

# Decision Processes Colloquia

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Monday, April 4, 2022

Where: 360 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:00 pm

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## Expecting a better subsequent experience inhibits adaptation to a negative experience

### ABSTRACT:

People often undergo negative experiences while having expectations about future experiences. For instance, travelers sit in cramped airplane seats while thinking about their next connecting flight, and students attend boring lectures expecting to attend other lectures afterward. In this research, we investigate how expectations about future experiences affect adaptation to negative experiences. We find that people adapt to a negative feature of an ongoing experience at a slower rate if they expect a subsequent experience to be more positive or more negative on that feature. For instance, they do not adapt as much to the experience of watching a low-resolution video if they expect to subsequently watch a high-resolution video, rather than another low-resolution video. This occurs because expecting a negative feature of an experience to be different for a subsequent experience sustains attention on this feature, such that expecting a negative feature of an ongoing experience to be positive for a subsequent experience disrupts adaptation as much as directly asking people to sustain their attention on this feature.

