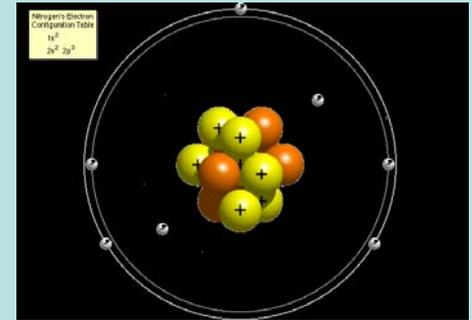


Space Science, Society and Religion: Some thoughts

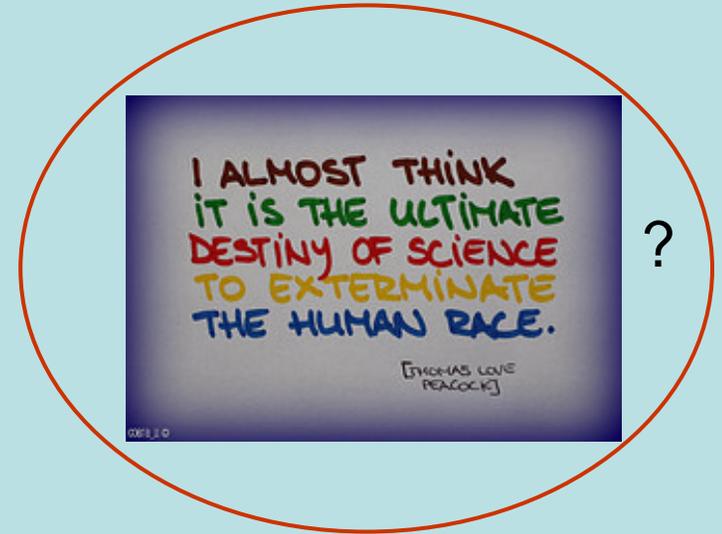
P. G. Niarchos

**Department of Astrophysics, Astronomy
and Mechanics, University of Athens**

What is Science?



What is the purpose of science?

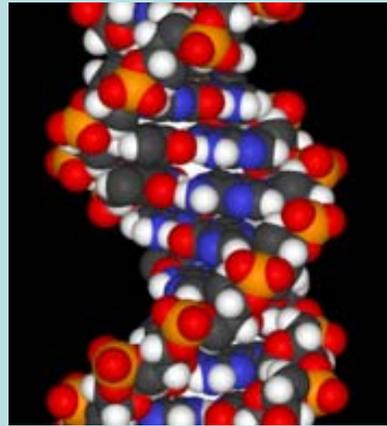


Scientific method



Fields of science

- Natural sciences

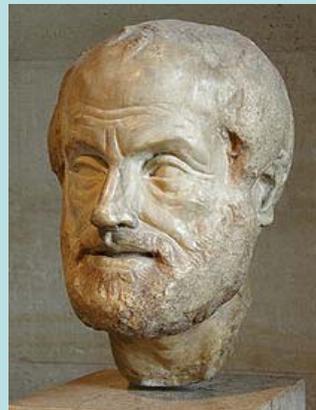


A fragment of DNA, that contains genetic instructions for the development and functioning of living organisms.



Apollo 11 view of Daedalus crater on the far side of the Moon.

- Social sciences



Aristotle asserted that man is a political animal in his book *Politics*

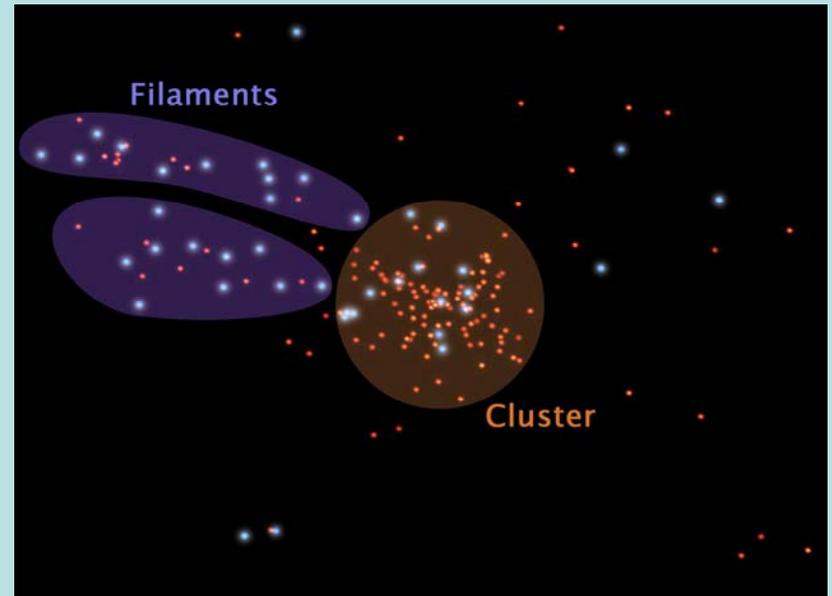


A depiction of Europe's oldest university, the University of Bologna, Italy

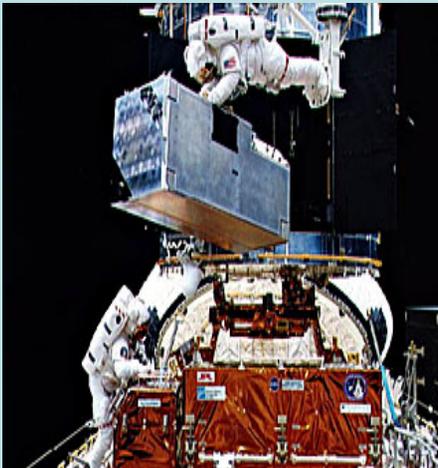
Space science

Why Humans in space?

1. To work
2. To live
3. To survive



Celestial Cities and the Roads That Connect Them



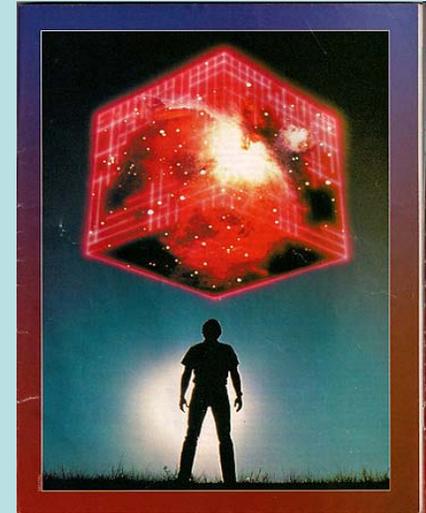
HST service mission 1



International Space Station

What space science gives mankind ?

- inspiration and aspiration
- tries to answer ultimate questions



- ✓ Where are we in the Universe?
- ✓ How did our Earth and our Solar System evolve?
- ✓ Where are we going?
- ✓ Where did life come from, and are we alone?



are we alone?

Answer to these questions by studying near and far space



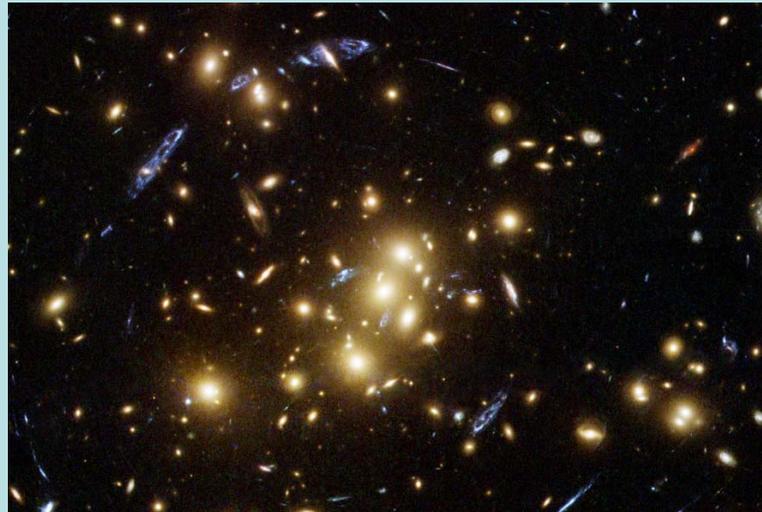
Cassini-
Huygens,
Saturn,
30 June 2004



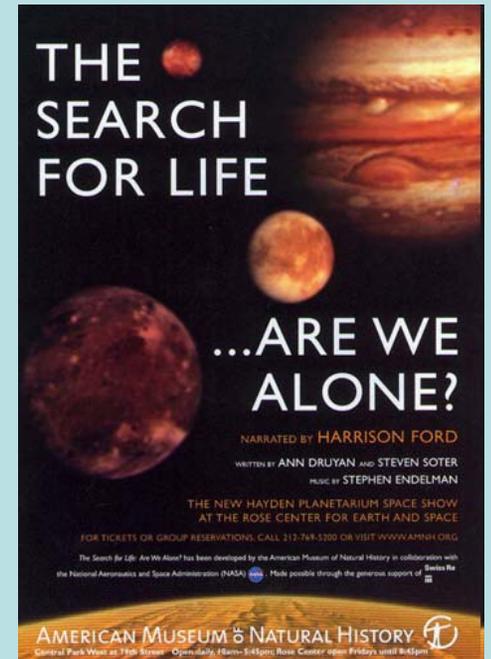
LRO and LCROSS: Leading the Quest to
find Water on the Moon, 8 June, 2009



Mars: Spirit and
Opportunity, 7 July 2003



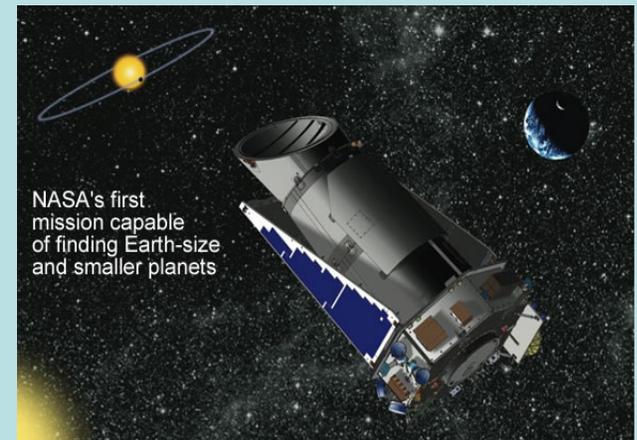
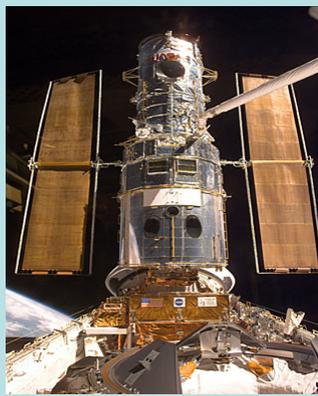
HST photo of galaxy
cluster CL0024+1654



Space Science and Society

The role of Astronomy and then Space Science in society

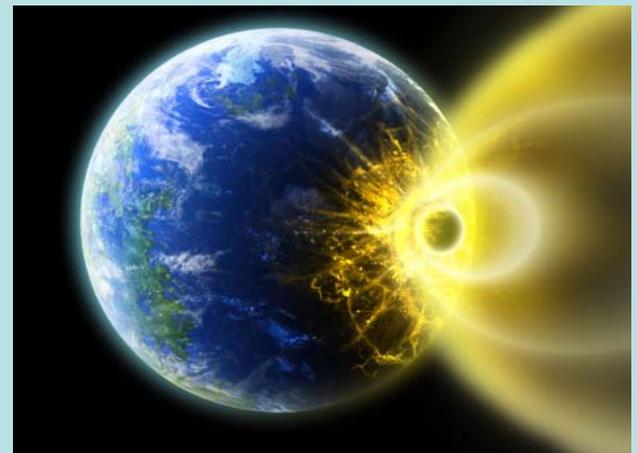
- Age-old questions
- Over time, the development of technology, coupled with space sciences, brought more answers to our curious questions



- Other astronomical phenomena closer to Earth that pose a threat to society



- Are we able to prevent them or at least ameliorate their effects without harming society or our environment.



Space Science and ethics

- Science and technology are the results of the slowly evolving activities of the human mind throughout history
- Can science and technology by themselves guarantee man's prosperity forever?

One of the features of science and technology is that they do not lead to decisions by themselves. Therefore, science serves man. **Science and Technology without Ethics Can Do Nothing for the Prosperity of Human Beings.**

The Ethics of Outer Space Space as an Ethical Issue

- ❑ Man, the “master and possessor of nature”?
- ❑ Important ethical questions raised by the new activities of man
- ❑ Ethical questions condition the acceptability of space technologies



Science and Religion

- wider definition of knowledge
- Science and religion need not be seen as foes
- Science: bunch of tools for understanding the material universe
- Religion: bunch of tools giving us hints of a mental or spiritual universe

What does Space Science tell us about God?

So... does science, such as astronomy and particularly Space Science, challenge religion and its guidance on how we should behave?



HARMONY OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

and

The big question:

Are **Religion** and **Science**
in direct competition with one
another?



"..There is no contradiction between true religion and science. When a religion is opposed to science it becomes mere superstition: that which is contrary to knowledge is ignorance. (*'Abdu'l-Bahá: Paris Talks, Pages: 141-146*)

Epilogue

- Clearly, science and society are intricately entwined, and as one progresses, so does the other
- science has touched upon and improved almost every aspect of our lives
- explore space as a new frontier that belongs to all of us
- Religion and Science may be in competition with one another but the truth is they have the same goal; to find the truth, whether it be based on faith or facts.