

# **Laura Mersini-Houghton, Ph.D.**

**Associate Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, College of Arts and Sciences at UNC-Chapel Hill**

Chapel Hill, NC, US

Mersini-Houghton studies the origin of the universe, dark energy and the quantum physics of black holes.

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## **Description**

Laura Mersini-Houghton is a cosmologist and theoretical physicist and an associate professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a proponent of the multiverse hypothesis, which holds that our universe is one of many. She argues that anomalies in the current structure of the universe are best explained as the gravitational tug exerted by other universes.

In 2014, Mersini-Houghton's paper on black holes (which appears to demonstrate mathematically that they do not exist) generated much discussion in the scientific community. This led to UNC-Chapel Hill co-sponsoring the Hawking Radiation Conference in Stockholm in 2015, initiated by Mersini-Houghton. Stephen Hawking and other renowned physicists gathered to debate whether singularities in black holes exist and whether Hawking Radiation has bearing on their existence.

Mersini-Houghton has taught at UNC-Chapel Hill since 2004. She received a B.S. degree from the University of Tirana, Albania, and an M.Sc. from the University of Maryland. She was awarded a Ph.D. in 2000 by the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. After earning her doctorate, Mersini-Houghton was a postdoctoral fellow at the Italian Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa from 2000 to 2002. In 2002, she had a postdoctoral fellowship for two years at Syracuse University.

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## **Topics**

Theoretical Physics, High-Energy Physics, Quantum Physics, Cosmology, Black Holes, Dark Energy, Origins of the Universe, Space and Time

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## **Education**

**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**

Ph.D. Theoretical Physics

**University of Maryland-College Park**

M.Sc. Theoretical Physics

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## **Accomplishments**

**Conference organizer, Hawking Radiation Conference**

Initiated and organized international conference held in Stockholm, Sweden, August 2015.

## **A Debate in Cosmology: The Multiverse**

One of the organizers of the conference, a collaborative effort between Columbia University, the Perimeter Institute and UNC-Carolina-Chapel Hill to stimulate progress in outstanding topics in theoretical physics.

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