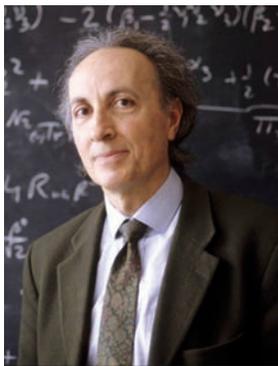




Press Release – 21 April 2016

Permanent Professor Thibault Damour received two international distinctions

The work of Permanent Professor Damour is awarded twice: he is elected Foreign Honorary Member to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences for 2016 and awarded the 2016 Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture by European Astronomical Society.



Thibault Damour is a theoretical physicist working on consequences of Einstein's theory of General Relativity, and its String Theory extensions. He has made lasting contributions on: the theory of black holes, the dynamics and relativistic timing of binary pulsars, the generation of gravitational waves, the motion and coalescence of black holes, as well as several aspects of early cosmology. He has introduced in 2000 (with several collaborators) a new method for describing the motion and gravitational radiation of coalescing binary black holes, which gave the first prediction of the gravitational wave signal observed by LIGO in September 2015. His work was crucially used for interpreting the observed signal and measuring the masses and spins of the two coalescing black holes.

Thibault Damour is a French theoretical physicist born in 1951 in Lyon. After studies at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de la rue d'Ulm (1970-1974), he obtained his Thèse de Doctorat de troisième cycle in 1974 (Université de Paris VI), and, later, his Thèse de Doctorat d'Etat ès Sciences Physiques (Université de Paris VI, 10 janvier 1979). He started his career (1977-1989) as researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Since 1989 he is permanent professor at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques.

Professor Thibault Damour has won many awards in his career: Laureate of the Fondation Singer-Polignacrix (1978), CNRS Bronze medal (1980), "Paul Langevin" Theoretical Physics Prize of (1984), First Award de la Gravity Research Foundation (1994), -Mergier-Bourdeix Prize, Einstein Medal (1996), Cecil F. Powell Medal (2005), Amaldi Prize (2010).

He is a member of the Academie des Sciences de Paris and the Institut de France.

On 20 April 2016 Thibault Damour was elected Foreign Honorary Member to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, along with 213 new members including 36 Foreign Honorary Members. They include some of the world's most accomplished scholars, scientists, writers, artists, as well as civic, business, and philanthropic leaders.

Among Foreign Honorary Members, many are affiliated to IHES: Former Permanent Professors Pierre Deligne, Mikhail Gromov, and David Ruelle, Louis Motchane Professor Alain Connes. James H. Simons, IHES Director of the Board is also a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Science.

Thibault Damour was also awarded the 2016 Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture for his “outstanding career on theoretical implications of General Relativity and in particular on the prediction of the newly-observed gravitational wave signal of coalescing binary black holes” on 12 April 2016 by the European Astronomical Society.

The Institute congratulates Permanent Professor Damour for those two distinctions. “*Scientific knowledge knows no border, and I am very proud for those international recognitions that show Thibault's remarkable contributions to contemporary physics*” says Director Emmanuel Ullmo.

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Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques (IHES)

IHES is a private research center dedicated to mathematics, theoretical physics and related disciplines. The Institute has a small faculty of permanent professors, both mathematicians and physicists, and hosts some more than 200 visitors annually, who come from all over the world for research periods. Freedom of research, independence and interdisciplinarity are core IHES values.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Founded in 1780, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences is one of the United States' oldest learned societies and independent policy research centers, convening leaders from the academic, business, and government sectors to respond to the challenges facing—and opportunities available to—the nation and the world. Members include some of the world's most accomplished scholars, scientists, writers, artists, as well as civic, business, and philanthropic leaders.

The Lodewijk Woltjer Lecture

The European Astronomical Society (EAS) is a society of individual members that promotes and advances astronomy in Europe. Together with one of its affiliated societies, the EAS organizes the annual European Week of Astronomy & Space Science (EWASS), since 2010, astronomers of outstanding distinction are invited by the EAS to give the Lodewijk Woltjer lecture at the EWASS.