

Alexandre Champagne-Ruel

NASA Postdoctoral Program Fellow

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Origins of Life • Astrobiology • Complex Systems

RESEARCH PROFILE

NASA Postdoctoral Fellow and Physicist investigating the physical principles underlying the origin of life. My research integrates statistical mechanics, information theory, and evolutionary dynamics to understand how spatial environments drive the emergence of complexity. Currently developing quantitative frameworks for agnostic life detection and biosignature assessment.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

NASA Postdoctoral Program Fellow

Arizona State University, Mathis Group

Current

Tempe, AZ

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Physics

Université de Montréal

2025

Montréal, QC

- Thesis: *Spatiality in Prebiotic Evolution: Toward a Physics of the Emergence of Complexity*
- Advisor: Paul Charbonneau

M.Sc. Physics

Université de Montréal

2020

Montréal, QC

- Thesis: *From Game Theory to Exobiology: The Emergence of Cooperation as a Critical Phenomenon*
- Advisor: Paul Charbonneau

B.Sc. Physics

Université de Montréal

2018

Montréal, QC

B.Sc. Philosophy

Université de Montréal

2012

Montréal, QC

GRANTS & AWARDS

NASA Postdoctoral Fellowship

146,496 USD

2025

Project: Mapping Molecular Complexity for Agnostic Life Detection

J. Armand Bombardier Scholarship

10,000 CAD

2024

Globalink Research Award (Mitacs Canada)

6,000 CAD

2024

J. Armand Bombardier Scholarship

10,000 CAD

2023

J. Armand Bombardier Scholarship

10,000 CAD

2022

Doctoral Scholarship (FRQNT)

70,000 CAD

2022

Excellence Award (UdeM)

10,000 CAD

2018

Various Travel & Research Grants (15 awards)

~30,000 CAD

2011 – 2025

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Articles under review

- A. **Champagne-Ruel** and C. Mathis, "Spatial Patterning and Selection: How the Environment Shapes Molecular Complexity", [10.48550/arXiv.2509.04547 \(2025\)](https://arxiv.org/abs/2509.04547), (Submitted to PNAS Nexus).
- OoLEN, S. Asche, C. Bautista, D. Boulesteix, A. **Champagne-Ruel**, C. Mathis, et al., "What it takes to solve the Origin(s) of Life: An integrated review of techniques", [10.48550/arXiv.2308.11665 \(2023\)](https://arxiv.org/abs/2308.11665), (Submitted to Cell Reports Physical Science).

Published articles

- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, S. Zakaib-Bernier, and P. Charbonneau, "Diffusion and pattern formation in spatial games", [Physical Review E 110, 014301 \(2024\)](#).
- A. **Champagne-Ruel** and P. Charbonneau, "A Mutation Threshold for Cooperative Takeover", [Life 12, 254 \(2022\)](#).
- S. Gelin, A. **Champagne-Ruel**, and N. Mousseau, "Enthalpy-entropy compensation of atomic diffusion originates from softening of low frequency phonons", [Nature Communications 11, 3977 \(2020\)](#).

Invited talks

- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "Physics of Complexity And Agnostic Life Detection", Trottier Institute for Research on Exoplanets (Canada), 2025.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "Spatial Patterning and Selection: How the Environment Shapes Molecular Complexity", Max Planck Institute for Terrestrial Microbiology (Germany), 2025.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "From Emergent Complexity to Reliable Life Detection", Arizona State University, 2024.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "Coopération, émergence et transitions: comment la physique statistique peut nous éclairer sur la question des origines", Qu'est-Ce Qu'expliquer Une Origine En Science ? (CIRST, UQAM), 2022.

Oral presentations

- A. **Champagne-Ruel** and C. Mathis, "From Emergent Complexity to Reliable Life Detection", BEACON (Iceland), 2025.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "Diffusion: an Overlooked Driver of Prebiotic Complexity", AbSciCon (Providence), 2024.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "Théorie de l'information et origine de la vie", 90e Congrès de l'ACFAS, 2023.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "A Mutation Threshold for Cooperative Takeover", AbSciCon (Atlanta), 2022.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "Cooperation: an emergent universal feature at the dawn of life", Interdisciplinary Origin of Life Meeting for Early Career Researchers (Montréal), 2022.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "Mutation favors the emergence of cooperation", Life and Space Poland, 2021.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, "La criticalité dans un système évolutif artificiel", Centre de Recherche En Astrophysique Du Québec (CRAQ) - Rencontre Annuelle, 2019.

Posters

- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, C. P. Kempes, and C. Mathis, "Mapping molecular complexity for agnostic life detection", NASA Postdoctoral Program Virtual Symposium, 2025.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, A. Demers-Bergeron, and P. Charbonneau, "L'émergence de la coopération via l'évolution de réseaux informationnels", 90e Congrès de l'ACFAS, 2023.

- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, S. Zakaib-Bernier, and P. Charbonneau, “Diffusion, structures spatiales et origine de la vie”, 90e Congrès de l’ACFAS, 2023.
- S. Asche, A. **Champagne-Ruel**, S. F. Jordan, M. Preiner, A. d. N. Vieira, J. C. Xavier, et al., “OoLEN - The Origin of Life Early-career Network: Building the community needed to solve the problem”, AbSciCon Atlanta, 2022.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, “A Mutation Threshold for Cooperative Takeover”, Gordon Research Conference: Environments for the Origins of Life and Habitability (Oxnard), 2022.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel**, “A Mutation Threshold for Cooperative Takeover”, Gordon Research Seminar: Challenging Paradigms in Prebiotic Chemistry (Oxnard), 2022.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel** and P. Charbonneau, “Les mutations favorisent la coopération en contexte évolutif”, Centenaire, Département de Physique, Université de Montréal, 2021.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel** and P. Charbonneau, “Mutation favors the emergence of cooperative behavior”, Molecular Origins of Life Munich, 2021.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel** and P. Charbonneau, “Mutations promote cooperation in an evolutionary setting”, XIXth ISSOL Conference, 2021.
- A. **Champagne-Ruel** and P. Charbonneau, “Self-organized criticality : a prelude to avalanche models of solar flares”, Space Climate 7 Symposium, 2019.

Media & Public Engagement

- É. Beaudoin-Paul, “Entrevue avec Alexandre Champagne-Ruel, récipiendaire de la prestigieuse bourse en astrobiologie de la NASA”, [Quartier Libre \(2025\)](#).
- A. Riopel, “Comment reconnaître la vie sur d’autres planètes”, [Le Devoir \(2023\)](#).
- C. Tamura, “Cooperation and the Origin of Life”, Quantum Photonics Clubhouse Podcast (2022).

SCHOOLS & SELECTIVE WORKSHOPS

Assembly Theory for Folded Matter

Santa Fe Institute

2025

Santa Fe, NM

Information Driven States of Matter

University of Rochester

2024

Rochester, NY

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Mentor – Biocomputing Scholars program

Arizona State University

2025 – 2026

Tempe, AZ

- Guiding 3 undergraduate students in developing computational chemistry simulations.

Undergraduate Internship Supervision

Université de Montréal

2022

Montréal, QC

- Supervised a summer research project on diffusion; resulted in journal publication and poster presentation.

Teaching Assistant – Introduction to Astrobiology

Université de Montréal

2021 – 2022

Montréal, QC

Tutoring – Undergraduate Level

Université de Montréal

2018 – 2022

Montréal, QC

SERVICE & OUTREACH

Scientific Leadership

Positions

Member of the Executive Board 2022 – Present

Origin of Life Early-career Network (OoLEN)

Origin of Life Digest ([link](#)) 2021 – Present

Editor

Conference Organization

- **Interdisciplinary Origin of Life Meeting (Japan, 2026)** (Organizing Committee)
- **Frontiers in Astrobiology and Origins of Life Conference (Iceland, 2025)** (Organizing Committee)
- **Origine de la vie : de l'astrophysique à la philosophie (Canada, 2023)** (Lead Organizer)
- **Interdisciplinary Origin of Life Meeting for Early Career Researchers (Canada, 2022)** (Lead Organizer)
- **Space Climate 7 (Canada, 2019)** (Local Organizing Committee)

Session Convener

- **AbSciCon (Madison, 2026): Assembly Theory Across Scales: From Molecules to Planetary Systems**
- **AbSciCon (Madison, 2026): Exploring Self-Assembly and Self-Organization in Prebiotic Complexity**

Reviewing Activities

- Royal Society Open Science

Memberships

- International Society for Artificial Life
- Center for Research in Astrophysics of Québec
- Canadian Association of Physicists
- Canadian Astronomical Society
- Origin of Life Early-career Network
- International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life
- Complex Systems Society
- Scientific Society for Astrobiology (Founding Member)

SKILLS

Languages: Fluent in Spoken/Written French, English

Programming: Python, C++, Fortran, Julia, R, LaTeX, MatLab, Assembly, Bash

Modeling: Agent-based, Evolutionary Algorithms, Machine Learning, Network Theory, Game Theory

Development Workflow: Linux, High Performance Computing (HPC)/SLURM, Git, Jekyll, Hugo, HTML5/CSS3