

Call for papers

## **FIFTH EUROPEAN ADVANCED SCHOOL IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE LIFE SCIENCES (EASPLS)**

### ***INTERDISCIPLINARITY IN THE LIFE SCIENCES AND THEIR PHILOSOPHY***

Konrad Lorenz institute for Evolution and Cognition Research (KLI),  
Klosterneuburg (Austria), September 10-14, 2018

Directors: Sabina Leonelli (Exeter) & Thomas Reydon (Hannover)

The European Advanced School in the Philosophy of the Life Sciences (EASPLS) consortium will hold its fifth biennial summer school on September 10-14, 2018 at the Konrad Lorenz institute for Evolution and Cognition Research (KLI) in Klosterneuburg near Vienna, Austria. The overarching topic of EASPLS 2018 is **interdisciplinarity in the life sciences and their philosophy**. Young scholars (PhD students and early post-doctoral researchers) in the history, philosophy and social studies of the life sciences (including medicine) are invited to apply. The registration fee is € 570,- (including accommodation in single rooms, breakfasts and lunches, but not including travel expenses and dinners). Please find more details at: <http://bit.ly/2mHYPdj>.

Candidates should send a letter of motivation along with their CV, and a title and abstract of their proposed presentation of about 500 words in a single file (labelled: name-easpls2018.pdf) to Isabella Sarto-Jackson, Executive Manager of the KLI, at [sarto@kli.ac.at](mailto:sarto@kli.ac.at). The deadline for applications is **February 28, 2018**. Applicants will be notified of decisions by late May 2018.

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### **What is the EASPLS?**

The European Advanced School for the Philosophy of the Life Sciences is a biennial event that aims at fostering research, facilitating collaborations, and training students in the field of the philosophy, history, and social studies of the life sciences, broadly conceived. EASPLS is organized by a consortium of the following European top level institutions in the area of philosophy, history and social studies of the life sciences:

- Egenis, the Centre for the Study of Life Sciences; University of Exeter, U.K.
- Centre for Ethics and Philosophy of Science (CEPS), Institute of Philosophy; Leibniz University Hannover, Germany

- IAS Research Centre for Life, Mind and Society; University of the Basque Country, San Sebastian, Spain
- Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IHPST); University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France
- Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis of Immune Activation and Biological Boundaries research group (ImmunoConcEpT); University of Bordeaux, France
- Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research (KLI), Klosterneuburg, Austria
- Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities; University of Geneva, Switzerland.

The EASPLS is characterized by its unique format: The schedule mixes presentations of senior researchers and presentations by PhD students and young post-doctoral researchers. The summer school includes various forms of participation. The selected participants will be asked to either (1) give a paper on the topic they have proposed with their application, (2) to present a commentary on a senior researcher's presentation, or (3) to participate in a roundtable discussion moderated by a senior researcher. The organizers aim to publish the best contributions (full-length papers, commentary notes, and discussion notes) in a thematic issue or section in an international journal in the field.

EASPLS 2018 will be held at the Konrad Lorenz Institute for Evolution and Cognition Research (KLI; [www.kli.ac.at](http://www.kli.ac.at)) in Klosterneuburg, a small town about 15 min by train from Vienna. The KLI is an international center for advanced studies in theoretical biology, with a focus on the development and evolution of biological and cultural complexity. The KLI supports theoretical research primarily in the areas of evolutionary developmental biology and evolutionary science. Emphasis is given to projects bridging the natural and social sciences and the humanities. The institute is located in the historical Kremsmünsterhof, a cultural heritage monument where workshops, symposia, and summer schools are hosted. It provides a stimulating and creative environment for fellows, visiting scholars, students, and external faculty (get an impression of the last EASPLS at: <http://bit.ly/2cM9AWU>). Accommodation (in single rooms) will be in a hotel in Vienna close to the train station (Wien Franz-Josefs-Bahnhof) from which there is a direct train connection to Klosterneuburg.

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**The topic of EASPLS 2018:  
Interdisciplinarity in the life sciences and their philosophy**

EASPLS 2018 welcomes contributions on all aspects of interdisciplinarity in the life sciences, interdisciplinarity between the life sciences and other areas of research (such as engineering and the physical and social sciences), as well as interdisciplinarity in the philosophy of the life sciences (for instance, integrating

philosophy with historical or social scientific methods). The aim of the summer school is to bring together graduate students and senior scholars whose work reflects on the nature of interdisciplinary work in the life sciences, on the prerequisites for getting interdisciplinary research projects off the ground, on the role that the philosophy of the life sciences can play in facilitating interdisciplinary scientific research and the “bridging” of disciplines, or on the position that work in the philosophy of the life sciences can occupy as a part of interdisciplinary research projects in the life sciences. The organizers aim to assemble a community of scholars addressing these issues from a wide variety of perspectives and whose research focuses on a diversity of topics. The following areas of work serve to illustrate the sorts of issues that are in focus for the summer school, but it should be emphasized that EASPLS 2018 aims to cover the topic of interdisciplinarity conceived broadly and not limited to the issues mentioned below.

Unity and diversity in the life sciences: The life sciences constitute a very diverse set of fields of work, including fields such as evolutionary biology, phylogenetic systematics, population genetics, ecology, conservation biology, developmental biology, behavioral biology, crop science, synthetic biology, microbiology, biomedical research, epidemiology, and many more. What binds these fields of work together is their concern with phenomena in the living world. At the same time, they show an enormous diversity with respect to their theoretical underpinnings, their metaphysical commitments, their research aims and questions, and their methodologies, raising the question how (dis-)unified the life sciences in fact are. How large exactly are the theoretical and methodological differences between the various areas of life science? This is not merely a question of theoretical interest, but also one that touches scientific practice, as many research projects in the life sciences rely on contributions from multiple fields of work. What does it take to get interdisciplinary research projects in the life sciences to work? What sorts of obstacles do researchers from different areas of life science encounter when working in interdisciplinary contexts, and how can such obstacles be overcome?

Darwinism bridging disciplines: Authors such as Daniel Dennett (*Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*, 1995), or Gary Cziko (*Without Miracles: Universal Selection Theory and the Second Darwinian Revolution*, 1995) have long argued that evolutionary thinking constitutes a powerful scientific tool that can be applied both to biological phenomena and to phenomena outside the biological realm. At present there are several strong movements that attempt to establish evolutionary research programs outside the life sciences, such as economics and organizational science or the philosophy of science. Richard Dawkins, one of the most vocal proponents of Darwinian thinking, however, cautioned against an “uncritical dragging of some garbled version of natural selection into every available field of human discourse, whether it is appropriate or not. Maybe the “fittest” firms survive in the marketplace of commerce, or the fittest theories survive in the scientific marketplace, but we

should at the very least be cautious before we get carried away" ("Why Darwin matters", The Guardian, Friday 8 February 2008). This cautioning raises the question what it takes to apply a theoretical framework such as Darwinian evolutionary theory to phenomena outside its original domain of application. What are the conceptual, epistemological and metaphysical requirements that need to be met to construct genuinely evolutionary explanations of phenomena in economics and other non-biological domains? How can evolutionary biology be integrated with areas of work outside biology to create new research programs?

History and philosophy of the life sciences as an interdisciplinary area of study: Many philosophers working on the life sciences use interdisciplinary methods, drawing on historical or social science methods such as the collection and analysis of archival sources, interviewing, surveys, ethnography and participative observation. What methods best fit the philosophical study of the life sciences and its key subject matter, life itself? What are the philosophical and practical implications of adopting one method over another, and what are the challenges and opportunities involved in building bridges between philosophy and other branches of scholarship focusing on the study of science (including history, sociology, science and technology studies, anthropology, geography, innovation studies and so forth)?

Philosophy of biology as theoretical biology: What happens when philosophers become participants in biological research? How does philosophy fit in the workflow and conceptual apparatus deployed by biologists, particularly (but not only) in situations where several branches of biology are involved? And how is the position of biological and medical research within philosophy itself to be conceptualized (a question typically confronted by philosophers who collaborate in scientific projects, and wish their scientific colleagues to appreciate and understand philosophical contributions)? We are hoping for papers that examine the roles that philosophy of biology can play as a contributor to biological research, and the implications that such roles may have on the content of both scientific knowledge and philosophical scholarship; and/or the roles that biology plays within philosophy itself, as a subject matter, provider of empirical resources and evidence, source of conceptual inspiration and constraint on philosophical thinking.