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NEUROSCIENCE SPEAKER SERIES



Jonas Kaplan

**Brain & Creativity Institute
University of Southern California**

Losing the plot: The cognitive neuroscience of engagement with and disengagement from narrative thought

Monday, November 14th
4:00 PM

Zoom link: <https://pitzer.zoom.us/j/3790149928?pwd=YW1mYTk0WXA5YTdVYk5DOGINUVV0Zz09>

Abstract: We spend a large portion of our conscious lives immersed with narrative thought, whether it is enjoying fiction, retelling events from our own lives, or simply sitting around thinking. Story is an important form of information representation for the brain, a scaffolding that seems to support our central meaning-making process; it is a lens through which we see the world and it even shapes our identity in the form of an autobiographical self. A cognitive neuroscience of mind-wandering and narrative thought has begun to emerge in recent years, with a focus on the Default Mode Network. However, many experiential traditions around the world have stressed the benefits of disengagement from the narrative thought process, the dissolution of the autobiographical self, and a focus on the present moment. In this talk I will discuss what we know about neural systems for narrative thought from the perspective of understanding both sides of this coin: both the storytelling mind and the narrative-free “quiet mind”.