

Yale International Alliance

Spring 2025 Common Rooms

Begin the week of February 24, 2025

All times in ET ('New Haven time')

Occurrence: Common Rooms meet biweekly for 6 weeks

Date: the specific dates depend on the day of the week of your Common Room (CR).

* Dates and times can be adjusted after discussion in your group. Please plan for the daylight's savings time changes.

General Conversation Common Rooms:

Hershel Safer's General Common Room (formerly Miranda Melcher's CR):

Thursdays 8am ET

Themed Common Rooms:

The Glorious Age of Aging

Hosted by Edna R.S. Alvarez

Thursdays 2pm ET

Open to 80-year-olds and older 'senior-seniors' alums only - explore action steps taken to continue a life of substance and substantiality. Some potential topics: the psychology of aging; external and internal ageism; intergenerational communication; disintegration and death.

Truth and Trust (formerly Time and Infinity)

Hosted by Gavin Bingham

Wednesdays 9am ET

Come explore with other questioning minds whether the quest for truth is feasible and whether trust is meaningful in our ever-changing world. Drawing on our experience, observations and a set of sporadic readings, we shall explore how these two ideas have changed over time and what they might mean today and tomorrow.

Models of primary healthcare in different countries

Hosted by Rozina Mistry

Thursdays 10am ET

With my experience in 10 or more countries, I have seen some unique examples of delivering primary health care. I would like to invite alums to share the model currently present in their own countries with strengths and weaknesses and innovation inherent there. You don't have to be a public health specialist to participate.

Quantum Technologies

Hosted by Manouchehr Shamsrizi

Fridays 8am ET

In light of the UN's International Year of Quantum Science and Technology, this Common Room will discuss the potential and risks of quantum technologies, their intersection with business and politics, and their impact on humanity. Quantum computing may currently be the most publicly discussed aspect, but different economic, research and political ecosystems engage with different aspects of quantum technology, such as quantum sensing and quantum communication."

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.

Japan: What to Make Of It

Hosted by Toyota Horiguchi

Saturdays 8am ET

Japan: What to Make of It. Is it a messy outlier in decline or the happiest place in the world? Share your views, whether based on experiences, imaginations, or memories. We can also look further afield for comparison. Do Korea, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Singapore, facing modernization and Westernization, also simply stand as deviations in the current world order, or do they all offer a radical reimagining of its structures and

narratives? Exploring their histories, cultures, and regional influence, can we discover alternative paradigms for understanding both global relations and the human story itself? Join us to discuss these rich perspectives, whether to contribute your own insights or simply to listen and reflect.

Sailing through life: Negotiation lessons from thanatology to diplomacy

Hosted by Sihini Trinidad

Thursdays 10am 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.

Freedom of Mind and Its Implications

Hosted by Kyle Kegang Wang

Sundays 10am ET

Everyone seems to be interested in freedom. But do we truly believe we are free without questioning and understanding if our mind is free or if our mind is conditioned to see the world as we are, not as the reality is? Is the conditioning of our mind received during our growing up or from what we were taught, helping our mind to be free or restricting it from being free? Leveraging evolutionary psychology, cognitive archaeology and other relevant investigative tools, this CR attempts to investigate questions such as:

- Is freedom of mind essential for our survival, for decoding reality as well as telling stories that benefit or damage our wellbeing?
- How does our mind decide what is true independent of authorities, gurus, role models, etc.? Is the “elemental mind/nature” important and does it still exist when we grow and mature? How is maturity of our mind defined?
- Is it correct to say that intelligence is about constant learning, unlearning and relearning things throughout our life? Is the passion to undo what we know and believe driven by freedom of mind or something else?
- Is self-censoring a freedom of mind or the opposite of it? Is freedom of mind dangerous? How so? Why so?
- How do culture and geography impact our concept of personal freedom and then our freedom of mind?
- Does freedom of mind provide benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing or fear, confusion and self-destruction, or both?
- Is the human mind “born free”, does it “stay free” as we age, how do we tell?

- Examining the relationship or feedback loop among freedom of mind (or lack of it), reason, knowledge, beliefs, experiences, ways of life, tribal solidarity, storytelling and human progress, can we identify the root and impetus of this loop?

Come to explore these seemingly innocent questions. Bring your insights, questions, comments on the implications of freedom of mind in your own experience or interpretations wherever you're from and however you grew up. You don't need academic training in neuroscience or psychology. We want to break away from academic literature on how the mind works. Instead, we examine our own minds through mind-sharing. This is a safe and open space where minds meet minds, and we'll have a feast of appreciation of how freedom of mind shapes reality, the world we live in and the future we build. It can be consequential.

Limits of Compassion: A Moral Imagination

Hosted by Ali Van

Every Saturday, 9am ET - Not accepting new participants this cycle

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: this CR is continuing but not currently accepting new members.