

2025 Data Mourning Clinic

How many centimeters of water above a patch of sand define a territory as submerged?

GSAPP SPRING 2025

MARCH and AAD

Monday + Thursday 2:00 - 7:00 pm

9 Points

CCCP, CDP, HP, RED, and UP

Thursday 2:00 - 5:00 pm

3 Points

We are excited to announce the second iteration of the Data Mourning clinic at GSAPP for Fall 2025. Led by Marina Otero Verzier together with Daniel Miller, the 2025 Data Mourning clinic will function as an agency composed of students from MARCH, AAD, CCCP, CDP, HP, RED, and UP programs.

Data Mourning examines the case of Tuvalu, a Pacific island nation confronting imminent submergence due to global warming and rising sea levels. Facing the potential loss of its physical homeland, the government of Tuvalu has announced a plan to become fully virtual, transferring the nation's existence to the "cloud." As we witness the unraveling of worlds, the possibility of Tuvalu's digital twin raises critical questions on how to address the fragility of environments and communities, their care, custodianship, preservation, and eventual loss in the face of climate catastrophe.

Data Mourning explores the inherent tension between digital custodianship and the unsustainable practices of the data storage industry, which is heavily reliant on land, electricity, water, and other precious resources, and whose operations hasten the disappearance of other territories. The clinic aims to analyze the impacts of climate catastrophe on Tuvalu and to design strategies for safeguarding the intricate social, cultural, and environmental relationships that have defined this territory for centuries.

In its first iteration, the Data Mourning clinic engaged with the Permanent Mission of Tuvalu to the United Nations. The outcomes have been featured in multiple publications and in *The Ocean Speaks: New Ecologies and New Economies of the Seas* exhibition at Disseny Hub Barcelona (October 10, 2024 - February 23, 2025).

The clinic's second iteration will include a trip to Tuvalu, further expanding its research and engagement.

Envisioned as an agency with the capacity to offer diverse perspectives on the future of Tuvalu and other vulnerable territories at risk of disappearance, the clinic welcomes students from various academic programs, each contributing unique expertise. Students' skills and focus areas are interchangeable, encouraging collaboration and interdisciplinary exchange during collective moments. Together, we will explore how design actively participates in transforming society, technology, and the environment at different scales.