Towards Inflation in String Theory: Extra Dimensions and Spacelike Branes

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Observational cosmologists have recently discovered that our universe is surprisingly in an inflationary epoch, meaning that our universe is expanding at an accelerating rate. The so far mysterious source of this acceleration has been called "dark energy". String theory provides a promising tool to investigate this "dark energy" since it is the most well established theory incorporating both gravity and gauge interactions. I will review aspects of standard cosmology and then discuss recent string theory progress in attacking the problem of inflation.

Friday, November 11th 2004, McCook 102, 3:00 pm, Refreshments 2:45 pm