

INVITED LECTURE

We are pleased to invite you to a lecture by Professor **Kärin Nickelsen**, Chair for the History of Science at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. The lecture will take place on **Tuesday, 31 March 2026, from 18:00 to 20:00**, in the New Building (seminar room NK1) of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at the National and Kapodistrian University of the Athens (University Campus, [map](#)).



Title of the lecture:

**Too green, too strange,
too complicated?
Encounters between Physics, Chemistry
and Biology in Photosynthesis Research,
c. 1920-1950s**

Abstract: Photosynthesis is the complex metabolic process by which plants convert carbon dioxide into sugar using the energy of the sun. Understanding how this process works required a combination of various methodological and conceptual approaches from physics, chemistry, and biology, which was often less straightforward than one might expect. This paper uses three examples from the first half of the twentieth century to explore how these cross-disciplinary encounters unfolded. I will argue that they can be conceptualised as a form of knowledge transfer. The success of this transfer depended not only on the factual expertise of those involved, but also on their interactional expertise and on the ability of the receiving community to accommodate change. All of these factors posed challenges in the examples that I will present. Regardless of the objective value of the knowledge involved, cross-disciplinary encounters were bound to fail unless both sides ensured that the new approaches aligned with the epistemic goals and methodological standards of the target area.

The lecture is organized by the [Department of History and Philosophy of Science](#), National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, with the support of the Interdepartmental Program of Graduate Studies in ['Science, Technology, Society—Science and Technology Studies'](#).