

The Colloquium Committee of the USF Psychology Department is pleased to announce Shinobu Kitayama as the featured speaker for the 2016-2017 academic year. Dr. Kitayama is Robert B. Zajonc Collegiate Professor of Psychology, Social Psychology Area Chair, and Director of the Culture & Cognition Program at the University of Michigan.



His talk, Cultural Neuroscience: Why We Need It, will be at 1:15 on February 3rd and in PCD 1147.

ABSTRACT: The last two decades of research in socio-cultural psychology shows that basic psychological processes such as cognition, emotion, and motivation, as well as the self and the human agency that is constituted by these processes, are profoundly influenced by values, beliefs, and norms that sometimes vary dramatically from one society to the next. So far, however, this research has remained agnostic about specific mechanisms underlying the socio-cultural influences. Here, I will make four arguments that as a whole begin to suggest a broad program of research addressing the mechanism question. First, ecology is a potent distal factor that fosters cross-culturally divergent values and norms. Second, to clarify the nature of this ecological influence, it is important to focus on the last 10,000 years of human evolution/history, during which humans across the globe began to form large non-kin-based groups. Third, culture as a loosely organized set of social values, norms, and attendant practices is embrained. That is, cultural information is stored in neuro-physical structures and processes of the brain. Fourth, the eco-cultural influences on neural pathways of the brain are modulated by genetic and epigenetic mechanisms. Implications for the future of socio-cultural psychology are discussed.

A reception will follow the talk, at 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. (3rd Floor Breezeway).