Please join the Science, Religion, and Lunch Seminars (SRLS) hosted by the Northern Plains Ethics Institute for:

Russ Colson  
Professor, Department of Anthropology and Earth Sciences,  
Minnesota State University Moorhead  

Searching for Common Ground Between Science and Faith  
12-1pm, February 11, 2020  
Room of Nations, Memorial Union

Abstract: Science and faith are often seen to offer different ways of knowing, providing perspectives on existence that may not be completely compatible with each other. For example, faith may ground its way of knowing in the idea of divine revelation, whereas science may ground its way of knowing in reproducible observation. Science may require belief in ongoing change (in ideas, life, rock, or the stars) whereas faith may require belief in the stability of an unchanging God. Science might expect the immutability of natural law, whereas faith might expect the occurrence of miracles that set those laws aside. Incompatibilities such as these can seem like unbridgeable chasms between different belief systems, making science feel ‘off limits’ to the person of faith and faith to the person of science. In fact, many people who adhere to both faith and science are careful to keep them in separate mental drawers. But, is there common ground between science and faith, areas where each can inform the other? In my presentation, I would like to discuss my own search for common ground between science and faith, and offer my way of merging the two into a single worldview, which, although perhaps troubling to both people of faith and people of science, might provide some thoughts to chew on.

Bio: Russ Colson is a geology professor at MSUM with a long-standing interest in both science and faith. His background includes thirty-five years research and teaching in planetary science, starting out as an experimental petrologist at the Johnson Space Center in Houston and at Washington University in St Louis and then migrating toward science education after coming to his current position at MSUM twenty-six years ago. The topics of his peer-reviewed professional publications range from the chemistry of silicate melts, to assessment and processing of space resources, to inferring the depositional environment of hadrosaurs. His book Learning to Read the Earth and Sky (NSTA Press, 2016) examines the underpinning foundation for how we know things in science, emphasizing the importance of conveying how we learn rather than what we know in the science classroom. He has taught and lay preached in a number of churches over the years, with a particular interest in encouraging honest exploration of

If you are interested in giving a seminar, then please contact Syed Ahmed at syed.ahmed@ndsu.edu or Dennis Cooley at dennis.cooley@ndsu.edu.