



## HAPPENING TODAY

DR. CHRISTIAN LEITERER  
AT THE ECRE SEMINAR AT 1 PM

Dr. Christian Leiterer from the Nucleus Jena is giving a guest lecture on

**How to apply for third-party funding using AI**

at today's ECRE seminar. He will also be available for your questions and for networking!



## ALSO HAPPENING TODAY

RESEARCH DATA MANAGER, DR. IVAN BELIAEV, FROM THE MICROVERSE IS INTRODUCING US TO RDM (RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT) AT THE ECRE SEMINAR AT 1 PM!



JSMC CONGRATULATES

DR. ERIC RUHLAND

BE PART  
OF THE  
NEWSLETTER!

WE WANT TO  
KNOW ABOUT

- Your publications
- Awards and prizes
- Your graduations
- Your research stays abroad
- Anything fun happening in our JSMC labs

E-mail us [here!](#)



If you want to read about Eric's PhD journey, please go to our July issue of this year.

## JSMC GRADUATES - A PHD JOURNEY

### KERSTIN UNGER

#### THE ROLE OF THE PLANT SPECIALIZED METABOLITES GLUCOSINOLATES AND ISOTHIOCYANATES IN MICROBIAL INTERACTIONS AND LEAF COLONIZATION

I started my PhD in July 2021 in the Plant Microbiosis Group, supervised by Dr. Matt Agler and Prof. Erika Kothe. The JSMC funded my project with a PhD fellowship that allowed me to develop my own research ideas. I am curious about microbial interactions in all kinds of environments, and I decided to study the interplay between plant specialized metabolites and bacterial interactions in plant leaves. My work was highly collaborative with

researchers from the Microverse Cluster and the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology.

I submitted my thesis ("The role of the plant specialized metabolites glucosinolates and isothiocyanates in microbial interactions and leaf colonization") in June 2025, and I hope to defend it by the end of the year.

As part of my thesis, we found that plant "defense" metabolites do not

just repel herbivorous insects and inhibit plant pathogens; they also serve as a nutrient source, potentially influencing the community assembly of leaf microbiomes in *Arabidopsis thaliana*. Interestingly, microbial detoxification of these plant defense metabolites can function as a public good, rescuing sensitive co-colonizing commensal strains.

The past few years have been full of lab experiments, plant sampling, data analysis and writing. Of course, I had doubts if all these experiments made

sense, if I would ever finish, and if it was worth it - just like every other doctoral researcher - but now I'm glad that I did it.

Until the end of the year, I'm still working in Matt's group. I'm finishing up my projects and preparing for the defense. After that, I will take some time off to visit friends and family and to travel. I'm interested in finding a position in more applied research, either in agriculture or the food industry.

In the end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the JSMC for funding my project and for their administrative support (especially Katja!). I also thank all the dedicated people who organize social events, write newsletters, arrange the MiCom, company visits, alumni meetings, and the "Alternative Careers in Science" seminar. Most of them do this in their free time, but you all make this a vibrant, supportive community!




Join the JSMC community for a **Social Night!**

**When: Friday 17.10.25**  
**21:00**

**Where: Theater Cafe**  
Schillergäßchen 1,  
07745 Jena, Germany

## UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 17, 1 PM, LECTURE HALL ERBERTSTRASSE 1  
**ECRE SEMINAR**

NOVEMBER 11, 9 - 10:30 AM, NEUGASSE 23, SR 101  
**JSMC WELCOME SEMINAR FOR NEWBIES**  
DR. JASMIN MERTENS

NOVEMBER 12, 5-6 PM, LECTURE HALL ERBERTSTRASSE 1  
**MICoCo: CHRISTIAN KOST**  
PROF. CHRISTIAN KOST

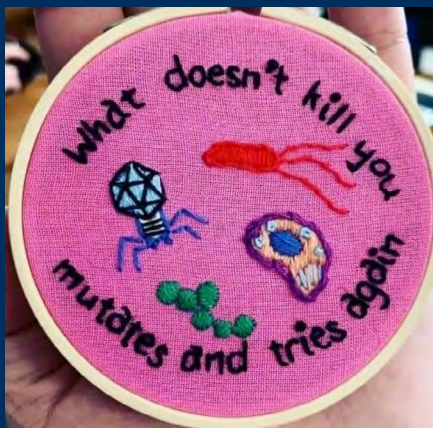
NOVEMBER 21, 2 PM, LECTURE HALL ERBERTSTRASSE 1  
**ECRE SEMINAR**

NOVEMBER 24, 5 PM, VIA ZOOM, LOGIN DETAILS VIA MAIL  
**GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE MODULE: USING AI IN SCIENCE**  
DR. ILONA LIPP

NOVEMBER 26, 12 - 6 PM  
CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH (ZAF)  
**LIFE SYMPOSIUM**  
DR. DANIA ROSE-SPERLING, REGISTRATION UNTIL NOVEMBER 20

More information on all events  
in the [JSMC EVENT CALENDAR](#)

## MEME OF THE MONTH



## SCIENCE SLAM!




One Night... One Mic...  
One Stage...



... and as much Life Science as you want!

 **Big Lecture Hall**  
Erbertstraße, Jena

 **Nov 18th 2025**  
7 PM



### The Speakers

*Dr. Clara Correia-Melo*  
Research group leader,  
Leibniz-FLI

*Raghav Vij*  
PhD student, Leibniz-HKI

*Lena Raupach*  
PhD student, UKJ

**More tba**



Take part in our  
prize-competition!



**SIGN UP!**



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