

# Decision Processes Colloquia

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Monday, February 13, 2023

Where: **260 JMHH**

When: **12:00 – 1:20 pm**

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## Why Do We Think?

### ABSTRACT:

Much of daily cognition consists of spontaneous thoughts, like daydreaming, mind wandering, and creative ideation. Why do we devote so much time and cognitive resources to spontaneous thought? I present a series of lab experiments, natural experiments, and archival analyses that test two possible functions of thought: memory optimization and goal pursuit. To gain insight into its function, these studies quantify both the content and the dynamics of spontaneous thought, as well as its consequences for decision-making. Taken together, this work shows that spontaneous thought is not idle mental chatter. Instead, it is a powerful force shaping our memory, goal pursuit, and decisions.

