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## **Woods Hole Scientist Christopher German to Speak at Bennington College**

**Bennington, VT:** On [Thursday, March 7 at 7:00 PM](#), **Christopher German**, Senior Scientist of Geology and Geophysics at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, will speak on what seafloor hydrothermal vents—fissures in volcanically active regions from which geothermally heated water flows—may indicate about the origin of life on Earth and, possibly, elsewhere.

German is the 2019 Robert H. Woodworth Lecturer in Science. This event will take place in the Tishman Auditorium at Bennington College.

As part of the [Spring 2019 Science Workshop Series](#), on [Friday, March 8 at 1:00 PM](#), German will be speaking on “The Geo-Diversity of Submarine Venting Along Slow-Spreading Ridges.” This event will take place in Dickinson Science Center Room 232 on the College’s campus. Both events are free and open to the public.

German’s lecture “Hydrothermal Activity in Distant Oceans: Oases for Life on Earth—And Beyond?” will cover the evolving research around deep-sea hydrothermal venting, which has led to an increasing recognition of how vents could have provided the right conditions for the origin of life on Earth. NASA’s discovery of compelling evidence for vast saltwater oceans underlain by rocky seafloors on moons of Jupiter and Saturn have led German and other scientists to look to Earth’s hydrothermal vents as possible analogs for life-hosting systems elsewhere in our solar system.

Suddenly, humanity is faced with the prospect that we may not only be able to search for, and perhaps even find, life beyond Earth within the next human generation, but that such life—which would imply a second and independent evolution of life—could be found as close to home as the outer reaches of our own solar system.

“Dr. German is a preeminent ocean scientist. He has done some of the most influential and innovative work of the past several decades,” said faculty member [Tim Schroeder](#).

Established in 1988 by former students, the **Robert H. Woodworth Science Lecture Series** honors a longtime Bennington biology faculty member and pioneer in the development of time-lapse photography.

### **About the Speaker**

**Christopher German** received his BA in 1984, his PhD in 1988 and his ScD in 2007, all from the University of Cambridge. Following a NATO Post-Doctoral Fellowship at MIT (1988-1990), he returned to the UK to work in Government Research Laboratories, pioneering the systematic exploration of the global mid-ocean ridge system for hydrothermal activity. In 2005, he returned to the United States to take up the position of Chief Scientist for the National Deep Submergence Facility at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI). In that role, he continued his own research while simultaneously providing scientific oversight of the biggest overhaul in the DSV *Alvin*’s more than 50-year history and pioneered the use of AUVs for seafloor exploration.

Since 2014, he has returned to full-time research at WHOI, including development and first field expeditions with the Nereus Under Ice vehicle in the Arctic and working with NASA to develop a new program to investigate newly discovered ocean worlds in the outer solar system that may be both habitable and, potentially, inhabited.

During his career, German has served as President of the Challenger Society for Marine Science, in the UK and as Co-Chair of two international programs: InterRidge and the Census of Marine Life's Chemosynthetic Ecosystems program. In addition to a suite of early career awards, his recognition has included an MBE medal from Queen Elizabeth II in the UK, an Alexander von Humboldt Research Prize from Germany, and election as a Fellow of The Explorers Club in the United States.

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Thurs. March 7 | 7:00 - 8:30 pm

**[Woodworth Lecture: Chris German](#)**

Tishman Lecture Hall

The 2018/2019 Robert H. Woodworth Lecture presents Chris German, who will speak on "Hydrothermal Activity in Distant Oceans: Oases for Life on Earth—And Beyond?"

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Fri. March 8 | 1:00 - 2:00 pm

**[The Geo-Diversity of Submarine Venting Along Slow-Spreading Ridges](#)**

Part of the [Science Workshop](#) series

Dickinson Science Center, Room 232

German discusses the profound implication abundant hydrothermal activity has for the Earth and Life Sciences, ranging from their economic potential for marine mining and resource extraction to the origins of life on Earth and, perhaps, elsewhere in the Universe.

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Located in picturesque Southwestern Vermont, Bennington College holds a distinguished place among American colleges and universities. It was the first to include the visual and performing arts in a liberal arts education. It is the only college to require that its students spend a term—every year—at work in the world.

Rooted in an abiding faith in the talent, imagination, and responsibility of the individual, Bennington invites students to pursue and shape their own intellectual inquiries, and in doing so to discover the profound interconnection of things. Learn more at [bennington.edu](http://bennington.edu).