

Departmental Seminar

Boredom is an Emotional Gadfly: Searching for Meaning in Ideology, Social Identity, and Nostalgia

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. | April 26, 2018 (Thursday)

Rm 813, 8/F, The Jockey Club Tower | Centennial Campus | The University of Hong Kong



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Abstract

Boredom is an unpleasant emotion that correlates with many adverse phenomena (e.g., depression, anxiety, unhealthy eating, lack of self-control, attention failures). Consequently, boredom is typically considered a nuisance. Notwithstanding this negative connotation of boredom, we propose that it serves an important self-regulatory function: Boredom affectively signals that an individual's behavior or situation is devoid of purpose and it subsequently motivates attempts at resolving this conflict. Although some responses to this conflict can be undesirable, they nonetheless find their origin in a functional self-regulatory process.

This functional view of boredom was examined across the domains of political orientations, social identification, and nostalgic reverie. Overall, the results indicate that boredom instigates attempts to resolve the perceived lack of purpose at hand by pursuing meaningful alternatives. Importantly, this process can yield both arguably undesirable consequences (e.g., outgroup derogation, political polarization) but also desirable reposes (e.g., nostalgic reverie, finding new meaning).

~All are Welcome~