



Open Sky Newsletter

YVES AND INEZ OLTRAMARE FOUNDATION

Dear Friends,

It's summer. With it comes a powerful desire to slow down, to take our time, and sometimes to gain some distance — at times in communion with those close to us, at others in communion with ourselves. Whatever form it takes, summer is often an opportunity to immerse ourselves in nature, to discover landscapes that transport us elsewhere, or to rediscover our familiar surroundings from a thousand new perspectives.

Even journeys undertaken without moving can set us on a path towards inner harmony. And reconnecting with nature often creates an opportunity to reconnect with ourselves. In this way, we regenerate. Drawing energy from the natural elements, we feel even more strongly rooted among the other species that make up the living world. Nature opens the way towards a broader and more acute awareness of our humanity.

Recognising the extent to which our balance, as individuals and as human beings, is rooted in complete interdependence with all other living species — and even with so-called inanimate matter — leads us to feel connected to the entire universe.

Thus, after a cycle of reflection devoted to our relationship with nature, we are naturally inviting you, as autumn begins, to embark on a new cycle of reflection on "consciousness." An unlimited subject whose Latin etymology, *cum scientia*, brings us back to the notion of "with knowledge" or "with knowing." The faculty of perceiving our presence in the world as well as the presence of the world; intuitive, reflective or moral knowledge that each of us has of our own existence and of the external world; a structuring element of our psyche, alongside our unconscious; and much more besides.

What is consciousness, this intangible entity intrinsically linked to our humanity? Where is it located? Is it a source of freedom or constraint? Many other questions will be explored throughout the autumn lectures, the November round table and the upcoming semester-long course.

In the meantime, this newsletter offers you a look back at our recent activities, a glimpse of what is to come, and, in keeping with your summer break, an invitation to join us for the 2026 Astronomy Festival, taking place from 20 July to 2 August in Saint-Luc, in the Val d'Anniviers. A cultural and scientific event offering an opportunity to step back and gain a new perspective... with science. Have a wonderful summer!

Marie-Gabrielle Cajoly
President of the Foundation

Editorial

FROM US TO YOU



Transversal Course

Follow

REWATCH

**Closing of the spring 2026 transversal course
Open Sky – Science and Spirituality Programme**
In partnership with the Institute
for Environmental Sciences (ISE) of UNIGE

By becoming aware of the human impact
on the non-human living world,
we have an opportunity to better understand
how our individual and collective choices
determine the kind of humanity we want to be.

THINKING ABOUT THE ANTHROPOCENE THE MEANING OF BEING HUMAN ON EARTH

Thursdays, 4:15–6:00 pm
Uni Dufour / M2170

The *Open Sky* course, jointly organised by the Faculty of Theology and the ISE, enjoyed unprecedented success this year. The polyphonic sessions took place throughout the spring and explored the Anthropocene from a range of different perspectives.

The theme was chosen to provide us with tools for understanding and questioning the relationship between humanity and the world around us.

Discover each session available for replay



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News

TRANSVERSAL COURSE

A LOOK BACK AT THE PROGRAMME

- 19 February — Introduction to the course
Ghislain Waterlot (Philosopher – UNIGE)

PART I: NATURAL SCIENCES

- 26 February — How can we define safe and just planetary boundaries for countries?
Hy Dao (Geographer – UNIGE)
- 5 March — A brief history of climate: from the Holocene to the Anthropocene
Sébastien Guillet (Paleoclimatologist – UNIGE)
- 12 March — What future awaits life on Earth?
Martin Schlaepfer (Biologist – UNIGE)
- 19 March — Challenges of biogeochemical flows (nitrogen, phosphorus, carbon)
Aurélien Boutaud (PhD in Environmental Sciences, consultant-researcher)

PART II: SOCIAL SCIENCES

- 26 March — Writing the history of the Anthropocene
Antoine Acker (Historian – UNIGE)
- 2 April — An Anthropocene observed and monitored
Nicolas Ray (Biologist – UNIGE)
and **Nicolas Baya Laffite** (Sociologist – UNIGE)
- 16 April — Capitalocene: a critical perspective on economics and the environment
Pauline Plagnat-Cantoreggi (Economist – UNIGE)
- 23 April — How can cities intensify their responses to climate disruption?
Géraldine Pflieger (Political Scientist – UNIGE)

PART III: PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

- 30 April — How can we tell the story of a damaged world?
Christian Schlenker (Theologian – UNIGE)
- 7 May — Eutopia and apocalypse: thinking about utopianism in the Anthropocene
Benoît Ischer (Theologian – UNIGE)
- 21 May — The Anthropocene: “a perfect moral storm”?
Damien Delorme (Philosopher – UNIL)
- 28 May — Conclusion: reintegrating ourselves into the order of the world?
Pierre Gillouard (Philosopher – UNIGE)

Transversal
Course

Discover each session available for replay



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Lecture

Watch

OR REWATCH



Beyond the Anthropocene?

Anne Fremaux, a professor of philosophy and PhD in political ecology (Queen's University Belfast), gave a lecture on 17 March 2026 building on her book *After the Anthropocene* (2019), which explores what it means to move beyond the Anthropocene.

The Anthropocene is presented here as a profound crisis in our relationship with the living world and the Earth, rather than simply as a change of geological epoch. Anne Frémaux challenges the modern worldview based on the domination of nature and unlimited growth. She advocates a global transformation — political, economic and ontological — of the way we inhabit the world.

She highlights “green republicanism” as one possible path towards reconciling freedom, ecological justice and intergenerational responsibility. In this respect, she argues that a post-capitalist future is necessary in order to build more balanced relationships between human beings and the rest of the living world.

Watch the lecture



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Lecture

Watch

OR REWATCH



The resilience of life and human societies: What plants can teach us in the Anthropocene

Mathilde Simon, PhD in Biology and ethnobotanist (Institut Michel Serres – ENS Lyon), gave a lecture on 19 May 2026 exploring what plants can teach us in the Anthropocene.

The notion of resilience and robustness is first explored through the plant world. Plants, organisms that are rooted in place and exposed to environmental uncertainties, do not seek maximum performance. Instead, they develop strategies of adjustment, redundancy and plasticity that enable them to persist in changing environments.

This approach invites us to shift our perspective: what if, rather than focusing on optimisation and short-term efficiency, our societies drew inspiration from these principles of the living world? Robustness then becomes a framework for rethinking our Western modes of organisation, our relationship with time and our use of resources.

Wild foraging is presented as a concrete practice embodying these principles: attentiveness to ecosystems, an intimate knowledge of natural cycles, restraint in our actions and adaptation to seasonal variations. It also involves a sensitive and relational dimension, potentially opening the way towards a form of ecospirituality: a way of inhabiting the world based on reciprocity, attentiveness to the living world and an awareness of our interdependence.

Watch the lecture



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Discover

Screening & Discussion

REDISCOVER



Alone among the living world? Meeting with a voluntary castaway

Marine biologist **Matthieu Juncker** set himself a challenge: to live alone for two hundred days on an uninhabited atoll in French Polynesia. His aim? To observe both its richness and its vulnerability, including the consequences of the human footprint on Earth even on a small piece of land where no human being lives.

In a compelling documentary, "Alone on the Atoll: Journal of a Voluntary Castaway," he recounts this extraordinary scientific and human experience. On Tuesday 21 April, the documentary was presented exclusively to the Geneva public as part of the À Ciel Ouvert programme at UNIGE, followed by a live video conversation with Matthieu Juncker from Nouméa, New Caledonia, where he lives and works.

An unprecedented and exceptional testimony.

Watch the documentary trailer



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Editorial
by Trinh
Xuan Thuan

Read

OR REREAD

The spring 2026 editorial by Professor Trinh Xuan Thuan, Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at the University of Virginia, is now available. He introduces us to an almost invisible and elusive particle that nevertheless proves essential to understanding how stars work, supernova explosions and the evolution of the Universe.

The neutrino: an elusive particle at the heart of modern astrophysics

The neutrino is one of the most fascinating and mysterious particles in particle physics. Invisible, almost massless and interacting extremely weakly with matter, it travels through the Universe leaving almost no trace. Yet, despite its elusive nature, the neutrino plays a fundamental role in our understanding of the laws of nature, the evolution of stars and the structure of the cosmos.

Pauli and the Invention of the Neutrino

At the beginning of the 20th century, particle physics underwent profound upheaval, marked by the emergence of quantum mechanics and the discovery of new particles. Against this backdrop of intense exploration, a major problem arose in the study of beta decay, a type of radioactive decay in which an unstable atomic nucleus transforms into another nucleus while emitting an electron (or its antiparticle, the positron).

Experiments showed that the energy of the particles emitted during beta decay did not match theoretical expectations: part of the energy appeared to be missing. This anomaly called into question a fundamental principle of physics — the conservation of energy, a cornerstone of the scientific description of the natural world.

[Read the full editorial](#)



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Calendar

SAVE THE DATE

The À Ciel Ouvert Institute is delighted to join forces with the OFXB Festival.

OFXB TURNS 31

SCIENCE • THEATRE • SHARING • WONDER

**20 July to 2 August 2026 in Saint-Luc
& Tignousa, Val d'Anniviers**

The 2026 Astronomy Festival is a public cultural and scientific event organised by the François-Xavier Bagnoud Observatory (OFXB) in Saint-Luc and Tignousa. It continues more than forty years of astronomical activities in the Val d'Anniviers and celebrates science as a shared cultural heritage.

The programme aims to make astronomy accessible to everyone by bringing it into dialogue with the performing arts, music, heritage and the convivial spirit of popular festivals. It offers a cross-disciplinary approach in which scientific knowledge, imagination and shared experience come together. The programme includes lectures, an original theatrical production, concerts, open-air cinema and a variety of artistic forms.

FESTIVAL LECTURE SERIES

Eight lectures exploring the mysteries of the cosmos through science, philosophy and wonder.

- **20 July – Thomas Dolivo**, space exploration history enthusiast:
Apollo 16 Visits Descartes
- **22 July – Luca Sciarini**, astrophysicist: From the Planetary
Pathways to the Far Reaches of the Cosmos
- **24 July – David Lindemann**, astrophotographer
and software engineer: From Photon to Image
- **25 July – Gilbert Burki**, astrophysicist and honorary professor:
Earth Facing the Cosmos
- **26 July – Pierre Gillouard**, philosopher and theologian:
Rediscovering the Meaning of the Cosmos
- **29 July – Sylvia Ekström**, astrophysicist and professor:
The Secret Life of Our Cosmic Mothers
- **31 July – Michel Mayor**, astrophysicist and Nobel Prize laureate:
Is There a Planet B?
- **2 août – Arthur Choplin**, astrophysicist and musician:
Cosmic Pulse

All lectures take place at 4:00 pm at the Tignousa restaurant.

[More information here](#)



OFXB
Festival

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Read

& DISCOVER



MEMOIRS OF A HUMANOID ROBOT

by Solange Gheraouti
and Philippe Monnin
published by Slatkine



Solange Gheraouti, PhD in Computer Science from the University of Paris-Sorbonne and Honorary Professor at the University of Lausanne, is an internationally renowned specialist in security issues related to technoscience. A member of the Swiss Academy of Sciences, she is the author of numerous scientific and popular science books, some of which have been translated into several languages.



Summary

Nowadays, as algorithmic governance invades every aspect of our lives, the humanoid robot *Off*, speaking to us from the future, tells us the story of the rise of artificial intelligence, where myths become intertwined with reality. He tells us of humanity's fascination with technology, which will ultimately take control of our imagination and our lives.

Moving from the anthropocene to the robotocene, humanity loses its way, with the exception of a few people who defend their unwavering desire to remain human and show the way forward.

[More information here](#)



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Read

& DISCOVER



CROSSED HORIZONS

by Jean Audouze and Bai Ming
published by L'Étincelle nomade



Born from the encounter between Chinese ceramic and visual artist Bai Ming and French astrophysicist Jean Audouze, *Crossed Horizons* is neither an art book nor a popular science book. It is the fruit of two curious and passionate minds offering their original perspectives on the world.

The subtle beauty of Bai Ming's works reveals the harmony of matter, while Jean Audouze invites us, through astrophysics, to explore the mysteries of the Universe. Two perspectives come together to guide us towards a deeper understanding of concepts and elements such as light, space, time, earth, water, air, fire and, ultimately, life.

Bringing together philosophical reflections, poetic thoughts and personal experiences, all inspired by the same universal thirst for knowledge and understanding, this unique book reveals the similarities between artistic creation and scientific discovery — two horizons born from the extraordinary capacities of the human mind.

[More information here](#)



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Edgar Morin

TRIBUTE

We would like to pay tribute to sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin, one of the greatest thinkers of our time.

His thought, deeply rooted in the complexity of reality, never ceased to invite us to connect rather than separate, to understand rather than judge, and to cultivate a lucid and compassionate awareness. We share his open, demanding and deeply humanistic vision of the world.

Below, we offer a selection of inspiring quotations from some of his major works. May reading these texts also be a way of extending the intellectual and human legacy Edgar Morin leaves us.



"The inability to accept the complexity of reality leads not to unreality, but to the forced simplification of reality."



"Consciousness is not the light that illuminates the mind and the world, but the glimmer or flash that illuminates the breach, uncertainty, the horizon."



"Regenerated humanism is therefore not only the feeling of human community, of human solidarity; it is also the feeling of being part of this unknown and incredible adventure, and the wish that it continue towards a metamorphosis from which a new becoming might emerge."



"I experience the aesthetic joy of contemplating the beauties of life, of nature, of the Sun, the Moon and the stars. At the same time, I experience a fervour of communion and an almost mystical integration of the world within me and of myself within the world."



Open Sky
Institute
SCIENCE & SPIRITUALITY

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