

ALISTAIR SPONSEL

Science History Institute
315 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106 (USA)

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POSITIONS HELD

- 2025-present Oral Historian and Curator of Life Sciences, Science History Institute.
- 2021-present Lecturer, Department of History, Tufts University.
- 2019-2025 Historian of the Life Sciences, Center for Humanities & History of Modern Biology, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.
- 2020-2021 Senior Research Fellow, Program on Science, Technology & Society, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.
- 2019 Instructor, Division of Continuing Education, Harvard University.
- 2012-2018 Assistant Professor, Department of History, Vanderbilt University.
- 2010-2012 Lecturer, Department of the History of Science, Harvard University.
- 2009-2012 Senior Research Assistant (postdoc), Darwin Correspondence Project.
- 2009-2012 Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of the History of Science, Harvard University.
- 2009 Postdoctoral Fellow, Smithsonian Institution.

EDUCATION

- 2009 Ph.D. in history of science, Princeton University.
Dissertation title: "Coral Reef Formation and the Sciences of Earth, Life, and Sea, c. 1770-1952."
- 2006 Visiting Student, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge.
- 2004 M.A. in history of science, Princeton University.
- 2001 M.Sc. in history of science, technology, and medicine (with distinction), Imperial College, London.
Thesis title: "The Cambridge Natural Sciences Tripos, 1915-1949."
- 2000 B.S. in biology and B.A. in history, Indiana University, Bloomington.
Area Certificate in history and philosophy of science.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2025 (as grant writer) Richard Lounsbery Foundation, “Inspiring Lives in Science: New Conversations with Role-Model Biologists.” Awarded to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory’s Center for Humanities & History of Modern Biology.
- 2024 Emanuel Fellowship, Consortium for the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine. “Documenting Traditional Knowledge of Coral Reefs in the Society Islands and the Tuamotu Archipelago.”
- 2022 Andrew W. Mellon Travel Fellowship. “Analyzing Historical Scholarship on Nineteenth-Century Geology.” University of Oklahoma. (Postponed for injury.)
- 2020 (as grant writer) National Endowment for the Humanities CARES Act grant, “Oral Histories of Biology, Medicine, and Pandemic Response.” Awarded to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory’s Center for Humanities & History of Modern Biology.
- 2019 Lyell Endowed Lecturer, Georgia Southern University.
- 2017 Vanderbilt University Research Scholar Grant. “Coral Reefs from Western and Nonwestern Perspectives.” (Internal competition for leave-year salary; declined.)
- 2016 Vanderbilt International Research Grant. “Coral Reefs: From Threatening to Threatened.” (Award providing funds for Sponsel and accompanying Vanderbilt faculty members and graduate students to travel to the University of Sydney and to research stations on the Great Barrier Reef.)
- 2015 Visiting Scholar with stipend, Max-Planck Institute for the History of Science (Abteilung II: Lorraine Daston). May-June.
- 2013-2014 Vanderbilt University Research Scholar Grant. “Coral Reefs in Science and Culture.” (Internal competition for leave-year salary.)
- 2013 Ritter Memorial Fellowship, Scripps Institution of Oceanography. (Biennial stipendiary award to a scholar “whose research enlarges and deepens the understanding of the history of earth, ocean, and atmospheric sciences. During a recipient's tenure he or she interacts with Scripps scientists and historians, and presents lectures to the academic community and the public.”)
- 2011, 2012 Harvard University Certificate of Teaching Excellence. Faculty of Arts and Sciences (for “Science and the Sea” and “Mapping the British Empire”).

- 2011 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Library Resident Research Fellowship. American Philosophical Society.
- 2009 Smithsonian Institution Postdoctoral Fellowship. “The American Study of Coral Reefs and the Sciences of Exploration since 1838.” (Institution-wide competitive application for a stipendiary fellowship, served during a six-month appointment at the Smithsonian Institution Archives.)
- 2006-2007 Whiting Fellowship in the Humanities.
- 2006 History of Geology Student Award. Geological Society of America (for “Core Drilling at Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls, 1947-1952”).
- 2005-2007 National Science Foundation Dissertation Research Improvement Grant SES 05-22664. “History of ‘The Coral Reef Problem’ from Explorations to Explosions.”
- 2004 Schuman Prize (now Reingold Prize). History of Science Society (for “Fathoming the Depth of Charles Darwin’s Theory of Coral Reef Formation: Humboldt, Hydrography, and Invertebrate Zoology”). Citation published in *Isis*, 97:1 (2006), 134.

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Darwin’s Evolving Identity: Adventure, Ambition, and the Sin of Speculation. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2018.

EDITED VOLUMES

2013. Frederick Burkhardt, *et al.*, eds., *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 20. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (As associate editor.)

2012. Frederick Burkhardt, *et al.*, eds., *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (As associate editor.)

ARTICLES AND BOOK SECTIONS

In preparation. “What Kind of Industry would British Biotechnology Be? Cambridge, Slough, and the 1980 Founding of the Celltech Company.” For inclusion in a special issue of the *Journal of the History of Biology* on “Legacies of Asilomar.”

2023. “Atolls, Experiments, and the Origin of Islands: Science as a Way of Knowing the Pacific since 1766.” *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean*, ed. Paul D’Arcy, Anne Hattori, Ryan Jones, Matt Matsuda, and Jane Samson. Vol.1: 174-197. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2016. “An Amphibious Being: How Maritime Surveying Reshaped Darwin’s Approach to Natural History.” *Isis*, 107: 254-281.

2016. "Pacific Islands and the Problem of Theorizing: The U.S. Exploring Expedition from Fieldwork to Publication." In *Soundings and Crossings: Doing Science at Sea, 1800-1970*, ed. Katharine Anderson and Helen M Rozwadowski, 79-112. Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications.

2015. "From Cook to Cousteau: The Many Lives of Coral Reefs." In *Fluid Frontiers: Exploring Oceans, Islands, and Coastal Environments*, ed. John Gillis and Franziska Torma, 139-161. Cambridge, UK: White Horse Press.

2013. "Charles Darwin's Theory of Coral Reef Formation." In *Coral: Something Rich and Strange*, ed. Marion Endt-Jones, 70-73. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

2010. "Lords of the Ring: Beneath the Surface of the Atoll." *Cabinet*, 38: 55-59.

2009. "Darwin and Humboldt" and "Darwin and Coral Reefs." In *A Voyage Round the World: Charles Darwin and the Beagle Collections in the University of Cambridge*, ed. Alison M. Pearn, 13-15, 104-107. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2002. "Constructing a 'Revolution in Science': The Campaign to Promote a Favourable Reception for the 1919 Solar Eclipse Expeditions." *British Journal for the History of Science*, 35: 439-467.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

2011. "Selective Memory: An Interview with Londa Schiebinger." *Cabinet*, 42: 98-104. (Commissioned as part of themed section on forgetting.)

2010: "Charles Darwin's Notes on the Geology and Corals of the Keeling Islands." In *The Complete Work of Charles Darwin Online*, edited by John van Wyhe. <<http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frameset?viewtype=side&itemID=CUL-DAR41.40-57&pageseq=1>>.

2010: "Darwin and Geology." Web resource offering several essays and a full bibliography of Darwin's geological works. <<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/darwin-geology>> (As main author and designer.)

REVIEWS

2009. "Bonds Forged on the High Seas." *Nature*, 462 (November 19), 286-287. (Review of *Darwin's Armada* by Iain McCalman.)

2008. "Review of *Seafaring Scientist: Alfred Goldsborough Mayor, Pioneer in Marine Biology* by Lester D. Stephens and Dale R. Calder." *International Journal of Maritime History*, 20: 386.

2006. "Overshadowed Ports of Call," *Science*, 312: 5775 (May 12), 850. (Review of *Darwin's Other Islands* by Patrick Armstrong.)

2006. "Review of *Cambridge Scientific Minds* edited by Peter Harman and Simon Mitton, and *From Newton to Hawking* edited by Kevin C. Knox and Richard Noakes." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 42: 409-411.

2005. "From the Beach to the Seafloor," *Science*, 309: 5739 (August 26), 1327-1328. (Review of *Fathoming the Ocean* by Helen M. Rozwadowski.)

PRESENTATIONS

INVITED TALKS

"What Type of Industry would British Biotechnology be? A Tale of Two Cities circa 1980." Part of the "Legacies of Asilomar" conference, Rice University. May 2023.

"Scientific Correspondence as a Medium for Mentorship." Presented at the conference "Darwin and the Life of Letters: Corresponding in Science During the Long Nineteenth Century," University of Cambridge. July 2022.

"How Charles Darwin Became an Amphibious Being." North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. November 2020.

"Imperial Ambitions and Colonial Organisms: How Coral Reefs Have Been Valued Across Times and Cultures." Part of "New Earth Histories" conference, University of New South Wales. December 2019.

"Barriers and Guardians: A Brief History of Ideas and Emotions about Coral Reefs." Part of "Oceanic Humanities" symposium, Melburn G. Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, Texas A&M University. November 2019.

"Between Newton and Darwin: Charles Lyell's Vision of a Modern Science." Inaugural Lyell Endowed Lecture, Georgia Southern University, May 2019.

"Darwin's Evolving Identity." Department of History, University of Tennessee, September 2018.

"How Darwin Learned to Theorize." Department of History, Oxford University, April 2018.

"Darwin's Use of Species Diversity as an Indicator of Geographical Change." Part of workshop "Biodiversity and its Histories." University of Cambridge Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. March 2017.

"An Amphibious Being: Charles Darwin's Debt to Marine Science." GeoQuest Seminar, University of Wollongong. August 2016.

"An Amphibious Being: Charles Darwin's Debt to Marine Science." School of Geosciences, University of Sydney. August 2016.

"Coral Reefs since Cook: From Threatening to Threatened." Part of workshop "The Underwater Realm." Stanford University. May 2015.

“Writing the *Origin* with Burnt Fingers: Darwin’s Penance for the ‘Sin of Speculation.’” Lone Star History of Science Association, University of Houston, April 2015.

“Writing the *Origin* with Burnt Fingers: Darwin’s Penance for the ‘Sin of Speculation.’” History of Science, Technology, and Medicine colloquium, University of Minnesota, September 2014.

“The Hydrographer-Naturalist: How Darwin’s Career depended on his Study of the Ocean.” Part of the workshop “Place and Practice: Doing Science on and in the Oceans, 1800-2000.” Halifax, NS, June 2014.

“Imperial Ambitions and Colonial Organisms: When Corals Built Barriers to Commerce.” Science and Capitalism lecture series, Brown University, February 2014.

“How Studying the Ocean Launched Charles Darwin’s Scientific Career.” Director’s Lecture, National Evolutionary Synthesis Center, Durham, NC, September 2013.

“How Studying the Ocean Launched Charles Darwin’s Scientific Career.” Ritter Memorial Lecture, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, June 2013.

“Reefs since Cook: From Threatening to Threatened.” Scripps Institution of Oceanography, June 2013.

“What is an Author, and how did Darwin Become One?” Science Studies Program, UC San Diego, June 2013.

“An Amphibious Being: How Maritime Culture Shaped Charles Darwin’s Practices and Theories.” Department of History, University of South Carolina, April 2013.

“A Growing Hazard: Charles Darwin and the Puzzle of Coral Reef Formation.” Department of History and Philosophy of Science, Indiana University, September 2012.

“From the Pacific Ocean to the Peabody Museum: The Coral Worlds of James Dwight Dana.” Peabody Museum and Program in the History of Science and Medicine, Yale University, March 2011.

“Local Surveys and General Theories of the South Sea Islands in the Decades around 1800.” Part of “Earth Science, Global Science” workshop, York University, Toronto, October 2010.

“Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls as Proving Grounds for Atomic Bombs and Coral Reef Scientists.” National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C., April 2009.

“Surveying for a Cause: Local Studies and General Theories of the South Sea Islands, from *Resolution* to the U.S. Exploring Expedition.” Part of “Scientific Voyaging: Histories and Comparisons,” Royal Society, London, July 2008.

“Darwin’s First Theory: The Mystery of Coral Reefs.” Klopsteg Lecture on Science in Human Culture, Northwestern University, November 2007.

“Darwin and Coral Reefs.” Bermuda Institute for Ocean Sciences, June 2007.

“Darwin’s First Theory: The Formation of Coral Reefs.” Franklin & Marshall College, March 2007.

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND SEMINARS

“Siamese fighting fish and humans as 'correlated' experimental systems in early LSD-based schizophrenia research.” History of Science Society, Merida, Mexico. November 2024.

“Nuclear Weapons Testing and Local Resistance to the Premise that Pacific Islands were Interchangeable Research Sites.” Society for the Social Studies of Science, Honolulu. November 2023.

“From the Indian Ocean to the Pacific via Upper Gower Street: A Global History of the Word “Atoll.” Part of the Society for the History of Natural History’s “The Language of Nature” conference, Birmingham, UK. June 2023.

“What Type of Industry would British Biotechnology be? A Tale of Two Cities circa 1980.” Part of the “Engineering Life: Regulating Science, Risks, and Society in Europe” conference, Paris. June 2023.

“‘Unsurpassed Concentration’: Competing Visions of Science in Efforts to Promote Cambridge, UK as a Biotechnology Cluster.” History of Science Society, Chicago, November 2022.

“Gentlemen of Science Redux: Recent Visions of Cambridge, UK as a Site for High-technology Businesses.” British Society for the History of Science, Belfast, July 2022.

“Brenner as a Commentator on Biotechnology, from Cambridge to the Courtroom.” Poster presentation with coauthor Antoinette Sutto at “Celebrating the Life and Science of Sydney Brenner” conference, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York, March 2022.

“Siamese Fighting Fish and Humans as ‘Correlated’ Experimental Systems in Early LSD-based Schizophrenia Research.” Australian and New Zealand Society for the History of Medicine, Auckland, December 2019.

“Beneath Tupaia’s Map: Polynesian and European Explanations for the Origins of Pacific Islands, 1770-1850.” Encounters & Exchanges conference, Blenheim, New Zealand, December 2019.

“From Threatening to Threatened: The History of Coral Reefs as Objects of Scientific Inquiry.” Department of Geology and Geography, Georgia Southern University, May 2019.

“Theory, Observation, and Discipline: The Funafuti Expeditions as Crucial Experiments?” History of Science Society, Seattle, November 2018.

“Hearing, Fearing, and Exploiting the Unfamiliar Sounds of the 1940s.” International Congress on History of Science and Technology. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 2017.

“The symbiosis between studies of nuclear weapons and studies of coral reefs, 1946-1977.” International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology, Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 2017.

“Reflections on doing history with science.” History of Science Society, Atlanta, November 2016.

“Hearing, Fearing, and Exploiting the Unfamiliar Sounds of the 1940s.” Vanderbilt History Seminar series “Senses & Emotions,” October 2016.

“Something New Under the Sea? An Environmental History of the Post-Paleozoic World of Corals.” American Society for Environmental History, Seattle, March 2016.

“Visualizing Time, Travel, and Publication in the History of Expeditionary Research, 1830-1930.” History of Science Society, San Francisco, November 2015.

“Coral Reefs and the Concept of Fragility in the Age of Ecology.” Ecological Society of America, Baltimore, August 2015.

“The Life Acousmatic: *Musique concrète*, Underwater Listening, and the Number 1 Crackling Noise.” Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, June 2015.

“Underwater listening and the Acousmatic Predicament: *Musique concrète*, Science, and Safety in the 1940s.” Vanderbilt History Seminar workshop “Can the Sub-marine Speak?” at Vanderbilt University. April 2015.

“Coral Reefs as Objects of Scientific Study, from Threatening to Threatened.” American Society for Environmental History, Washington, D.C., March 2015.

“Coral Reefs as Objects of Scientific Study, from Threatening to Threatened.” History of Science Society, Chicago, November 2014.

“An Amphibious Being: How Darwin’s Theories Depended Upon the Practical Work of Maritime Surveying.” Biological Interest Group, University of Minnesota, September 2014.

“The *Musique concrète* of Nature: Underwater Listening and the Acousmatic Predicament.” Society for the Social Studies of Science, Buenos Aires, August 2014.

“From Description to Theory: How Coral Reefs Changed Nineteenth-Century Hydrography.” British Society for the History of Science, St. Andrews, July 2014.

“From Threatening to Threatened: How Coral Reefs Became Fragile.” Department of the History of Science, Harvard University, February 2014.

“The Hydrographer-Naturalist: How Darwin’s Approach to Science was Reshaped by Maritime Surveying Practices.” American Historical Association, January 2014.

“Naval and Zoological Opportunism during World War II: The Case of the Snapping Shrimp.” History of Science Society, Boston, November 2013.

“From Threatening to Threatened: How Coral Reefs became Fragile.” Department of History, Yale University, November 2013.

“What is an Author, and how did Darwin Become One?” Department of the History of Science, Harvard University, October 2013.

“From Threatening to Threatened: Coral Reefs as Objects of Scientific Study.” International Congress of History of Science, Technology and Medicine.” Manchester, UK, July 2013.

“A Conflict between Biology and Geology: The ‘Thirty-Years’ War’ in Coral Reef Studies, 1910-1939.” International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology, Montpellier, France, July 2013.

“A Threat on the Map: The Growth of Coral Reefs as a Problem for British Surveyors, 1768-1850.” North American Conference on British Studies, Montreal, November 2012.

“From Cook to Cousteau: The Many Lives of Coral Reefs.” Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, May 2012.

“An Apprenticeship in Theory: Rethinking Darwin’s Debt to Lyell.” Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, May 2012.

“From Cook to Cousteau: The Many Lives of Coral Reefs.” Final Frontiers: Exploring Oceans, Islands, and Coastal Environments workshop at the Island Institute, Rockland, Maine, organized by the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, October 2011.

“Making a Man of Science: Lyell as a Personal Mentor to Darwin.” International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology, Salt Lake City, July 2011.

“Lyell’s Disciple.” Department of the History of Science, Harvard University, March 2011.

“Theory in the Making: Charles Darwin’s Explanation of Coral Reefs, from Problem to Publication.” Department of the History of Science, Harvard University, September 2010.

“Continents from Animalcules.” British Society for the History of Science, Aberdeen, July 2010.

“Was Darwin’s Theory of Coral Reef Formation the Product of a Particular Place?” Darwin in the Field Conference, Sedgwick Museum, University of Cambridge, July 2009.

“Operation Crossroads and the 1947 Scientific Resurvey of Bikini Atoll.” Joint Atlantic Seminar for the History of Biology, Philadelphia, March 2007.

“‘The Greatest Laboratory in the World’: The 1947 Scientific Resurvey of Bikini Atoll.” History of Science Society, Vancouver, November 2006.

“Core Drilling at Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls, 1947-1952.” Geological Society of America, Philadelphia, October 2006.

“‘The Good Man Who Has Spread His Studies Widely...is Likely to Prove a Very Useful Individual’: A History of the Natural Sciences Tripos from 1914 to 1950.” Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, June 2006.

“Coral Reefs and the Young Charles Darwin.” Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge, May 2006.

“Coral Reefs as Sites and Subjects of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Tests.” International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology, Guelph, July 2005.

“Fathoming the Depth of Charles Darwin’s Theory of Coral Reef Formation.” History of Science Society, Austin, November 2004.

“Fathoming the Depth of Charles Darwin’s Theory of Coral Reef Formation.” Joint Atlantic Seminar for the History of Biology, New Haven, April 2004.

“School of Empire: The Voyaging Naturalists of Joseph Banks’ Network.” History of Science Society, Cambridge, Massachusetts, November 2003.

“Debating the Purpose of an Undergraduate Training in Science: ‘Depth’ versus ‘Breadth’ on the Cambridge Natural Sciences Tripos, 1914-1950.” History of Science Society, Milwaukee, November 2002.

TEACHING

TUFTS UNIVERSITY (2021-PRESENT)

Undergraduate courses:

Global Environmental History (Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024)

Global History of Science, Technology, and Medicine (Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2025)

History of Exploration (Spring 2022)

Pacific History: Cultures and Environments of Oceania (Spring 2023, Spring 2024)

Master's field supervision:

2022 Kate Macy (History of science, technology, and the environment)

Senior thesis advising:

2023-2024 Laura Harvey (Global history of indigo cultivation and use)

Senior thesis committee membership:

2024-2025 Larson Burak (International governance of Antarctic natural resources)

Undergraduate research advising:

2022 Laura Harvey (Laidlaw Fellowship; co-supervised with James Rice)

HARVARD UNIVERSITY (2010-2012 AND 2019)

Undergraduate/graduate courses:

From Humans in Peril to Imperiled Planet (Summer 2019)

The Darwinian Revolution (co-taught with Janet Browne, Fall 2011)

Undergraduate courses:

Science and the Sea (Fall 2010)

Mapping the British Empire (Fall 2011)

The Darwinian Revolution (co-taught with Janet Browne, Fall 2011)

Senior honors thesis supervision:

2011 Julia Duke (late-nineteenth century studies of the animal mind)

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY (2012-2018)

Undergraduate courses:

The Darwinian Revolution (Spring 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Fall 2016, Fall 2017)

Science and Empire (Spring 2013)

Shipwrecks (Spring and Fall 2015, Fall 2016)

History of Exploration (Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017)

Science and the Sea (Spring 2016)

Graduate courses:

Environmental History (Fall 2012)
Graduate Readings in Science and Empire (Spring 2013)
History of Science and Technology (Fall 2014, Spring 2017)
Graduate Readings in Science, Technology, and the Environment (Fall 2015)
Graduate Readings in History of Modern Science (Fall 2016)
Cultures and Identities in Britain's Long Nineteenth Century (Fall 2017, co taught with James Epstein)

Ph.D. prospectus committees:

2017 Danielle Stubbe
2016 Sarah Cook
2016 Wietske Smeele
2015 Carolyn Taratko
2014 J'Nese Williams
2013 Danielle Picard

Qualifying exam committees:

2018 Miguel Chavez (chair; history of modern science)
2017 Patrick Anthony (chair; history of modern science)
2017 Danielle Stubbe (history of modern science)
2017 Anna Young (Early Modern science and medicine)
2016 Wietske Smeele (Dept. of English; external)
2016 Hillary Taylor (science, technology, and the environment)
2013 J'Nese Williams (science and empire)

First-year advising:

2015-16 Miguel Chavez
2015-16 Hannah Hicks (co-adviser with Catherine Molineux)
2014-15 Patrick Anthony

NORTHWEST VISTA COLLEGE, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS (2002)

U.S. History 1865 to the Present (3 sections, Spring 2002)

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ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATIONS

- Ongoing Peer reviews of book and journal manuscripts for presses and journals including University of Chicago Press, Oxford University Press, Centaurus, Endeavour, *Isis*, *Journal of the History of Biology*, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, and *Synthese*.
- 2024 Panel co-organizer (with Amalia Sweet), “‘Piscine Mice’: The Ascendency of Fish and Other Aquatic Animal Models in the Research Laboratory. History of Science Society annual meeting. Merida, Mexico. November 2024.
- 2023 Co-organizer (with Luis Campos, Angela Creager, and Ludmila Pollock), Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory workshop on the history of recombinant DNA (an event with ten invited speakers from five countries). September-October 2023.
- 2021 Panel organizer, “Opportunities for Historians at CSHL: A Virtual Tour of Collections, Resources, Fellowships, and the Center for Humanities & History of Modern Biology.” International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology biennial meeting. Cold Spring Harbor, New York, July 2021.
- 2021 Organizing committee member, STS Summer School, Harvard University.
- 2020-2021 Managing director, Global Observatory for Genome Editing.
- 2020 Organizing committee member, Science & Democracy Network annual meeting.
- 2018 Rainger Prize committee chair, History of Science Society.
- 2017 Organizer (with Danielle Picard and Patrick Anthony), Southern History of Science and Technology annual meeting. April 7-8, Vanderbilt University.
- 2015-2017 Prize committee chair, Earth and Environment Forum of the History of Science Society.
- 2016 Panel co-organizer (with Lukas Rieppel), “History of Science and Environmental History.” History of Science Society, Atlanta.
- 2013-2015 President, Earth and Environment Forum of the History of Science Society.
- 2015 Participant, Ischia Summer School in the History of the Life Sciences (theme: Geographies of Life).

- 2015 Panel co-organizer (with Helen Anne Curry), “Alternative Stories of Endangerment in the Twentieth Century.” American Society for Environmental History, Washington, D.C.
- 2012-2014 Member (Chair in 2014), Nathan Reingold Prize committee, History of Science Society.
- 2014 Panel co-organizer (with Helen Anne Curry), “Under Threat: The Sciences of Extinction and Endangerment since 1850.” History of Science Society, Chicago.
- 2014 Panel organizer, “Nineteenth-Century Science outside the Laboratory.” American Historical Association, Washington, D.C.
- 2012-2013 Steering Committee Member, Earth and Environment Forum of the History of Science Society.
- 2009-2013 Affiliated Research Scholar, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge.
- 2008-2011 Research Associate, Smithsonian Institution Archives.
- 2010 Conference co-organizer (with Janet Browne, Everett Mendelsohn, and Myrna Perez), Joint Atlantic Seminar in the History of Biology, Harvard University.
- 2006 Panel co-organizer (with Judy Johns Schloegel), “Artificial Radiation, ‘Natural’ Laboratories.” History of Science Society, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- 2006 Participant, “Oceans and Atmospheres.” Dibner Institute Seminar in the History of Biology. Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts.
- 2005 Co-organizer (with Shawn Mullet), Princeton-Harvard Colloquium for the History of the Physical Sciences, Harvard University.

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

- 2024-present Coach/faculty advisor, Tufts University cycling team.
- 2024 Organizer, “Cultural, Environmental, and Historical Perspectives on the Coral Reefs of Tahiti” visiting speaker panel, Tufts.
- 2024 Organizer, Sydney Brenner Fellows’ Symposium, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

- 2023-2024 Presentations in the on-campus seminar series on institutional history and diversity, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.
- 2015-2018 Co-organizer (with Ole Molvig and, from 2017, Tasha Rijke-Epstein), Science Studies Seminar. Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities.
- 2013-2018 Faculty Committee, Program in Environmental and Sustainability Studies, Vanderbilt University.
- 2016-2017 Founding faculty sponsor, History of Science and Medicine Society (Vanderbilt graduate student organization).
- 2016-2017 Committee on Graduate Education, College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt.
- 2016-2017 Graduate Studies Committee, Department of History, Vanderbilt.
- 2015-2016 Lectures Committee, Department of History, Vanderbilt.
- 2015-2016 Faculty sponsor, History of Science Working Group, Vanderbilt.
- 2015 Co-organizer (with Danielle Picard), “Can the Sub-Marine Speak?” Vanderbilt History Seminar workshop.
- 2014-2015 Graduate Studies Committee, Department of History, Vanderbilt.
- 2013 Organizer, “Maps and Mapping for Humanities Scholars,” Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities workshop.
- 2012-2013 Steering Committee, Vanderbilt History Seminar.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2021 Interviewee for *Ocean Matters* podcast episode “Charles Darwin’s Island Discoveries.”
<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/bonus-charles-darwins-island-discovery/id1546084893?i=1000527304175>
- 2019 Podcast interview about *Darwin’s Evolving Identity*.
<https://newbooksnetwork.com/alistair-sponsel-darwins-evolving-identity-adventure-ambition-and-the-sin-of-speculation-u-chicago-press-2018>
- 2017 Lecturer on Vanderbilt and University of North Carolina excursion to the Galapagos Islands.
- 2016 Speaker and participant, “Arts, Science, Oceans” event, Sydney Environment Institute.

- 2016 Lecturer aboard *Aranui 5* during April-May voyage from Tahiti to the Tuamotu Archipelago and the Marquesas Islands (eight lectures).
- 2016 Screening and discussion of *Le Monde du Silence* (with Jennifer Fay), Vanderbilt International Lens film series.
- 2015 “Before Darwin: Hutton, Lyell, Agassiz.” YouTube interview with co-panelists Christoph Irmscher (Indiana University) and Jack Repcheck (author of *The Man Who Found Time*). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XuMCdDjGwc>
- 2015 Historian Meets Curator (with curator Eric Lazo-Wasem). Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University.
- 2015 Judge for *The Atlantic*/College Board high-school history essay contest.
- 2013 Interview guest, University of Manchester Life Sciences Podcast <https://lifesciencespodcast.wordpress.com/2013/08/13/space-monkeys-and-threatening-corals/>
- 2007 “Charles Darwin’s First Theory: The Mystery of Coral Reefs.” (DuPont) Sunday Evening Seminar Series, Greenville, Delaware.

CV last updated: 4 February 2025