

The James Barnett Lecture Series

Presents

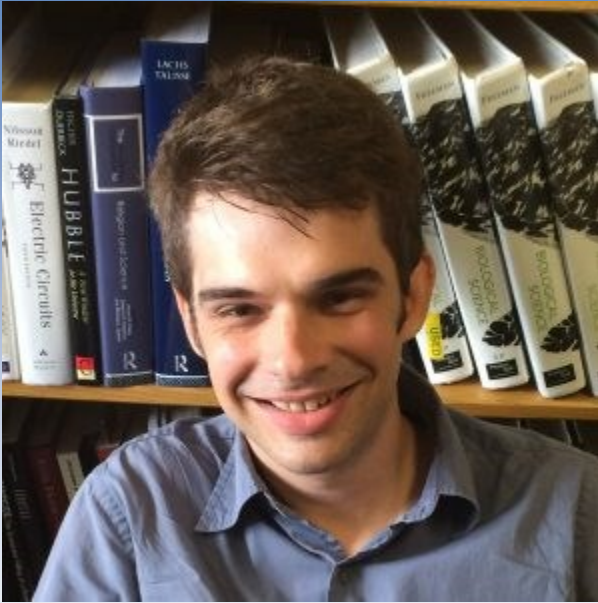
Connor Wood

Center for Mind and Culture, Boston

September 18, 2017

11:00 am -12:15 pm

Art Building, Rm 106



Self-Other Blurring in Ritual and Social Structure

Dance and rhythm are crucial elements of human sociality, but our capacity for rhythm extends far beyond just music. Religious and secular rituals alike involve bodily rhythms and coordination, from a simple shaking of hands to an all-evening-long Passover seder. Recently, many researchers have argued that rhythmic "synchrony" in particular – such as clapping, marching, or doing a ritual in time with others – may be a crucial for group bonding and cohesion. Synchrony seems to erase cognitive boundaries between self and other, making people more cooperative, friendly, and self-sacrificing. But in real settings, not all ritual blurs the boundaries between self and other. Many social, political, and religious rituals actually reinforce, or even exaggerate, the differences between distinct people and roles. So how might rhythmic ritual or synchrony affect the relations between people who occupy different roles? This talk will provide an overview of recent experimental findings in response to this question.

For more information please contact Richard Sosis (richard.sosis@uconn.edu).