

## OPEN SEMINAR SERIES

Wednesday 12 February 2014  
10:00 – 11:00

SEERC Conference Room  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Strategakis Bldg

### “God, do I have your attention? How religion affects cognition and action”

By  
Prof. Bernhard Hommel,  
Dept. of Psychology,  
Leiden University,  
The Netherlands

#### ABSTRACT

Religions are commonly taken to provide general orientation in leading one's life. However, we recently developed the idea that religions may also have a much more concrete guidance function in providing systematic decision biases in the face of cognitive-control dilemmas. These biases serve as defaults under decision-making uncertainty and affect performance in any task that shares cognitive-control operations with the religiously motivated behavior that generated these biases in the first place. They can therefore be unraveled and objectified by means of rather simple, well understood cognitive tasks. E.g., we could show that Calvinism, Roman Catholicism, Judaism, and Buddhism systematically change the way people attend to and process visual stimuli, how efficiently they switch between different tasks, and how well they suppress conflicting information. In particular, religions emphasizing individual responsibility bias attentional mechanisms in a systematically different fashion than do religions emphasizing social solidarity.

The seminar series is open to all members of *staff and students* of CITY and to any *externals* that wish to attend.



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