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Big History: Between Nothing And Everything



Synopsis

Big History: Between Nothing and Everything surveys the past not just of humanity, or even of planet Earth, but of the entire universe. In reading this book instructors and students will retrace a voyage that began 13.7 billion years ago with the Big Bang and the appearance of the universe. Big history incorporates findings from cosmology, earth and life sciences, and human history, and assembles them into a single, universal historical narrative of our universe and of our place within it. The first edition of Big History: Between Nothing and Everything, is written by the pioneers of the field, and presents a framework for learning about anything and everything. It encourages students to think critically about our cumulative history and the future of the world through a variety of lenses. Instructors and students can now access their course content through the Connect digital learning platform by purchasing either standalone Connect access or a bundle of print and Connect access. McGraw-Hill Connect® is a subscription-based learning service accessible online through your personal computer or tablet. Choose this option if your instructor will require Connect to be used in the course. Your subscription to Connect includes the following:

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Customer Reviews

This book, and The Big History Project, can take your mind to revolutionary perspectives. Consider: our written human history goes back around 4,000 years, but life began on our planet Earth around 4 billion years ago. So all of our written human history -- what we've simply considered to be "history" -- covers only about one MILLIONTH of the history of life on earth. There was obviously a lot written in the book of life before our species branched out from the family of big apes around 7 million years ago. In just my own field of religion, it's revolutionary to think that our religions aren't likely to have a lot to say about human nature or ethics -- who we are and how we should live. Why? Because our religions are simply too NEW! We've been taught that our major religions are umbrellas under which many other disciplines can be grouped. So under the umbrella of "Biblical religions," for example, we can find what is most profoundly true, who we are, how God or Jesus or Allah want us to live, where we came from, where we're going, and so on. But no. The biggest "umbrella" -- or metastory -- is Big History: the overarching story of the universe from the Big Bang to today, which can all be told without jargon, in the same basic concepts. Now the question to ask of all our religions is whether, or to what extent, they are really the best ways to understand who we are and how we should live. Ethologists, for example, have gathered thousands of observations of animal behavior, and have found that even our most "special" abilities -- empathy, compassion, fairness, territoriality for example -- are shown in the behavior of other animals, especially the social species, of which we are the most competent and the most arrogant.

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