

# Decision Processes Colloquia

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**Monday, March 3, 2014**

Where: 265 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:20 pm

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## **In Search of the Right Touch: The Psychology of Interpersonal Assertiveness**

**ABSTRACT:** Our days are filled with interpersonal conflict, large and small, overt and subtle. Whether we are buying a house, cajoling our coworkers for help, or nudging our children to eat their peas, our interests often depart to some degree from the people around us, forcing us to repeatedly confront a basic question of social life: How hard should I push to get my way? Building on past work tracing the impact of pushing hard or giving in, I discuss emerging results related to everyday assertiveness. I'll argue that people often don't know how others see their assertiveness. Self-flattery may be one part of the explanation. I'll show evidence for another effect as well: that our counterparts may be strategically leading us astray—with the potential for unwanted consequences for both sides. I'll also explore whether people can use range offers (e.g., "I want \$7,200 to \$7,600 for my car") to effectively assert themselves in a negotiation. While offer-recipients could selectively process such proposals in a way that makes the range irrelevant, I'll review evidence that certain kinds of range offers can have effects on social judgments and settlement terms. And I'll suggest that part of the explanation lies in a source that might not seem obvious for economically-incentivized negotiators: politeness concerns.



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