

SMS Spring 2023 Eyring Seminar

Thursday March 16 | 6pm | Marston Theater (ISTB4)

Jack Szostak, PhD

Professor, University of Chicago



Biography: Dr. Szostak is a University Professor and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Chicago, and an Investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Dr. Szostak's early research on telomere structure and function and the role of telomere maintenance in preventing cellular senescence was recognized by the 2006 Albert Lasker Basic Medical Research Award and the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. In the 1990s Dr. Szostak and his colleagues developed in vitro selection as a tool for the isolation of functional RNA, DNA and protein molecules from large pools of random sequences. Dr. Szostak's current research interests are in the laboratory synthesis of self-replicating systems and the origins of life.

*Join us for reception in
ISTB4 Lobby 5:00pm—5:40pm*

The Origin of Life: Not as Hard as it Looks?

The combined efforts of laboratories around the world have begun to converge on a reasonable pathway going all the way from planet formation to the beginnings of life itself. Many deeply embedded preconceptions have had to be overcome and discarded in order to enable this progress. I will explain how overcoming these conceptual barriers has enabled fresh thinking into how the molecules of life were synthesized on the early Earth and then assembled into the first living cells. Once the ability of life to evolve in a Darwinian sense had become firmly established, life was free to adapt, diversify, and flourish, eventually giving rise to all the varieties of life we see around us today.