

**Presenter:** Shao-Min (Sean) Hung

**Title:** Automatic? The attentional requirements of unconscious processes

**Author(s):** Shao-Min (Sean) Hung, Daw-An Wu, Shinsuke Shimojo

**Abstract:** The tight relationship between attention and conscious perception has been extensively researched in the past decades. However, whether attentional modulation extended to unconscious processes remained largely unknown, particularly when it came to abstract and high-level processing. Here we use a double Stroop paradigm to demonstrate that attention load gates unconscious semantic processing. We find that word and color incongruencies between a subliminal prime and a supraliminal target cause slower responses to non-Stroop target words—but only if the task is to name the target word (low-load task), and not if the task is to name the target's color (high-load task). The task load hypothesis is confirmed by showing that the word-induced incongruence effect can be detected in the color-naming task, but only in the late, practiced trials. We further replicate this task-induced attentional modulation phenomenon in separate experiments with colorless words (word-only) and words with semantic relationship but no orthographic similarities (semantics-only).