

# Decision Processes Colloquium

---

**Monday, November 14, 2011**

## **Yaacov Trope**

Professor of Psychology  
New York University

### **Traversing Psychological Distance**

People are capable of thinking about the future, the past, remote locations, another person's perspective, and counterfactual alternatives. Without denying the uniqueness of each process, I propose that they constitute different forms of traversing psychological distance. Psychological distance is egocentric, i.e., its reference point is the self in the here-and-now, and the different ways in which an object might be removed from that point— in time, in space, in social distance and in hypotheticality — constitute different distance dimensions. Transcending the self in the here-and-now entails mental construal, and the farther removed an object is from direct experience, the higher (more abstract) the level of construal of that object. In support of this idea, I'll present research showing (1) that the various distances are cognitively related to each other, (2) that they similarly influence and are influenced by level of mental construal, and (3) that they interchangeably affect prediction, preference, and action.