



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Biopolitics of Science Research Network

Faculty of Arts and
Social Sciences
Strategic Research
Theme

BioHumanity
Strategic Research Theme

SPEAKERS



Maureen O'Malley



Derek Skillings

WHEN

10.00am-12.30pm,
Friday 23 November 2018
(Morning tea provided)

Spaces limited, please
rsvp before Monday
November 16, 2018 at:
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/>

WHERE

LT 203, R.D. Watt Building

**For more information please
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MASTERCLASS

with Maureen O'Malley & Derek Skillings

THE MICROBIOME REVOLUTION?



Image credit: Zosia Rostomian, Berkeley Lab Creative Services, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Exascale Computing Project)

ABSTRACT

Microbiome research, the study of microbial communities in host organisms, is a well-funded, media-friendly, and supposedly 'revolutionary' science. Claims are made that microbiome research is transforming our understanding of the natural world, including our notions of self and individuality. How true is any of this? **This masterclass focuses on human microbiome research, with particular attention to suggestions that microbiomes are causally implicated in human health, including mental health.**

We will cover the basic history and methodologies of the field, then examine the evidence for whether there are causal relationships between microbiomes and health or disease states. After a discussion of the novelty and significance of microbiome findings, we will address the treatments that arise out of microbiome findings (especially probiotics and dietary interventions), and ask whether these treatments match 'revolutionary' claims about microbiome research. Finally, we will ask why microbiome research is so prominent in professional and social media.

BIOGRAPHIES

Maureen O'Malley (University of Sydney/University of Bordeaux) is a philosopher of biology, especially microbiology, who works in collaboration with microbiologists, philosophers and historians. She is very keen on everyone knowing more about microbes. Her website is here:
www.maureenomalley.org

Derek Skillings (University of Pennsylvania/City College of New York) is a philosopher and marine biologist who specializes in philosophy of biology, philosophy of science, and environmental philosophy. He is particularly interested in the problem of how to understand and explain the interconnected and hierarchical nature of complex living systems. Go to his website for more information: <http://www.derekskillings.com/>