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Faculty of Psychology

Colloquium lecture by Luca Cecchetti

Promises and Pitfalls of Naturalistic Stimulation in Affective (Neuro)Science

A central challenge in affective science is eliciting authentic emotional responses in laboratory settings. Traditional approaches often rely on simplified, decontextualized stimuli (e.g., pictures or brief sounds), which may fall short of capturing the complexity, temporal unfolding, and nuance of real-life emotional experiences. In contrast, literature, film, and other narrative media naturally evoke rich emotional reactions, so much so that people engage with them daily. The approach known as naturalistic stimulation, involving full-length movies, narratives, or music, offers a promising way to bridge this gap, enabling more ecologically valid investigations of emotion. While increasingly adopted in cognitive (neuro)science, its use in affective (neuro)science remains relatively limited. In this talk, I will discuss the promises and pitfalls of this approach, drawing on both existing literature and studies from my lab to explore whether, and to what extent, naturalistic stimuli can deepen our understanding of the behavioral and neural correlates of affect and emotion.

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**This lecture takes place at Liebiggasse 5, 1010 Vienna,
Lecture Hall G 2nd floor and will be streamed.**

Thursday, 5 June, 2025; 3pm

