BP 1: Tutorial: Stochastic Processes from Financial Risk to Genetics (joint session SOE/TUT/BP/DY)

Macroscopic and microscopic models from Economy to Biology must account for stochasticity on various levels. While classical physics strives for deterministic descriptions through differential equations from fundamental level to thermodynamics, many physics-based models on higher level explicitely include stochasticity from various sources. Discrete and continuous stochastic processes then become the mathematical foundation of these models. This tutorial highlights classical as well as current methods and approaches of probabilistic models and stochastic processes in physics, biology as well as socio-economic systems, thereby bridging the risk to extinction in genetics with its economic counterpart. (Session organized by Jens Christian Claussen.)

Time: Sunday 16:00–18:30 Location: H4

Tutorial BP 1.1 Sun 16:00 H4
Diffusion approximations for particles in turbulence — •Bernhard Mehlig — University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

The subject of this tutorial is the dynamics of particles in turbulence, such as micron-sized water droplets in the turbulent air of a cumulus cloud. The particles respond in intricate ways to the turbulent fluctuations. Non-interacting particles may cluster together to form spatial patterns – even though the turbulent fluid is incompressible [1]. In this tutorial I explain how to understand spatial clustering using diffusion approximations, highlighting an analogy with Kramers' escape problem [2]. I introduce/review the necessary elements of diffusion theory. My goal is to give a pedagogical introduction to diffusion approximations in non-equilibrium statistical physics, using particles in turbulence as an example.

[1] K. Gustavsson and B. Mehlig, Statistical models for spatial patterns of heavy particles in turbulence, Adv. Phys. 65 (2016) 57 (read Sections 1, 3.1, and 6.1).

[2] H. A. Kramers, Brownian motion in a field of force and the diffusion model of chemical reactions, Physica 7 (1940) 284 (read up to eq. (17)).

Tutorial BP 1.2 Sun 16:50 H4
Probabilities in physics, paradoxes and populations — •Tobias Galla — Instituto de Física Interdisciplinary Sistemas Complejos, IFISC (CSIC-UIB), Campus Universitat Illes Balears, E-07122 Palma de Mallorca, Spain

It is notoriously hard for humans to develop a good intuition for probabilities and stochastic processes. Our brains are not able to do this naturally, and there are numerous mistakes which are easy to make. These mistakes are in fact made regularly in the press (sometimes perhaps deliberately). More worrisome, decision makers such as judges, doctors or politicians are also prone to mishandling probabilities. In this tutorial I will outline a few of these traps, and how to avoid them. I will also discuss the nature of probabilistic models of physical processes – is there genuine randomness in the world around us? I will then present a number of instances in which physics approaches combined with stochastic modelling can make a difference. As one example, I will outline experimental and theoretical results which highlight the importance of stochastic processes in population dynamics. Other examples will include stochastic processes in genetics, the evolution of cancer and in game theory.

Tutorial BP 1.3 Sun 17:40 H4
Risk Revealed: Cautionary Tales, Understanding and Communication — •Paul Embrechts — Department of Mathematics, ETH Zürich

The title of the tutorial refers to a forthcoming book, to be published by Cambridge University Press, co-authored with Valérie Chavez-Demoulin (Lausanne) and Marius Hofert (Waterloo). Extreme Value Theory (EVT) offers a mathematical tool for the modeling of so-called What-If events, or stress scenarios. I will present several examples of risk-based decision-making and show how EVT can be used as part of the solution. The current pandemic has clearly shown that the communication of scientific evidence has a difficult stand in the ubiquitous environment of social media. I will discuss some examples of this struggle.