in 2000-03 he served as University Professor of Arts and Humanities. He teaches courses on Christian origins, the New Testament, the history of Christianity, early Christian interpretations of the book of Genesis, Christian fundamentalism, and religion and film.

Dean Saitta, PhD, is Professor of Anthropology. He teaches courses on human biological diversity, human nature, and human evolution. His archaeological research in several areas of North America is focused on better understanding long-term processes of social and cultural change on the continent from ancient times to the present. He is the author of *The Archaeology of Collective Action*, and co-author of *Denver: An Archaeological History*. In 1998 he was awarded the University Scholar-Teacher of the Year award, and from 2000-2003 he served as University Professor of Social Science. This Salon will explore these and other issues around science and religion in American life, and why settling the debate matters in more ways than we might imagine. Discussion will be framed by an examination of Kenneth Miller’s book, *Only a Theory: Evolution and the Battle for America's Soul*.