

The James T. Cushing Memorial Prize in History and Philosophy of Physics

Announcement of 2016 Winner



The John J. Reilly Center for Science, Technology, and Values, along with the Graduate Program in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Notre Dame and the Advisory Committee of the James T. Cushing Memorial Prize in History and Philosophy of Physics are pleased to announce the award of the

Cushing Prize for 2016 to Dr. Adam Caulton, currently assistant professor at the Munich Center for Mathematical Philosophy, for his paper, “The Role of Symmetry in the Interpretation of Physical Theories,” published in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Modern Physics* (2015). The Cushing Prize carries a \$2000 award plus an invitation to deliver a lecture as part of the History and Philosophy of Science Colloquium at the University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Caulton was nominated by Dr. Erik Curiel and Prof. Dr. Stephan Hartmann of the Munich Center for Mathematical Philosophy. They write: “The nominated paper is an important and original contribution to the debate about the semantics and interpretation of physical theories. [It shows] how to construct a complete, unique interpretation of a theory, unobservable terms included, in a way that respects the generic structure and applications of physical theory. Caulton begins with a general account of physical theories and their symmetries, proposing a novel and useful classification of the symmetries of a generic theory, the analytic and the synthetic. [He] successfully navigates the treacherous straits between semantic and syntactic approaches to the interpretation of physical theory, finding the common ground that makes his work relevant and applicable to both kinds of account. This is a paper that all future work on the semantics and interpretation of generic physical theories will have to take account of.”

Dr. Caulton received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Cambridge in 2011 under the supervision of Dr. Jeremy Butterfield. He has previously been a Jacobsen Research Fellow of the Institute of Philosophy in the School of Advanced Study, University of London, and a visiting professor in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Pittsburgh. In fall 2016, Dr. Caulton will begin as associate professor of philosophy of physics at Balliol College, Oxford University.