

Inquiry Into Cyberspace

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In this course we'll explore some of the contemporary debates about the effect of cyberspace on both individual and collective identity and interactions. Is cyberspace inimical to meaningful social interactions? Is it eroding community participation and involvement? Or does cyberspace carry utopian possibilities in its ability to liberate individuals from social constraints and norms and break social boundaries? We'll consider the limits and possibilities associated with cyberspace and examine how our experiences in the virtual world impact and affect our experience of the "real" world. Aside from reading essays on cyberspace by contemporary scholars and critics, we'll do our own field research by observing and analyzing how identity and community is constructed online and by interviewing others about their experiences in cyberspace. In addition, we'll study how cyberspace is represented in literature, and then consider how virtual narratives alter our understanding of reading and writing.