



## Astrobiology: A Brief Introduction

*Michael Gross, Kevin W. Plaxco*

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Informed by new planetary discoveries and the findings from recent robotic missions to Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, scientists are rapidly replacing centuries of speculation about potential extraterrestrial habitats with real knowledge about the possibility of life outside our own biosphere -- if it exists, and where. This second edition of Kevin W. Plaxco and Michael Gross's widely acclaimed text incorporates the latest research in astrobiology to bring readers the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and engaging introduction to the field available.

Plaxco and Gross expand their examination of the origin of chemical elements, the developments that made the Universe habitable, and how life continues to be sustained. They discuss in great detail the formation of the first galaxies and stars, the diverse chemistry of the primordial planet, the origins of metabolism, the evolution of complex organisms, and the feedback regulation of Earth's climate. They also explore life in extreme habitats, potential extraterrestrial habitats, and the current status of the search for extraterrestrial life.

Weaving together the relevant threads of astronomy, geology, chemistry, biophysics, and microbiology, this broadly accessible introductory text captures the excitement, controversy, and progress of the dynamic young field of astrobiology. New to this edition is a glossary of terms and an epilogue recapping the key unanswered questions, making *Astrobiology* an ideal primer for students and, indeed, for anyone curious about life and the Universe.

### *Praise for the first edition of Astrobiology*

"Certainly the most readable introduction to astrobiology now available." -- *Chemical and Engineering News*

"Plaxco and Gross bring us as close to aliens as we can currently get. I recommend this book to anyone interested in science's newest kid on the block." -- *Astronomy Now*

"A good read for all those who are fascinated by the search for extraterrestrial life and the origin of life on our own planet. I shall certainly value it in my own library." -- *Chemistry World*

"An accessible guide to this young and interdisciplinary field." -- *Physics World*

"The fascinating world of extremophiles is well presented, and a broad overview of the searches for evidence of life beyond Earth rounds off the book. The text is liberally illustrated with relevant figures that greatly enhance the content, and entertaining snippets of information detailing the quirks of research in this field nicely supplement the scientific content." -- *Astrobiology*

"A comprehensive yet concise introduction to the field." -- *The Space Review*

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