



**Institute of Information Processing and
Decision Making (IIPDM)
and
The Max Wertheimer Minerva Center for Cognitive
Processes and Human Performance**



Are pleased to announce a lecture by

Prof. Dr. Klaus Fiedler

University of Heidelberg, Germany

***Pseudo-contingencies –
an overlooked cognitive illusion***

by Klaus Fiedler & Peter Freytag

In the research reported in this paper, we explore a novel contingency illusion termed pseudo-contingency (PC) that suggests a universal source of biased social inference. PCs arise when bivariate contingencies are inferred from separately encoded univariate distributions via simple alignment processes. For example, when the distributions of TV habits and aggressiveness within a school class are skewed (e.g., towards high levels of time spent watching TV and aggressive behavior), a teacher may infer a (positive) PC such that higher levels of time spent watching TV seem to predict higher levels of aggressive behavior. Predictions of one variable from the other served a measure of PCs. The illusion could be evoked reliably, whether information about target attributes was presented successively or simultaneously, whether a common-cause or a common-effect model was activated, and whether attributes involved two or three levels. The theoretical discussion centers on the distinct cognitive processes underlying PCs, their environmental learning origins, and their implications for research on social inference and stereotyping.

Time and Location

Sunday, February 22, 2004 at 11:00

Institute of Information Processing and Decision Making (IIPDM),
Multi-Purpose Building, Seminar Room
University of Haifa



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