

Math, Productivity, Happiness & Decision-making

Organizer(s): Andrew Critch and Nisan Stiennon

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Wednesdays, 5:00–6:00pm, 740 Evans

Mar 21 **Joseph Williams**, UC Berkeley, Psychology

Tools for implementing behavior change

Nearly every one of us has a behavior we'd like to change. But we know how difficult that can be, and so we try to solicit advice or think through the most effective ways to change our behavior. How can these ideas be complemented by research from social sciences like public health, economics, cognitive science, psychology, and education? From my perspective as a graduate student in cognitive science who aims to link basic research to practical applications, I will discuss some of the principles and ideas I've found (1) most theoretically insightful, (2) most practically useful, and (3) most likely to actually change someone's behavior.

My main focus will be on how to learn new strategies or advice in such a way that the knowledge does not lie dormant, but is actually used again and results in specific changes. For example: Using software designed to help you reason through problems, text message reminders, changing your implicit "theories" about intelligence and behavior, or asking yourself to generate explanations and come up with analogies that help you to retain and apply new ideas. This presentation is also based on a reading and discussion group I have been running on behavior change, from 4-5 on Tuesdays in 2301 Tolman Hall.

This week (and every second week) we'll go out for dinner after the seminar.