UC Berkeley Professor to Discuss Human Origins April 17 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – UC Berkeley integrative biology Professor Tim D. White will present “Ardipithecus: The First Hominid Plateau,” from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 17, in the Spanos Theatre at Cal Poly.

It took much of the last century to demonstrate that the human genus, Homo, descended from Australopithecus, according to White. “By the 1960s, biomolecular work demonstrated that our closest living relatives are the African apes, the gorillas and chimpanzees. However, the precursor of Australopithecus remained unknown until a series of discoveries began in the 1990s and continue today.”

African fossils belonging to the genus Ardipithecus, a bipedal, small-brained, woodland dweller, were recovered in Chad, Ethiopia and Kenya. White will discuss how these fossils were found, how they change the way we view our origins and early evolution, and what meaning they have for Homo sapiens. White’s findings were the subject of an entire issue of the journal Science in 2009.

The free public talk is sponsored by Cal Poly’s College of Liberal Arts and the departments of Biology, History, Political Science, and Social Sciences. For more information, contact the Social Sciences Department at 756-2752.