

Colorado

# CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

Tuesday 11 December 2012

at the Wynkoop Brewing Company

<http://www.wynkoop.com/>

Corner of 18<sup>th</sup> and Wynkoop in LoDo, Denver

*About a block from Light Rail. Thirteen minutes by foot from Auraria.*

## THE END OF THE UNIVERSITIES?

Helen Macfarlane and John Cohen

University of Colorado School of Medicine

In fall 2011 Stanford University announced a course in Artificial Intelligence that would be available, online and free, to anyone in the world who wanted to try it; no prerequisites. 160,000 people registered. This was not the first **MOOC** (massive open online course) but it got the most publicity. In January 2012 its author left Stanford to found *Udacity*, a for-profit that would offer similar free courses. By April, 2 other Stanford faculty had created *Coursera*, a non-profit consortium of “prestigious” universities offering MOOCs. The next month, Harvard and MIT announced they were each putting up \$30 million for a venture, *edX*, which would also provide free MOOCs. The stampede continues; CU’s on board. If this is a revolution, it’s a very odd one, led by the aristocracy, not the oppressed masses. What’s going on? If Harvard online is free, why should anyone pay to go to college? Why would a venture capitalist offer \$20 million to a company whose product is free—what’s the financial model there? What did Udacity’s Sebastian Thrun mean when he said “**in 50 years there will be no more than 10 higher education institutions**”? Helen and JJ will provide the background and we expect the audience to come up with some answers!

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME.** The discussion starts at 6:30 in the Mercantile Room (no food service there). Come before 6 PM to leave yourself time to get something to eat, or stay and eat afterwards. We end around 8 PM.

There’s no charge. The Wynkoop is generously providing the facility; we buy our own drinks. It is first come, first seated, and **seating is limited** so that everyone can take part in the discussion.

The Colorado Café Scientifique is organized by an informal group of faculty from CU and institutions up and down the Front Range, as well as science fans from industry, government and elsewhere. We welcome your input, including ideas for speakers and topics. Bring them with you to the next Café, or e-mail them and any questions to [John.Cohen@UCDenver.edu](mailto:John.Cohen@UCDenver.edu)

Essential information about the topic and the event on our Web site at:  
**CafeSciColorado.org**