

# Cybernetics of Desire

Yale GSD Fall 2022

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## Syllabus

**What worlds do our desires produce?** This course will explore the process of gathering as a transformative act of communing. **Why do we gather, how do we protect the container of our gathering, and afterwards, how do we then carefully dissolve?** Cybernetics is the study of how we shape and are shaped by systems. To gather together is to step into a role of great significance, poetry, and responsibility; being clear about our purpose for gathering is part of what sets the conditions to best honor your mind, body, and spirit, and in turn, **ask the same of others.**

How are social containers weaved, what boundaries will we lay to freely gather within, and how can we move from a place of attunement to personal and collective pleasure?

This class is a hybrid coding, critical theory, and design production class. We will explore desireful gathering through code, somatic exercises, discussion, and collaboration. **Participants will be encouraged to develop their own research interests and explore their personal histories.** When projects are discussed, we will practice communicating ideas through presentation as a medium and will co-create a culture of constructive feedback. For second-year graphic design students, this course builds on Mindy Seu's [On Gathering: Digital Collections and Virtual Events](#). Part studio, part reading and conversation seminar. This class is intended for those with a working knowledge of HTML and CSS. JavaScript is helpful but not required. Completed projects are expected to be technological in nature.

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## Orientation

This class is an iteration of On Gathering, extending out from a focus on materials to gather towards a focus on \_who\_ we gathering, \_why\_ are we gathering them and \_how\_ are we gathering them? This 'how' part is the most direct plug back into \_what\_ materials are we gathering.

We are going to do a kind of pass of our whole semester in one day. Are ya ready? It's like our life will flash before our eyes and we're going to live that together.

*Meditation*

*Get comfortable*

*Release your day*

*Release your future*

*Release expectations of yourself and of others*

**Who is here with us?**

**Who is here with you?**

**What are you bringing/offering**

**What are you seeking/open to?**

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**What worlds do our desires produce?** In Cybernetics of Desire we will explore the process of gathering as a transformative act of communing. ***Why do we gather, how do we protect the***

**container of our gathering, and afterwards, how do we then carefully dissolve?** Cybernetics is the study of how we shape and are shaped by systems. To gather together is to step into a role of great significance, poetry, and responsibility; being clear about our purpose for gathering is part of what sets the conditions to best honor your mind, body, and spirit, and in turn, **ask the same of others.**

How are social containers weaved, what boundaries will we lay to freely gather within, and how can we move from a place of attunement to personal and collective power, pleasure, peace?

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*What do you want to teach?*

*What do you want to learn?*

## WHO IS HERE WITH US

- ❖ **What is the story of your name and optionally, your pronouns.**
- ❖ **Spatial Questionnaire**

## WHO IS HERE WITH YOU

Our lived experience and personal histories shape our desires. Other's lived experiences and personal histories shape our desires. In other words, other's desires shape what we know of desire. Other's desires and others before them carve shape, expand, and diminish the epistemic space of knowing. the space that limits what access to knowing what is possible to desire.

In this class we are asking, what worlds do our desires produce?

Right now let us ask: **whose desires produce your world?**

- ❖ **Index card activity: *Who is here with you?***
  - **Reflections & sharing**

*BREAK (Drink & eat if you desire)*

#### WHAT ARE YOU BRINGING/OFFERING

- ❖ Community Agreement reading

**Melanie Brief Intro to herself and the conceptual framing of \*cybernetics\* \*of\* \*desire\***

*It will never be the first time again*

#### WHAT ARE YOU SEEKING/OPEN TO

##### **Partner Activity**

- ❖ What is the shape of your hunger?
  - What do you want to eat?
  - **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN**
  - **WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TEACH**

#### **Presentation Presentation**

## **Assignments for Next Week:**

### **1. A Presentation with 2 Prompts**

- a. Presentation: *What is the story of your life?***

- i. Who are you?
- ii. How are you feeling, what have you seen, what do you know?
- iii. Who is with you?
- iv. What have you been through, Where are you coming from?
- v. What are you bringing/offering?
- vi. What are you seeking/open to?

**b. Presentation: *Love Letter to a Speculative Liberatory Learning Environment***

**Love Letter to a Speculative Liberatory Learning Environment**

What does a speculative liberatory learning environment look like for you for learning about *code desire art and gathering*?

Imagine a space that can hold you and those you want to learn with.

*This space does need not be like any learning environment that exists. It does not have to be realistic or adhere to laws of physics.*

- \* What kinds of subjects would be taught there?
- \* Are there teachers and students or other roles? Do the roles ever change?
- \* How is time measured?
- \* What routines are practiced there?
- \* What kinds of relationships would the inhabitants have to each other?
- \* Are there grades? Would people be separated into groups? If so, how?
- \* What does it look like? What material is the space made out of?
- \* Who is there with you?
- \* What are the emotional qualities of the space?
- \* Consider the many forms it could take.

**c.**

**d. Example Love Letters to Browse:**

<https://www.are.na/digital-love-languages/love-letters-to-a-speculative-liberatory-learning-environment>

**Time constraint: 8 minutes total per person.** Presentation can be separated (part 1 and part 2), combined, or threaded.

**Platform constraint:**

- EDIT: You are welcome to present from your own computer.
- Google Slides doc: [Add your slides below your name here](#) if you are using GSlides (presenter notes OK) OR without slides and with your words, (interactive OK)
- You can try changing the order of the slides if you desire to go first or last, for example.

**2. Read and be prepared to discuss for next week\*:**

- a. <https://www.are.na/block/11836035>
- b. <https://www.are.na/block/18011526>
- c. <https://www.are.na/block/4108964>
- d. Pg. 32-36: <https://www.are.na/block/18011426>

**3. Add a suggested reading [to this channel](#) that speaks to desire. Yours, others, collective, a critique of desire, or representative of anti-desire.**

- a. **Please write one or two sentences of why you suggested this media in the block description.**
- b. **Your “suggested reading” can be a video, podcast, essay, article, tiktok, sculpture, etc.**

References for other syllabi and curricula that draws on some of these concepts and activities: [Digital Love Languages](#), [Cybernetics of Sex](#), [SFPC: Sex Ed](#) (more information for the Sex Ed Curriculum can be found written in Instagram captions starting [here](#))