

# University of Edinburgh

## Psychology Seminar Series

Friday 07 October 2016, 4pm

F21, 7 George Square, EH8 9JZ

## Nick Chater

Professor of Behavioural Science, Warwick Business School



### About Nick

Nick Chater joined Warwick Business School in 2010, after holding chairs in psychology at Warwick and UCL. He has over 200 publications, has won four national awards for psychological research, and has served as Associate Editor for the journals *Cognitive Science*, *Psychological Review*, and *Psychological Science*. He was elected a Fellow of the Cognitive Science Society in 2010 and a Fellow of the British Academy in 2012. Nick is co-founder of the research consultancy Decision Technology; and is on the advisory board of the Cabinet Office's Behavioural Insight Team (BIT), popularly known as the 'Nudge Unit'.

## Joint Reasoning in Social Interaction: A Virtual Bargaining Approach

(with Tigran Melkonyan, Jennifer Misyak & Hossam Zeitoun)

Successful social interaction involves coordinating thoughts and behaviour between people. But how is such coordination achieved? If each person attempts to second-guess the thoughts and behaviour of the other, there is a danger of an infinite regress.

We introduce a new approach: that people can reason *jointly* about what they would agree to think or do, were they able to negotiate. That is, they reason not about “What will you do?” and “What should I do?”, but rather “What should we agree to do?” Where it is “obvious” what a resultant such negotiation would be, no actual communication is required: we can coordinate our thoughts and actions through a simulation of the bargaining process.

Virtual bargaining provides a new foundation for understanding the reasoning that underpins social behaviour, including communication itself.