

## **Lecture 1 – Cognitive Gadgets.**

***8<sup>th</sup> December 2017. 5.30pm – 7.00pm***

Evolutionary psychology casts the human mind as a collection of cognitive instincts - organs of thought shaped by genetic evolution and constrained by the needs of our Stone Age ancestors. This picture was plausible 25 years ago but, I argue, it no longer fits the facts. Research involving infants and nonhuman animals now suggests that genetic evolution has merely tweaked the human mind, making us more friendly than our pre-human ancestors, more attentive to other agents, and giving us souped-up, general-purpose mechanisms of learning, memory and control. Using these resources, our special-purpose organs of thought are built in the course of development through social interaction. They are products of cultural rather than genetic evolution; cognitive gadgets rather than cognitive instincts.