

Examples of Successful Branco Weiss Fellows



The Many Faces of Scientific Uncertainty

Karim Bschr – Philosophy of Science – Branco Weiss Fellow 2012-17

Decision makers in modern societies are highly dependent on scientific advice, and questions about the reliability of scientific predictions are becoming increasingly relevant. Understanding the limits of scientific predictions is thus crucial when it comes to handling complex problems. Accordingly, the way predictive uncertainties are handled and communicated is a matter of great public concern. Karim Bschr, Branco Weiss Fellow 2012-17, aims at a systematic philosophical account of predictive uncertainty. Discriminating different types and different sources of scientific uncertainty will provide the basis for a rigorous philosophical discussion of questions like the following: What do we mean when we say, for instance, that certain scientific predictions are “uncertain” or “only probabilistically valid”?



Putting Alzheimer's Disease into Context

Lara Keuck – History of Science – Branco Weiss Fellow since 2015

Alzheimer's disease ranks as one of the major medical threats for today's aging societies. The evaluation of Alzheimer's, its long history, and many re-phrasings over time are at the heart of Lara Keuck's research project at the intersection of history and the philosophy of biomedicine and psychiatry. She contextualizes the development of current biomedical models of Alzheimer's disease, and brings together historical, philosophical, and scientific readings of what it has meant to know something about, and learn something from, a disease. In her research, Lara benefits from five years of support by a Branco Weiss Fellowship. She is one of currently 37 outstanding postdoctoral researchers from around the world who have been selected.



Finding Balance between Proximity and Distance

Marie Kolkenbrock – Literature and Culture Studies – Branco Weiss Fellow since 2019

Her research about proximity and distance in the works of psychology, philosophical anthropology, literature, and film was well under way – when suddenly the global health crisis brought her research uncomfortably close to home. “Through the pandemic, our understanding of distance gained new counter-intuitive facets: keeping distance has become a form of solidarity and care,” she writes. “At the same time, the need for physical distancing has created a need to find new ways to be close to one another: in private relationships, in local communities, in our society.” Yet, from the resurgence of conservative conceptions of the “household” to exclusionary migration politics resulting in humanitarian atrocities at the borders of the West, we also are witnessing the problematic implications of proximity-based forms of solidarity and community. A deeper understanding of how spatial, social, and emotional forms of distancing practices intersect is therefore more crucial than ever.

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