

SPRING 2024 YIA COMMON ROOMS

Common Rooms start the week of February 18

All times in ET ('New Haven time')

Common Rooms meet biweekly, the specific dates depending on the day of the week of your CR. **They will run the weeks commencing February 18, March 3, 17 and 31, and April 14 and 28.** (Dates and times can be adjusted after discussion in your group. Please note the daylight savings time changes).

General Conversation Common Rooms:

Hosted by Mary Ellen Leuver, Sundays 10am ET

Hosted by Miranda Melcher, Thursdays 8am ET

Themed Common Rooms:

Life in strange places: imagined, lived, remembered

Hosted by Toyota Horiguchi, Tuesdays, 6am ET

Where do you call home? What place do you consider strange? Places of comfort may become unfamiliar when they are re-entered after a life outside. Some strange places may become familiar once we find our place in them whereas others remain strange forever. This common room will try to explore ideas about places and how they shape our experience.

Sailing through life: Negotiation lessons from thanatology to diplomacy

Hosted by Sihini Trinidad, Tuesdays 8am ET

Life's journey is a continuous negotiation. It can involve closing business deals, navigating personal relationships, accepting losses, or advising on matters of statecraft. Are you currently facing a challenging negotiation or a changing situation? Do you need to lead a contract, make a tough call, or readjust your own expectations? Join us for a thought-provoking experience! Through engaging discussions, guest speakers (yes, you could be the star!), and insights from history, philosophy, psychology, and politics, we will explore the myriad dimensions of 'winning'. Come sail with us and re-emerge a masterful negotiator, ready for life's challenges.

The Glorious Age of Aging

Hosted by Edna R.S. Alvarez, Tuesdays 11am ET

What significant, positive and extraordinary actions are you taking to remain relevant in your 70s [or way beyond]? To remain a person of substance? To continue as a change agent? To sustain your intellectual curiosity? This common room is for alums in this stage of life, for us to share specific action you have taken to remain engaged and relevant, and with what results. An example might be your creation of a monthly salon or the confrontation of institutions for their ageism. We will discuss how this chapter of your life is being embraced with energy and brilliance and action - or how it might move more in that direction.

Transitioning...yet again

Hosted by Peggy Shaw, Wednesdays at 8pm ET

Change is inevitable. Whether this change is self-determined such as welcoming a new baby or a new job, or imposed, in the case of divorce or loss, we are forced to respond. How we respond to these transitions can shape our experience and outlook. Let's embark on an intellectual journey together to unpack the strategies, mindsets, and research on ways to navigate the challenges wrought by transitions. We start with a discussion of Yale alumna Dr. Maya Shankar's TED talk on *Why Change Is So Scary -- and How to Unlock Its Potential*.

The Lost Art of Flirtation

Hosted by Gavin Bingham, Thursdays, 9am ET

Come join other curious souls on an uncharted journey in search of the lost art of flirtation. It will take us through the byways of desire and discretion, biology and biography, mischief and morality, literature and cinema, psychology and sociology, etc. Those looking for a Baedeker for the journey could do worse than to peruse 'Un Amour de Swann' in Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past" and/or watch Volker Schlöndorff's "Swann in Love".

Public Health

Hosted by Jia Sun, Thursdays, 9am ET

Any topics related to public health, such as healthcare system, gene-environmental interaction, health behaviors, infectious diseases, chronic diseases, medications, etc. The goal of this CR is to give each other an opportunity to learn what we are doing and share thoughts and experiences.

Shifts in the Contemporary Geopolitical Order

Hosted by Emanuel Pastreich, Day TBD, 8am ET

In this CR we will engage in a broad discussion about how contemporary geopolitics are shifting. The causes of such shifts (technology, economics, changing cultural assumptions), and what we can expect in the short, medium and long term. We welcome people with diverse expertise and perspectives.

Humanity and AI: Getting on the Front Foot

Hosted by Justine Lutterodt, Fridays, 11am ET

On these dates: 1 Mar, 22 Mar, 12 Apr, 3 May, 24 May, 14 Jun

AI is shaping our future for good and for bad. In this Common Room, we will discuss a few of the current trends in AI and explore what it means to get on the front foot – as individuals, as organisations, and as a society – to ensure that AI serves humanity rather than the other way around. Once again, I will be hosting a common room rooted in content that I am writing about, so we will follow a structured sequence of themes and I will provide context and provocation to spark discussion. The magic of the common room will come from hearing the diverse set of perspectives and lived experiences that emerge from the group. This group welcomes those with varying degrees of fluency in AI. Please come ready to reflect on your own circumstances, consider your unique ripple effects, and experiment accordingly.

Wealth Values and International Money for us, outside Power Structure

Hosted by Darindranath ('Darin') Charitha Gunsekera, Saturdays, 8:30am ET

I experience the world as a Developing Country citizen at the level of an Economist's income. CR members may have varying incomes and citizen bases. Yet we all have a home, which is the base of our wealth, some shares or stock as financial assets and money. Each of these three things can disappear in whole or part in value owing to the vagaries of bureaucracy and the international power system following their own logic. In an increasingly finance dominated world, we are whirled around. This Common Room is for persons to exchange views and experiences.

Limits of Compassion

Hosted by Ali Van, Saturdays, 9am ET

Herein a resonant core; proffered to greet day in particle form. A place to attribute breathing, to value ours within. Limits of Compassion is a focus on bridging time; looking gently at how we strive, defend, release, and enrich what arrives – to move, sublimate, and integrate our living spirits, loving commitments, and incorporate selves. Naoizear. Weharoui?

Note: In light of the sacredness and open circulation created within this CR, it welcomes participants who can commit to attending (nearly) all sessions.

Anatomy of Conspiracy Theories

Hosted by Kyle Kegang Wang, Saturdays 10am ET

Are we living in a post-truth era? Is this an accurate depiction of the facts? How do we define conspiracy and its theorists and tell conspiracy from other types of "storytelling"? Why do perfectly rational and well-educated people believe in irrational tales? What's the impact of cultures and geographies on humans' ability and needs to tell stories and tell different stories? Is there a connection between conspiracies and "non-conspiracy" types of beliefs, and do they have the same or similar evolutionary roots, sharing similar psychological dimensions? This CR examines these questions and more, from psychological, philosophical, and societal angles, in an open and mind-to-mind exchange among Yale alumni who are interested in the history and

development of conspiracies and storytelling and their difference. Use Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza's words to summarize the purpose of this CR:

"I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, not to bewail, not to scorn human actions, but to understand them".

Join us in the efforts to understand ourselves and the products of our thoughts better, perhaps and hopefully for a better "self" and then a better world.

Building Constituencies for Peace: Pain and Reconciliation in the Middle East

Hosted by George Abdelnour, Saturdays 11am ET

This CR brings Yale alumni from around the world in a frank dialogue about peace and reconciliation in the land of the Abrahamic religions. Topics will be wide and will include intra- and inter-state reconciliation, the history of Middle Eastern diversity, torture as social control, and an otherwise view from the ground of what it's like to live in the Middle East today. Openness to new ideas is expected from all participants.

Understanding China's Worldview

Hosted by Kyle Kegang Wang, Sundays 9am ET

This CR examines China's historical perspective of itself as a nation, and how it's being viewed as a nation in the sense of modern nationhood by people in China and overseas. We will discuss its traditional, cultural, national characteristics as a people and how Chinese history, tradition and culture have shaped China's worldview towards the outside world. We will explore China's relations with all major nations and regions in the world and attempt to understand the questions such as: What does a new world order look like according to China if China succeeds in building such a world order in the 21st century? Will the world's nations recognize and live by such a world order? Why and why not? What example, values and models will China project to the world as an economic power, a moral leader, and a cultural influence? What does it take for China to displace the current world order built and defended by the collective West? How likely and when would this new world order happen, if at all? All alumni, fellows and faculty who are interested in this theme are welcome. No prior knowledge of Chinese history, philosophy and politics is required to participate. Bring your perspectives and curiosities to this casual and welcoming forum.