



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI BOLOGNA  
DIPARTIMENTO DI PSICOLOGIA

The Department of Psychology of the University of Bologna, to celebrate and honor the contribution of Prof. Geoffrey Loftus to Psychological Sciences and his recent retirement, has organized a lecture, in which Prof. Loftus will discuss themes which are central to experimental research in Psychology, together with their theoretical and practical implications. The lecture will be followed by a discussion chaired by Prof. De Cesarei.

***Measuring the Passage of Time, the Heights of Trees,  
and the Rate of Forgetting***

**Prof. Geoffrey Loftus**

Department of Psychology - University of Washington

Central to science is figuring out how to measure things — e.g., for Physicists, energy; for Astronomers, planetary density; for Chemists, Avogadro's constant, and so on.

Whereas Psychologists have been remarkably successful in measuring some things, we have been less successful in measuring other things. In particular, in many fields of Psychology, one's goal is to measure some internal entity (e.g., "memory strength") which, while presumed to exist, and while central in psychological theories, is not directly observable. One must therefore carry out such measurements using a dependent variable (e.g., "probability correct") that is related to the internal entity only in an ill-specified manner. This in turn renders tests of theoretical hypotheses untrustworthy and unstable.

Dr. Loftus will illustrate this problem using fictional measurements of time and height practiced by a fictional group of ancient people, and then demonstrate one solution to it within Psychology, using as an example, how to measure the rate at which people forget.

**Lunedì 2 Ottobre 2017**

**10:00 – 13:00**

Aula Magna - Dipartimento di Psicologia

Viale Berti Pichat, 5 – Bologna