

Marketing Colloquia

Thursday, November 29 2012

Where: 741 JMHH

When: 3:00 PM to 4:20 PM

Juliet Zhu

Associate Professor and Chair, Marketing Division

University of British Columbia, Sauder School of Business

I Can Feel Your Pain: Haptic Roughness Promotes Empathy and Helping Behaviors

ABSTRACT: Eliciting help has important social impacts. However, we know little about how incidental, contextual cues can encourage helping behaviors. In a series of laboratory and field studies, we show that incidental exposure to haptic sensation of roughness (vs. smoothness) promotes empathy and consequently enhances helping towards unfamiliar targets. In addition, using direct measures of brain activity, we provide important insight to the process by suggesting that haptic roughness increases attention to others' misfortune, and therefore leads to enhanced empathetic responses at later, evaluative (vs. earlier, automatic response) stages. These findings not only underscore the power of subtle contextual cues on shaping important behaviors, but also point to the possibility of developing novel intervention strategies for promoting human prosociality.