

The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology

Departmental Seminar

***Mental Simulation:
Is it a Matter of Perspective?***

Date: January 20, 2014 (Monday)
Time: 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Venue: Room 8.13, 8/F The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus,
HKU
Speaker: Professor Neil Macrae
University of Aberdeen, Scotland

A fundamental capacity of the human mind is the ability to transcend the here-and-now, allowing us to mentally visit distant times, far-off places and see ourselves from different visual perspectives. Importantly, escaping present reality can serve as an adaptive precursor to future behavior. By drafting imaginary plans and previewing their potential consequences, we can determine what needs to be done (or indeed not done) in order to achieve desired outcomes. In the current talk, I will outline how visual perspective shapes experiences of simulated events. While extant research has explored the impact of imagery content on behavior, the current presentation will focus on how the structural characteristics of mental simulation can influence person understanding, self-control and social interaction. Both behavioral and brain imaging data will be presented and the goal of the presentation will be to delineate how simulated experiences impact core aspects of social-cognitive functioning.