

Two PhD positions: Social Evolution Theory, University of Neuchatel (Switzerland)

Two PhD positions are open under the supervision of Dr. Laurent Lehmann to study social evolution theory at the Laboratory of eco-ethology of the University of Neuchatel Switzerland (<http://www2.unine.ch/ethol/>). The positions are funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and are available for three years. Starting date: end of 2009, beginning of 2010. Salary per annum: 36'900 to 45'600 CHF.

The focus of the SNF-funded project is to develop gene-culture co-evolutionary models for social interactions, with focus on human evolution. The project will have two different but complementary directions. First, we will seek to develop models, which can explain the evolution of the transition of small-scale egalitarian societies to larger-scale stratified societies. Second, we will seek to develop models aiming at understanding the role of individual and social learning in the expression and dynamics of social behaviours, for example in the context of the usage of adaptive and maladaptive cultural traits. Some related papers on this can be found at <http://www.stanford.edu/~lehmann/>. Depending upon the applicants, the work could be taken in a number of directions.

The Institute of Biology at Neuchatel consists of a dozen groups working in diverse fields of ecology, evolution, physiology and molecular and cell biology. Neuchatel is a University town in the French-speaking part of Switzerland situated between the Jura Mountains and a 40km long lake. The town is well connected with larger centres such as Lausanne, Geneva, Berne, or Zurich by public transportation. For more information, contact Laurent Lehmann (lehmann@stanford.edu).

Applicants must have a university degree that allows entrance to a PhD program. Applicants are required to have good knowledge in mathematics or computer programming. Ideal applicants have a good knowledge of evolutionary biology, behavioural ecology and/or population genetics. A strong interest in understanding the genetic and cultural factors driving social evolution in humans is an asset. Motivated applicants should submit (1) a one-page letter that summarizes interests and relevant experience, (2) a CV, (3) copies of undergraduate and masters/diploma transcripts, and (4) contact information for 2 references (all as PDFs) to lehmann@stanford.edu.