



Máster Universitario en  
Neurociencia Cognitiva  
y del Comportamiento

## Seminario

### **"Not just a social dog: Exploring what dogs know about the physical environment"**

14/03/2022

Seminar:

Dr. Julia Espinosa, University of Toronto

Date and time: March 23rd at 12:30

Place: Sala de Conferencias 1 (CIMCYC)

Title:



Not just a social dog: Exploring what dogs know about the physical environment

**Abstract:** Domestic dogs are primarily recognized for their social cognition and skillful interactions with humans, but comparatively little is known about how they make inferences about physical objects or recognize cause-and-effect relationships in the environment. How do dogs perceive the world around them and what cognitive processes are involved in playing a game of fetch or finding a ball that has rolled under the couch? While these might seem like trivial scenarios, the ability to track objects (even toys) in one's environment and make inferences about how they will behave in object interactions are mental abilities that support a wide variety of behaviours from play to hunting to understanding social interactions. Sparse previous scholarship has

probed dogs' physical and causal cognition and findings are contradictory, resulting in a poor understanding of how dogs represent the physical world. I address this knowledge gap with empirical studies of dogs' physical and causal cognition, examining their ability to make inferences about object interactions and recognize underlying causal structures in the world. My work expands our understanding of cognitive abilities in dogs, and sheds light on the evolutionary origins of fundamental cognitive processes by exploring how dogs view and behave with objects in their environment.