The Editor-in-Chief of the journal BioScience recently remarked that, “of the many misconceptions about science, the idea that it can give definite answers to questions about how people should live may be the most damaging.” The Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science (MCPS) is committed to articulating realistic conceptions of science through intense reflection on the nature of science and its diverse practices. The people we have involved in our activities, whether it is faculty, post-docs, or graduate students in philosophy, history of science, biology, psychology, physics, or other sciences, make it possible to understand more precisely what kinds of answers the sciences deliver (see the reverse page for several profiles). Included here are just a few highlights of recent events and accolades. For more details, visit us online (www.mcps.umn.edu).

Alan C. Love
Director

Alan Love was recently awarded a grant of $2.1 million from the John Templeton Foundation for the project “From Biological Practice to Scientific Metaphysics,” with co-principal investigators C. Kenneth Waters (University of Calgary), Marcel Weber (University of Geneva), and William Wimsatt (Winton Chair in the Liberal Arts). The project brings together philosophers to address the challenges of drawing metaphysical conclusions from science by reconceiving the success of science in terms of practice and asking what the world must be like for successful practices to have evolved into particular forms. Project activities include three international summer institutes devoted to metaphysical questions surrounding complexity, emergence, and levels of organization in biology, as well as public lectures, conference symposia, and mentoring junior scholars (both graduate students and post-docs). Read more about the project at: http://biological-practice-to-metaphysics.org/
Ruth G. Shaw
is Professor of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior. Her research in evolutionary genetics addresses questions about ongoing evolution in wild plant populations, currently focusing on prairie plants native to Minnesota. In this research, she and her students employ approaches of quantitative genetics, a branch of genetics with a venerable 100-year history that continues to be vibrant.

John M. Heydinger
is a graduate student in the Program in the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. He’s currently researching the conceptual and practical relationships between conservation science and the Anthropocene.

Katherine Liu
is a graduate student in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior co-advised by Michael Travisano (EEB) and Alan Love (MCPS). Her dissertation, which examines the various causal models used in cancer research, includes empirical and philosophical work. MCPS provides intellectual and professional support by helping her interact with philosophers and historians of science.

Roy T. Cook
is Professor of Philosophy and CLA Scholar of the College, and works in the philosophy of mathematics, the philosophy of logic, and the philosophy of art (especially comics). His work in logic and philosophy of mathematics is informed both by mathematical practice and by current philosophical debates in metaphysics and epistemology, while his work in aesthetics focuses primarily on the formal structure of comics and other sequential art forms, and the nature of pictorial depiction in visual art.

Ruth G. Shaw

Roy T. Cook

John M. Heydinger

Katherine Liu

Research Groups
MCPS has seven active research groups that focus on topics such as biology, early modern natural philosophy, foundations of logic and math, social and behavioral science, general philosophy of science, and physics.

A new volume of Minnesota Studies in Philosophy of Science? Yes! Coming soon…

People

Fall 2015 - Colloquia

September 18th
Mary Domski (University of New Mexico)
Descartes and Newton on Deducing True Laws of Nature

October 9th
Richard Scheines (Carnegie Mellon University)
The Revolution in Computational Causal Discovery

November 20th
James Justus (Florida State University)
Ecological Theory and the Niche

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