

MIND, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

Seminar Series

UC MERCED, SPRING 2017

H. CLARK BARRETT, PH.D.

University of California, Los Angeles

- DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY -

“MINDREADING, MORALITY, AND THE SEARCH FOR HUMAN COGNITIVE SPECIALIZATIONS”

Mindreading and cooperation are among the abilities that appear to be uniquely elaborated in humans. Is this a coincidence? Are these each distinct specializations, are they part of the same underlying ability, or are they byproducts of something else entirely? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to examine how these abilities cohere or fractionate within and across individuals and societies. Using data from multi-site cross-cultural studies, Dr. Barrett suggests that uniquely derived mechanisms of cooperation and mindreading in humans can be combined in diverse ways across individuals and societies to produce a spectrum of context-specific moral judgments. This proposal has the potential to explain why the role of intentionality in human social life can be so different than in other primates—and therefore human-specific—and yet also so flexible and variable across people and contexts.

H. Clark Barrett is an evolutionary anthropologist who studies the evolution of cognition. For the past 15 years he has conducted field work in the Amazon region of Ecuador, and has used experimental cognitive tasks across cultures to test hypotheses about the evolution of the mind. He is now Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles.



Monday,

February 13, 2017

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

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Please contact David Noelle (dnoelle@ucmerced.edu) for more information.