Life in the Universe

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One of the oldest and most intriguing questions posed by humankind is “are we alone?” In the Twenty-First Century, this question has gained new meaning and impetus as we find scores and scores of planets orbiting other stars, and begin in earnest to search for life not just in our solar system, but in our galaxy and in the vastness of the Universe. This micro-seminar will first set the stage by exploring how the Universe and our solar system came to exist, then discuss the necessary ingredients for life as we know it and the evolution of life on Earth. Finally, the search for life in our solar system and beyond will be presented, including searches for habitable planets by the Kepler mission and Earth-based telescopes, and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence with radio telescopes.