



PiBM Newsletter

September 2024

Introduction

Hello PiBM network members!

As we pass another equinox hopefully you're hitting your stride with your respective semesters. This month's offerings are a bit shorter, but given the deadlines for a few, it was good to get this out. That said, be sure to check out the jobs, exciting new publications, and recent or upcoming events to stay on top of the PhilInBioMed happenings. Stay tuned for next month as we aim to get some reports back on the most recent PhilInBioMed conference in Bielefeld (which I can confirm, *does* exist!).

Enjoy!

Academic Jobs

[Assistant Professor, Medical Humanities, University of Utah](#)

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Utah seeks to hire a tenure-track assistant professor to begin in **Fall 2025** in the highly interdisciplinary and rapidly expanding field of medical (or health) humanities. AOS : Medical Humanities, broadly understood in the field of philosophy to include areas such as bioethics, medical ethics, health ethics, philosophy of medicine, philosophy of health, philosophy of public health, philosophy of disability, philosophy of psychiatry, philosophy of race and health, health and justice. AOC : Open, but applicant must be able to teach courses related to medical/health humanities areas such as those listed above. (...)

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Academic Jobs (cont.)

The department is seeking an outstanding scholar who can contribute to the development of a new Medical Humanities Major being developed by the Department of Philosophy for the University of Utah. Candidates must have a PhD in philosophy or a related disciplinary field by July 1, 2025.

The deadline for applying is November 1. Apply here: <https://employment.utah.edu/salt-lake-city-ut/assistant-professor-of-medical-humanities-in-the-department-of-philosophy/210A2AEC4F8048D7BB3E47FA3CF2D228/job/>

Assistant/Associate/Full Professor, HPS, University of Pittsburgh

The Department of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Pittsburgh seeks a candidate for a position as Professor specializing in History and Philosophy of Biology beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year, pending budgetary approval.

Required Qualifications: (1) A PhD in History and Philosophy of Science, Philosophy, or a closely related field expected by the proposed start date; (2) a promising research agenda in History and/or Philosophy of Biology; and (3) exhibit interest in integrating history and philosophy of science as well as in-depth knowledge of the science or sciences relevant to their research.

The deadline for applying for full consideration is October 15, 2024. Please direct all further inquiries to Matthew Ceraso, mrcii8@pitt.edu.

For all details about applying, please visit: https://cfopitt.taleo.net/careersection/pitt_faculty_external/jobdetail.ftl?job=24007394&tz=GMT-04%3A00&tzname=America%2FNew_York



Publications

Athéa, H., Heck, N. & Forest, D. (2024). 'The private life of the brain: issues and promises in the neuroscientific study of internal states'. *Synthese*, 204, 64. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-024-04717-6>

Beer, R. D., Barwich, A.-S., & Severino, G. J. (2024). 'Milking a spherical cow: Toy models in neuroscience'. *European Journal of Neuroscience*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejn.16529> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ejn.16529>

Lala, K., Uller, T., Feiner, N., Feldman, M., Gilbert, S.F. (2024). *Evolution Evolving: The Developmental Origins of Adaptation and Biodiversity*. Princeton University Press.

Laplane, L., Maley, C.C. (2024). 'The evolutionary theory of cancer: challenges and potential solutions'. *Nature Reviews Cancer*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41568-024-00734-2>

Millstein, R. L. (2024). *The Land Is Our Community: Aldo Leopold's Environmental Ethic for the New Millennium*. University of Chicago Press.

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Sholl, J. & De Block, A. (2024). 'The vices and virtues of medical models of obesity'. *Obesity Reviews*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.13828>.



Recent PiBM Events

Erik T. Frank (University of Würzburg): “Evolution of Social Wound Care Behaviour in Ants”

Dr. Erik T. Frank is Emmy Noether Group Leader, Department of Animal Ecology and Tropical Biology, Biocenter, University of Würzburg, Würzburg, Germany. He spoke at ImmunoConcEpT, University of Bordeaux on 17 September: <https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/erik-frank/>

Abstract:

Animals developed different behavioural adaptations to help injured individuals. In ants permanently injured individuals that lost an extremity are carried back to safety to allow them to recover. In case of an infection, different behavioural strategies have evolved to combat the pathogens. Ants often use the metapleural gland, but some genera lost this gland in their evolutionary history. Here we compare two different behaviours to combat an infected wound, one with the metapleural gland and one without. The ant *Megaponera analis* treats infected wounds with antimicrobial compounds secreted from the metapleural gland, thereby reducing mortality of infected ants by 90%. Further analyses of the metapleural gland secretions of *M. analis* revealed over 121 chemical compounds and 41 proteins, almost half of which have an antimicrobial effect. However, ants from the genus *Camponotus* do not have this gland at their disposal. Remarkably, we observed that workers amputated the infected leg by biting it off at its base. This behaviour halted the infection and guaranteed the survival of the injured ant. The large phylogenetic distance between *Megaponera* and *Camponotus* and their strikingly different natural history (*Megaponera* a group-hunting predator, *Camponotus* a solitary foraging generalist) also suggest that wound care behaviour could be much more widespread in social insects than previously thought. Overall, we reveal a multifaceted care system, which not only allows to differentiate between sterile and infected wounds but also to treat them either with antimicrobial compounds or amputation of the infected leg. Thereby allowing *M. analis* and *Camponotus* to combat opportunistic pathogenic pressures present on their frequently inflicted wounds with two very different strategies.



Recent PiBM Events (cont.)

Ford Doolittle (Dalhousie, Canada), “Making Evolutionary Sense of Gaia”

W. Ford Doolittle, Professor Emeritus at the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology of the Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada, is an evolutionary and molecular biologist. All details about his talk in the PhilInBioMed seminar series can be found here: <https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/ford-doolittle/>

Abstract:

After briefly describing James Lovelock’s Gaia Hypothesis, I’ll argue that Gaia does not reproduce, or rather that it has what Peter Godfrey-Smith would term “too many parents” to undergo natural selection according to Lewontin’s Recipe. So it does not make sense to most Darwinians. If that recipe were extended to include differential persistence as well as differential reproduction, or if the “gene’s-eye view” of Richard Dawkins as further extended by David Hull and us were adopted, then the Gaia Hypothesis would make sense. That’s what the It’s the song not the singer(s) theory does.

Upcoming PiBM Events

Symbiosis: Emerging Reconceptualizations and Theories (Bordeaux, France)

On Monday, October 14th, we organize in Bordeaux, France (UTC+2), an exceptional international conference with outstanding speakers on the concept of symbiosis and the many emerging conceptual and theoretical approaches to symbiosis and host-microbiome interactions in today’s biology and philosophy of biology.

All practical details:

<https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/symbiosis-conference/>

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Upcoming PiBM Events (cont.)

Program:

- Charlotte Brives (Centre Emile Durkheim, CNRS Bordeaux, France), “Thinking through pluribiosis: the case of phage/bacteria relationships”
- Gérard Eberl (Institut Pasteur, Paris, France), “How the immune system makes the difference between pathogens and mutualists... or not”
- Hannah Kaminski (ImmunoConcept, University of Bordeaux, France), “Are damage and repair the features that microbiota and host develop to promote a stable association leading to symbiosis?”
- Sarkis Mazmanian (Caltech, USA), “The Gut Microbiome Modulates Brain Pathologies in Parkinson’s Disease”
- Margaret McFall-Ngai (Caltech, USA), “Symbiosis brings together communities of different expertise: Retaining rigor in developing this frontier”
- Spencer V. Nyholm (University of Connecticut, USA), “Illuminating interactions between the immune system and symbiotic bacteria of the Hawaiian bobtail squid”

Registration (either in-person or virtual) is free but mandatory: please complete the following form:

<https://rdv.immuconcept.org/studs.php?sondage=bf5q4zjqeenn5ipe>

Zoom link for those who cannot attend in person:

<https://u-bordeaux-fr.zoom.us/j/86440120220?pwd=MHMqvxUdTUBnURVFfFgiO tazbaZGRh.l>

This is a PhilInBioMed and ImmunoConcEpT event, organized by Thomas Pradeu, and funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.



Upcoming PiBM Events (cont.)

[Kate E. Lynch \(Melbourne, Australia\), On genetic causation \(Virtual\)](#)

The next speaker in the PhilInBioMed seminar series will be [Kate Lynch](#) who will speak on **17 October at 9:00am** (Paris time). She will present research on the topic of genetic causation.

Kate is Lecturer in Philosophy of Science at the University of Melbourne (Australia). She is a philosopher and biologist who is interested in issues that intersect both fields. These include: How to understand causation and explanation in biological and medical contexts, the societal implications of genetic technologies, and how to most effectively practice conservation biology.

More details of the talk can be found here: <https://www.philinbiomed.org/event/kate-lynch/>

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