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Infection

Date(s)	Thursday 19th (09:00) - Friday 20th July 2012 (16:30)
Contact	**Workshop leader: Professor Mark Pallen (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/biosciences/pallen-mark.aspx)**
Download	**Add to Calendar (/research/activity/ias/workshops/2012/Infection.aspx?ical=true)**

The University of Birmingham has recently established an Institute of Microbiology and Infection (IMI). However, this is narrowly focused on laboratory-based research on pathogenic microorganisms. Instead, it is important to recognise that infection is a phenomenon and an idea, which permeates the whole of human endeavour and brings an interdisciplinary angle unmatched by almost any other topic. Here are a few of the many topics that could fall under this umbrella:

Biology and Medicine

- Ecology and Evolution of Infection; Infection and the changing environment
- Clinical Aspects of Infection
- Infection in Public Health and Primary care
- Infection and War

History

- Infection shaping the destiny of peoples (e.g. Native Americans; Black Death and plague in Europe) and "great men" (what if Cromwellor Jinnah had not succumbed to infection?)
- Infection in the Ancient world. Infection and trade routes and the slave trade and the great voyages of discovery. Irish potato famine. Local history. Smallpox.
- History of microbiology and epidemiology: John Snow, Jenner, Germ theory
- Palaeoinfection: archaeology and infection, Black Death genome

Arts and Humanities

- Infection in literature. Infection and the tragic hero. *Love in a time of cholera*. Byron dying of dysentery at Missolonghi. Infection and exististentialism, e.g Camus, *La Peste*. Infection in science fiction and survivalist literature (*Death of Grass)*
- Infection in the visual arts. Paintings: an exhibition at the Barber? Film Studies from *Outbreak* to *Contagion*.
- Theology of infection. Religious attitudes to infection (e.g. Jesus healing a leper). Infection and predestination.
- Philosophy of Infection. Language of infection; corpus linguistics of infection. Infection in metaphor.

Social Sciences

- Infection and stigma. Infection and policymaking. Infection and wealth creation/poverty. Infection and the law. Infection and human rights. Vaccination and antivaccination. AIDS denial in South Africa and the Mbeki/ANC government.
- Social responses to catastrophe and threats. Bioterrorism and biowarfare. Malthus and Infection; Infection and the Apocalypse; Infection and life expectancy. Infection and the media.
- Mind viruses, infectious memes. Viral marketing.

Geography and Environment

- The geography of infection: from John Snow to Google Maps
- Infection and Food security; BSE, bovine TB; badger culls; Striga. potato blight, Death of Grass; Bee colony collapse disorder

Engineering and Physical Sciences

- Infection and nanotechnology: threat of the “grey goo”.
- Computer viruses and artificial life. Agent-based modelling. Malware and computer security. Stuxnet.

The aim of the workshop was to survey this topic in all its rich diversity, exploring the potential for collaborations and new research activities across and beyond the campus, together with thoughts on how we might build capacity and make an application to become an IAS Theme.

Delegate List

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