



Behaviour and Evolution Research Group Seminar
5.30pm Wednesday 10th May 2017
Psychology Common Room (3A94)

Scotland and Japan: Studying social influence, cultural transmission and responses to death in monkeys

Dr Claire Watson
University of Kyoto

Cultural variation can be conceptualised in two ways: as qualitative differences in behavioural form and as quantitative variation in performance of universal behaviours (cultural style). Communicative and social traditions are widely observed in nonhuman primates, yet understudied experimentally compared to food-related traditions. I will present the results of two experimental studies into the transmission of social culture. First, a call playback manipulation that induced a temporary quantitative culture of high affiliation in marmosets. Second, the limited spread of a qualitative, arbitrary tradition in Japanese macaques in an open diffusion design. Finally, I will discuss an emerging topic: comparative thanatology. Dead infant carrying is common in Japanese macaques with hundreds of such instances reported. I will present quantitative data relating to several illustrative cases of this behaviour.

