

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 13, 2007

Contact: Lisa Merkl  
713/743-8192 (office)  
713/605-1757 (pager)  
[lmerkl@uh.edu](mailto:lmerkl@uh.edu)

**FROM ZEBRA STRIPES TO FROG EGGS, UH TALK TEACHES PATTERNS WITH PICTURES**

Tenneco Distinguished Lecture Series Presents Renowned Physicist Harry L. Swinney

What do spiral patterns in a frog's egg, a fibrillating heart, ocean eddies and a zebra's stripes have in common? In a heavily illustrated presentation at the University of Houston, physics professor and chaos theory pioneer Harry L. Swinney will show what can be learned from seemingly incongruent patterns.

As part of the UH Tenneco Distinguished Lecture Series, Swinney, the Sid Richardson Foundation Regents Chair at the University of Texas at Austin, will be speaking 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 20 in room 130 of the Science and Research 2 building on the UH campus. The hour-long lecture is free and open to the public.

In his talk, "Emergence of Order in Physical, Chemical and Biological Systems," Swinney will address how patterns spontaneously form in nature, the general underlying principles that are shared across varying situations and what can be learned from these different systems that have similar patterns.

"Patterns with vastly dissimilar sizes and differing widely in complexity, scale and underlying molecular mechanisms can often be understood from a common approach," Swinney said. "I will present simple patterns, such as those found in liquids and solids, flowers and leaves, zebra stripes and frog eggs, to show what we can learn from one to another."

Swinney received his Ph.D. in physics from Johns Hopkins University and was a professor at the City College of New York before joining UT-Austin in 1978. Having made several seminal discoveries in chaotic dynamics, pattern formation and turbulence, Swinney is one of the most highly cited authors in physics and his research program is considered one of the best in nonlinear dynamics. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and a fellow of the American Association for Advancement of Science and the American Physical Society.

Inaugurated in 1986 and administered by the UH Center for Public History, the Tenneco Distinguished Lecture Series is made possible by grants from Tenneco Inc. and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The UH College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and physics department are co-sponsoring Swinney's appearance. Persons with disabilities who require special accommodations in attending this lecture should call 713-743-3538.

**WHO:** Harry L. Swinney, physics professor and chaos theory pioneer

**WHAT:** Tenneco Distinguished Lecture

**WHEN:** 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 20

**WHERE:** University of Houston  
Science and Research 2 Building  
Room 130  
Off Cullen Boulevard

###

**For more information** about UH, visit the university's Newsroom at [www.uh.edu/newsroom](http://www.uh.edu/newsroom).

To receive UH science news via e-mail, visit [www.uh.edu/admin/media/sciencelist.html](http://www.uh.edu/admin/media/sciencelist.html).