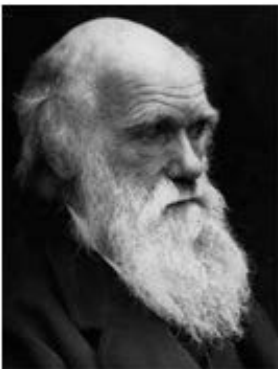




"Constructing the social world: from home remodeling to a new social order"

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Of any animal species, *Homo sapiens* makes perhaps the most radical changes to its surrounding environment. This powerful capacity for 'niche construction' is intimately linked to a suite of seemingly unique adaptations, including strong reliance on social learning, habitual tool use, sophisticated communication, and high levels of cooperation among non-kin. In this talk I focus on a phylogenetically distant species, a humble invertebrate, which has independently converged on a parallel suite of analogous, human-like adaptations. Through long-term field and laboratory experiments, spanning a decade, I reveal how and why a seemingly trivial act of niche construction, remodeling homes, has sparked the creation of a new social order among these invertebrates. I conclude with recent work on the evolution of gossip, a form of social niche construction that is unique to humans.

Haller Hall Room 102
24 Oxford Street
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