



Università
Ca' Foscari
Venezia

Dipartimento di
Filosofia e Beni
Culturali



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



THE NEW
INSTITUTE

Centre for Environmental
Humanities (NICHE)
at Ca' Foscari
University of Venice

ERC HealthXCross Kick-off event

Microbes: from technoscience to social theory (and back)

14 September 2022, 10.00 am

Main Hall, Ca' Bottacin
Dorsoduro 3911, Calle Crosera,
Venice and online at

<https://unive.zoom.us/j/84891549739>

THE NEW INSTITUTE Centre for
Environmental Humanities at Ca'
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Please register at:

<https://forms.gle/ahgR1U2B4qypJvXQ7>

Guests hosted by the ERC HealthXCross GA n. 949742

10.00 am - 10.10 am
Roberta Raffaetà (Ca'
Foscari University of Venice),
**Introduction of the ERC
project and the team**

10.10 am - 10.30 am
Team members' introduction
Lucilla Barchetta

(anthropology of data-driven
One Health - Cà Foscari
University of Venice), **Valeria
Burgio** (visual theorist -
independent researcher),
Joana Formosinho (history
and philosophy of the
microbiome - Medical
Museum, Department of
Public Health, University
of Copenhagen), **Victor
Secco** (anthropology of the
microbiome - Manchester
University), **Marta Scaglioni**
(anthropology of Africa
and of the microbiome -
University Milano Statale)

10.30 am - 11.15 am
Jamie Lorimer (University
of Oxford) **Why the
microbiome, why now?
Historicising the probiotic
turn in social theory** A range
of commentators across the
medical and environmental
humanities are making

fresh epistemic alliances
with microbiology and the
post-genomic and ecological
sciences. Figures like Donna
Haraway and Anna Tsing find
a new ontology in emerging
scientific theories of the
microbiome for grounding
political and ecological
projects. In contrast to the
reductionist, individualistic
and violent visions of the
natural world offered by 20th
century evolutionary biology,
the microbiome offers
them a palatable worldview
premised on symbiosis,
holism, and collaboration.
This talk describes and
reflects on this conjoined
'probiotic turn' (Lorimer
2020) in social theory and
the life sciences, noting the
tensions it generates, and
examines its implications
for how we understand the
role of science studies in the
crisis-inflected atmospheres
of Anthropocene knowledge
production.

11.15 am - 12.00 pm
Hannah Landecker
(University of California,
Los Angeles – UCLA)
Compartmentalization In

**Theory: Boundedness,
Integrity, and Organization
in Microbiome and
Mitochondria Science and
Ethics** This talk addresses
the recent rise of theories of
compartmentalization and
barrier integrity as a sign of
health. Arising in part from
the study of their breaching
by features and substances
of modern life, from
emulsifiers to detergents,
the spatiotemporal
organization of microbial
communities and their plant
and animal interlocutors
is a site for theory building
about the specificity of an
"industrialized microbiome"
and its impact on bodies and
ecosystems. I ask how and
why compartmentalization
is a theory, not just a certain
group of empirical facts about
microbial organization, and
how it might act as a resource
beyond the life sciences
for social theory and more
practical aspects of the
potential social use of findings
of microbiome science.

12.00 pm - 12.30 pm
**Open discussion and
concluding remarks**



This project has received funding from the
European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and
Innovation Programme (GA n. 949742 ERC-
HealthXCross)