

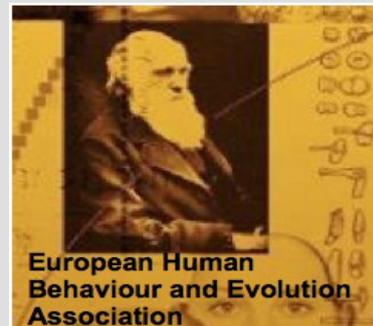
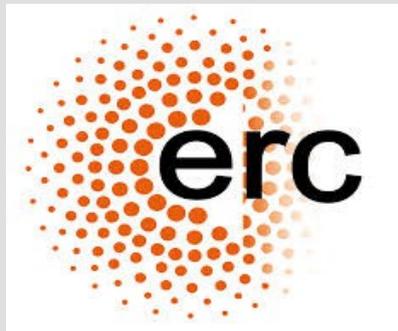
Perspectives on Human Cooperation

January 9th 2015

0900-1800

Organised by

Dr Nichola Raihani and Professor Ruth Mace



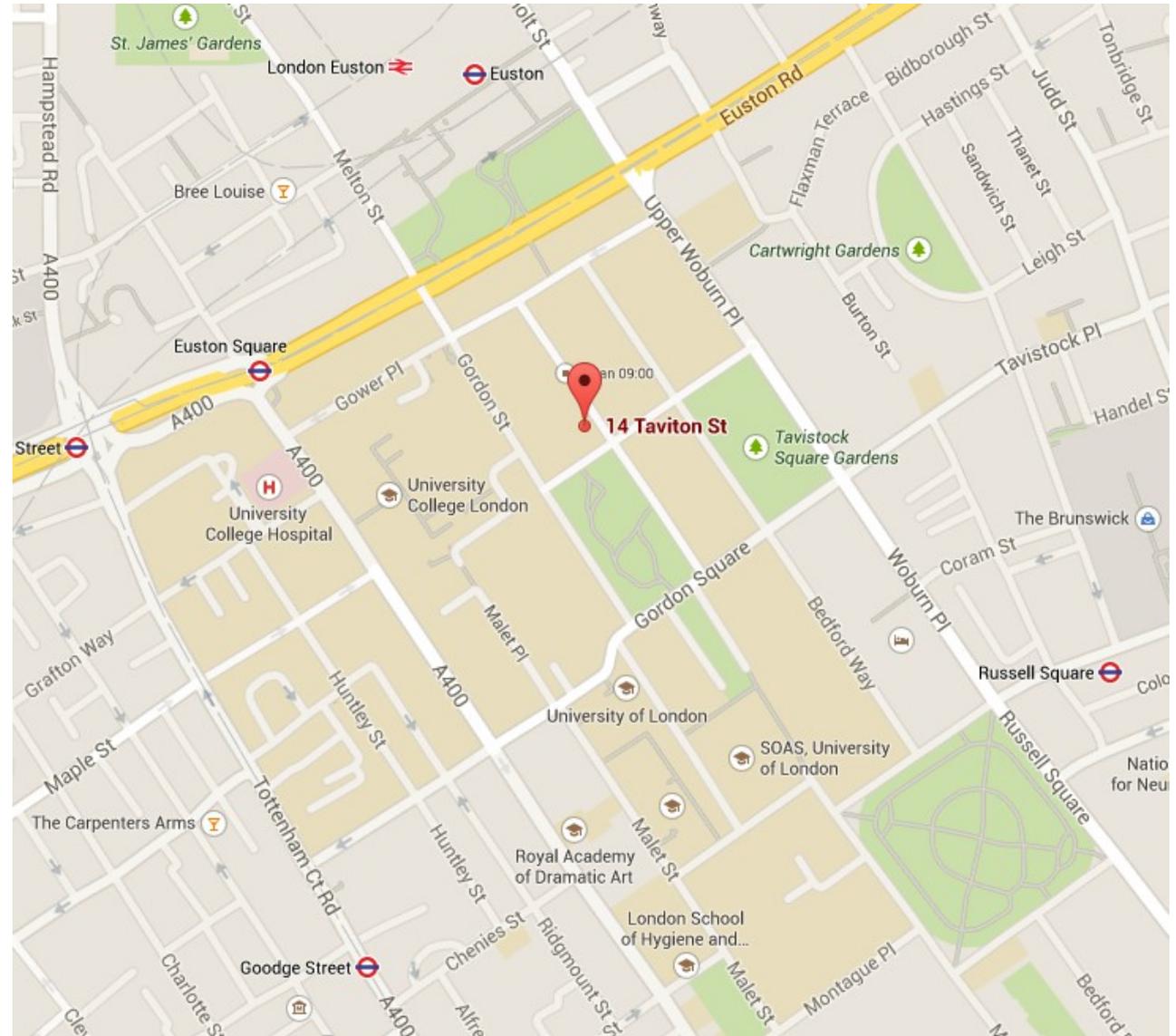
Getting Here

**Archaeology Lecture Theatre
UCL Anthropology
14 Taviton Street
London
WC1H 0BW**

Closest tube stations:

Euston
Euston Square
Warren Street
Russell Square
Goadge Street
Kings Cross St Pancras

Check www.tfl.gov.uk for travel options and information on station accessibility.



Abstracts

Plenary: Rory Sutherland

"Consumerism: the Galapagos Islands for Evolutionary Psychology"

Whether you love it or hate it (or love it *and* hate it), modern consumerism is an immensely well-funded ongoing social science experiment where $n=6bn$. Rory Sutherland has worked in advertising for 26 years, and has come to the conclusion that it is impossible to understand most human commercial behaviour without understanding evolutionary theory. He also believes, perhaps naively, that more frequent conversations between marketers, policy makers and evolutionary biologists can lead to better business practices, better forms of human behaviour and better government.

Favourite quote: "I try to bring the mind of a naturalist to the management of business." John Spedan Lewis, founder of the John Lewis Partnership.

Biography

Rory Sutherland is President of the IPA, Vice-Chairman of Ogilvy Group and The Spectator's Wiki-Man. He has given three TED talks, amassing nigh on 5 million views in total. Rory Sutherland is as outspoken as he is creative. A champion of behavioural economics and an early adopter of new technologies, he is not one to stand still for too long. His creative output includes numerous blog posts, column inches and charismatic talks which often have a light-hearted, humorous and anecdotal tone that can be found in various online and offline locations.

Sarah Smith

"The Generosity Tournament among Males: Competitive Altruism in the Real World"

(Co-author: Nichola Raihani)

In this paper we explore whether males compete in generosity, particularly in the presence of attractive potential partners. We use data from online fundraising pages where donations are public and made sequentially. Donors can therefore respond to the behaviour of previous donors, creating a potential generosity tournament. We focus on the response to large, visible donations. We show that male donors show significantly stronger responses – and escalate their giving – when they are donating to an attractive female fundraiser and responding to a large donation made by another male donor. The responses for this condition are around four times greater than when males give to less attractive female (or male) fundraisers or when they respond to a large donation made by a female donor. We find no such differential response among females.

Biography

Sarah Smith is the Head of Department and Professor of Economics at the University of Bristol. Her research focuses on applied micro - specifically consumer behaviour and public economics. Sarah's main current focus is the economics of not-for-profit organisations. She has worked with a number of charity organisations (JustGiving, Charities Aid Foundation, Remember a Charity, Big Lottery) to understand what motivates individuals to give and how donations respond to different (economic and non-economic) incentives. Sarah is a research associate at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and has also worked at HM Treasury, the Financial Services Authority and the London School of Economics.

Louise Barrett

"Levels of Cooperation in Baboons and Vervet Monkeys"

Ideas about the adaptive value of sociality among primates often hinge on notions of cooperation and conflict, with the assumption that these have selected for their distinctive brain size, cognitive abilities and behaviours. Here, using examples from baboons and vervet monkeys, I discuss whether cooperation at the ultimate level must always be accompanied by overtly cooperative, coalitionary behaviours at the proximate level, and why social relations may sometimes be less “political” and cognitively-driven than we assume. This is not to say that primates aren’t smart, but rather that there may be multiple perspectives from which we can understand a given phenomenon.

Biography

Louise Barrett is Professor of Psychology at University of Lethbridge, Canada and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Cognition, Evolution and Behaviour. Her research interests focus on the ecology of social life and cognition and she uses several model systems (vervet monkeys, baboons, humans) to investigate empirical questions on this topic.

Ruth Mace

"The Use of Economic Games to Determine Patterns of Cooperation in Real-World Contexts"

Economic games, originally designed to uncover universal preferences in economic decision-making, are now being used in real world contexts to try and determine the strength of co-operative relationships between individuals in different ecological and social contexts. Here I will review a range of studies that have attempted to do this, including some of our own, and review the usefulness of this approach towards understanding the evolutionary basis of co-operation.

Biography

Ruth Mace is Professor of Evolutionary Anthropology at University College London. Her research interests include: evolutionary demography and life history, particularly empirical studies focussing on traditional African populations; phylogenetic approaches to culture and language evolution, including comparative methods for testing cross-cultural hypotheses, and understanding the origins of kinship, family and social systems; co-operation and competition, within families and within wider groups; and cultural transmission and the establishment of social norms. Ruth is an Elected Fellow of the British Academy and a Visiting Professor at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing.

David Papineau

"The Evolution of Team Reasoning"

Team reasoning (asking ‘what shall we do?’ rather than ‘what shall I do?’) enables groups to adopt mutually advantageous joint strategies that are unreachable via individual reasoning. However, some query whether a disposition to engage in team reasoning could possibly be favoured by natural selection. I shall argue that this worry is misplaced.

Biography

David Papineau is Professor of Philosophy of Science at Kings College London. His research interests include metaphysics, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind and psychology and philosophy of mathematics. He maintains a popular website where his blog and thoughts on how an understanding of game theory can help us to understand team sport can be viewed – highly recommended!

Rebecca Sear

"A Cooperative Perspective on Human Reproduction"

Humans are a very cooperative species, and this cooperation extends to their reproduction. This talk will consider the hypothesis that humans are cooperative breeders, by reviewing the empirical evidence that mothers need help from family members to successfully raise offspring. Whether women receive help, who they receive help from and whether these patterns vary cross-culturally will all be investigated; as will the question of whether cooperation also gives rise to conflict within the family. The talk will end with a brief discussion of the implications of this reproductive strategy for human evolution past and future.

Biography

Rebecca Sear is Reader in the Department of Population Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Rebecca's research interests lie in human behavioural ecology and evolutionary demography, mainly focused in two areas: investigating the impact of kin on reproductive outcomes and examining interactions between health and reproduction. Initially her research was based in sub-Saharan Africa, but she is now interested in comparative work, testing the same hypotheses in a variety of ecological settings to establish their ecological variability.

Daniel Richardson

"How to Walk a Tightrope and Escape the Zombie Apocalypse Together: Experiments with Mass Participation"

(Co-author: Jorina von Zimmermann)

We present results from a new paradigm: mass participation games. In our experiments, hundreds of people can play a computer game simultaneously using audience response handsets. We can collect responses from a lecture hall full of people with the precision of a laboratory cubicle. We have studied two games: continuous, action games where participants cooperate to achieve a goal; and decision making paradigms in which participants make repeated choices to maximise their own or the group's rewards. We address a range of theoretical questions with experimental manipulations and computer modelling. Does the size of the group influence the group dynamics? How are participants learning about each others' behaviour and shaping their actions? Do participants play as if they were alone, or as a group? If so, do they represent the group as a single entity, or a collection of other agents? What are the dynamics of these behaviours, with learning across many trials? Lastly, we are interested in the social phenomenology of group dynamics. What social forces might shape group cohesion? How does it feel to be part of a successful, coordinated group?

Biography

Daniel Richardson is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Experimental Psychology at University College London. Daniel's research interests include social referencing, joint perception, group action and cross-cultural differences in behaviour. He has pioneered methods for collecting behavioural data using large crowds of people with his mass participation experiments.

Nichola Raihani

“The Reputation of Punishers”

(Co-author: Redouan Bshary)

Punishers can benefit from a tough reputation, where future partners cooperate because they fear repercussions. An alternative, yet untested, possibility is that punishers might receive help from bystanders if their act is perceived as just and other-regarding. Third-party punishment of selfish individuals arguably fits these conditions. Here, we show that third-party punishers are indeed rewarded by uninvolved bystanders. However, helpful individuals were rewarded even more than punishers. Fittingly, when given the option, most players preferred to help victims rather than punish cheats. These results suggest that punishment could in principle evolve via indirect reciprocity but also provide insights into why individuals typically prefer to invest in positive actions.

Biography

Nichola Raihani is a Royal Society University Research Fellow in the Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment at University College London. Nichola is interested in the the evolution of cooperation and in particular focuses on the proximate mechanisms that promote costly helping behaviour. She uses a variety of model systems, including cleaner fish, cooperatively breeding pied babblers and mole rats, and humans to test hypotheses and identify general mechanisms underpinning cooperative behaviour in nature.

Oliver Scott Curry

“Morality as Cooperation”

What is morality for? I argue that morality is a set of biological and cultural tools for solving the problems of cooperation and conflict recurrent in human social life. I show how, by going back to first principles -- the game theory of social interaction -- it's possible to identify seven distinct problems of cooperation, and arrive at conception of ethics that goes beyond existing frameworks. I defend the thesis against the twin objections that: there is more to morality than cooperation, and not all cooperation is moral. And I end with two predictions that the theory makes about the cross-cultural prevalence of moral values.

Biography

Oliver Scott Curry is a Lecturer in the Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology at the University of Oxford. Oliver is currently engaged in a number of empirical projects testing evolutionary theories of human social behaviour, including work on cooperation, coordination, friendship and coalition formation.

Michael Sanders

“Sequential Pro-sociality: an Experiment on the Effect of Volunteering on Other Pro-social Behaviour”

What effect does volunteering or donating to charity have on other-pro-social behaviour? Although giving behaviour by an individual is naturally correlated with giving behaviour by an individual, there exists little experimental evidence in which a first act of giving is subject to an exogenous shock. In these two experiments, we randomly allocate interested participants to either take part in a volunteering activity, or not to. Their participation in future volunteering opportunities is then measured, as is their willingness to donate to charity in a dictator game.

Biography

Michael Sanders is head of research in the Behavioural Insights Team and a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He researches the application of behavioural science in public policy, primarily through field experiments.