



Ever since Darwin, the elaborately-decorated train of the peacock has been a test case for sexual selection: the evolutionary mechanism by which such extravagant ornaments presumably evolved in response to female preferences. However, recent research has shown that in fact the female peahen does not prefer either longer trains or a greater number of the peacock's signature "eyespot" decorations. In this talk I will explain how the courting peacock performs a dance that excites resonant vibrations of its feathers. I'll then review research that explores how optical and mechanical properties of the peacock's feathers may play a role in the mating rituals of this and other bird species, and how we can test these ideas in the field.

PHYSICS COLLOQUIUM SERIES
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“The Biomechanics
of the
Peacock's Mating Dance”

Friday, November 11, 2016

3:10 p.m.

Franklin Miller, Jr. Lecture Hall

Reception to follow in the lobby of Hayes Hall