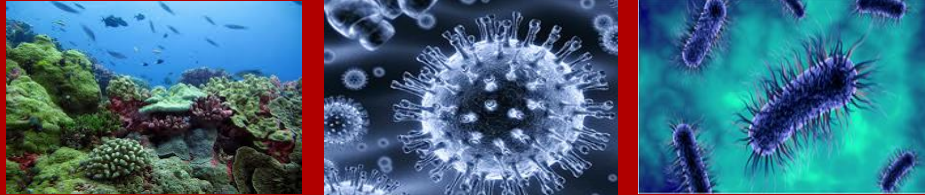


# WORKSHOP

## FUNCTION AND BIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION



**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS HAVE FUNCTIONS?**

**Speakers:**

**Eva Boon, Tyler Brunet, Ford Doolittle, Andrew Inkpen,  
Maureen O'Malley, Anna Frammartino Wilks**

**JULY 25, 2017 (10:00am–5:00pm)**

**ACADIA UNIVERSITY  
K.C. IRVING ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE CENTRE**

**Sponsored by the Department of Philosophy, Acadia University  
Please contact Anna Frammartino Wilks if you plan to attend ([anna.wilks@acadiau.ca](mailto:anna.wilks@acadiau.ca))**



## WORKSHOP

### FUNCTION AND BIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

JULY 25, 2017

ACADIA UNIVERSITY

K.C. IRVING ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE CENTRE (ACADIA ROOM)

Organizer: Anna Frammartino Wilks ([anna.wilks@acadiau.ca](mailto:anna.wilks@acadiau.ca))

Department of Philosophy, Acadia University

The notion of *function* in biological explanation has posed various problems since its earliest use by natural philosophers, and continues to be controversial among contemporary philosophers of biology. Theories of function currently under debate must accommodate the revised frameworks of biology, given the expanded range of phenomena which it studies. This creates a need for novel approaches to function ascription and investigation. The aim is to devise a comprehensive account of function that accommodates the various types of biological systems – organisms, microorganisms, evolutionary individuals, ecosystems, microbiomes, persisting biological processes, and other living systems – not all of which were in the purview of past theories of function from Aristotle to Kant, and throughout the Darwinian era. Contributing to this challenge are the difficulties occasioned by *neutral evolution theory*, the designation of functions at the molecular level, and the methodological problems associated with microbiome research. The above considerations suggest that accommodating certain types of biological systems may require the expansion of the traditional function concepts that dominate the contemporary landscape. The conceptual problems and controversies to which competing theories of function give rise constitute the core issues of this workshop.

### PROGRAM

- 10:00–10:15    *Welcome and Introduction* (Anna Frammartino Wilks)
- 10:15–11:00    **Functional Microbiomes**  
Maureen O’Malley  
(Université de Bordeaux, France)
- 11:15–12:00    **Do Processes Have Functions?**  
Ford Doolittle  
(Dalhousie University, Canada)
- 12:15–1:00    **Toward an ITSNTS Account of Ecological Function**  
Andrew Inkpen  
(Dalhousie University, Canada)
- 1:00–2:15    *COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH* (K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre)

- 2:15–3:00      **How Does ‘Function’ Explain in Definitions of Evolutionary Individuality?**  
Eva Boon  
(Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, Netherlands/Dalhousie University, Canada)
- 3:15–4:00      **Constructive Neutral Evolution and Functional Ascription**  
Tyler Brunet  
(University of Cambridge, UK)
- 4:15–5:00      **Reciprocal Causality: A Kantian Theory of Function**  
Anna Frammartino Wilks  
(Acadia University, Canada)
- 6:00–8:00      *Workshop Dinner (Troy’s Restaurant) Optional*

Attendance is free.

No registration required, but to assist with ordering of lunch and refreshments, please contact Anna Frammartino Wilks ([anna.wilks@acadiau.ca](mailto:anna.wilks@acadiau.ca)) if you plan to attend.