

4 Field Colloquium

The Complex Evolutionary History of Bipedalism: What New Fossils from South Africa Are Revealing

Speaker: Jeremy DeSilva

Host Department: Anthropology

Date: 02/05/2016

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: 411 West Hall

Description:

Humans are the only mammals that routinely walk on just their hind legs. New hominin fossils, together with new approaches that test the relationship between skeletal form and bipedal function in modern humans, are providing fresh insight into the evolution of our unique form of locomotion. In this talk, I will detail my on-going efforts to reconstruct bipedal mechanics in a relatively new species of hominin, *Australopithecus sediba*, and will present preliminary findings on a remarkably large deposit of fossils recently unearthed from the Rising Star cave system in South Africa. These fossil sites not only provide wonderful examples of exploration and discovery, but are a spectacular awakening that human evolution, and the evolution of upright walking in particular, are much more complex and interesting than previously envisioned.