OVERVIEW

This course examines computer hackers to interrogate not only the ethics and technical practices of hacking, but to examine more broadly how hackers and hacking have transformed the politics of computing and the Internet more generally. We will examine how hacker values are realized and constituted by different legal, technical, and ethical activities of computer hacking—for example, free software production, cyberactivism and hacktivism, cryptography, and the prankish games of hacker underground. We will pay close attention to how ethical principles are variably represented and thought of by hackers, journalists, and academics and we will use the example of hacking to address various topics on law, order, and politics on the Internet such as: free speech and censorship, privacy, security, surveillance, and intellectual property. We finish with an in-depth look at two sites of hacker and activist action: Wikileaks and Anonymous.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

This will allow us to 1) demonstrate familiarity with variants of hacking 2) critically examine the multiple ways hackers draw on and reconfigure dominant ideas of property, freedom, and privacy through their diverse moral
codes and technical activities. 3) broaden our understanding of politics of the Internet by evaluating the various political effects and ramifications of hacking. Students will be responsible for leading discussions on the readings and critically engaging the readings and class conversations.

**READINGS**

The following texts are available at Paragraph Books and the rest of the readings will be on our course website. Many of the readings are excerpts of much longer readings or blog posts. The week before the next class I will often highlight which pages to focus your attention on.

Doctorow, Cory. 2009 *Makers*. Harper Voyager

**BLOGS/SITES YOU MIGHT WANT TO FOLLOW**

[http://lwn.net/](http://lwn.net/)
[http://slashdot.org/](http://slashdot.org/)

**MOVIES**

I have booked our room after class to watch four movies throughout the semester. Although not required, I highly encourage students to come watch the films.

**REQUIREMENTS, METHOD OF EVALUATION, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Class will be conducted as a seminar and I have structured the assignments to encourage active and engaged class discussions focused on the readings. Students will be responsible for leading discussions on the readings and should critically engage the readings and class conversations. Because this is a seminar course, regular class attendance is required. You are allowed one unexcused absence. After this, your grade will drop by one half letter for each missed class.

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<td>Reading Responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
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<td>Questions/participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Project</td>
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**Grade Breakdown:**

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EMAIL POLICY

During the academic year, I receive a considerable amount of email. In order for me to respond to my e-mail efficiently, please follow the following guidelines:

1. If you cannot see me during my office hours, e-mail me to set up an appointment; I will try to respond as soon as possible but I usually cannot accommodate a meeting in 24 or even 48 hours.
2. I read and reply to e-mail once a day and usually do not read or reply to e-mail after 5 PM or weekends.
3. Follow instructions for turning in assignments. For this class you are expected to turn in the reading responses via e-mail by 10 a.m. and in class. No other assignments submitted by e-mail will be accepted.
4. Grade inquiries and disputes will not be considered or discussed via e-mail. For all grade inquiries and questions about assignments, please set up an appointment with me.
5. I will not reply to e-mail inquiries regarding course matters (assignment requirements, due dates, exam structure, readings, etc.) that arise from missing class or inattention to the course syllabus. Inquiries requesting clarification will receive replies, though I would strongly prefer these inquiries to be made in class or during office hours.

OTHER INFORMATION AND MCGILL POLICIES

Language: In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Accommodations: Students requiring special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications should notify Prof. Coleman and the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible. The OSD is located in Suite 3100, Brown Student Services Building, ph: 398-6009 (voice), 398-8198 (TDD), www.mcgill.ca/osd/.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

L’université McGill attaché une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par consequent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procedures disciplinaires (pour les plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

SCHEDULE

[While this version provides a very good indication of what will come it is still draft. The final version will be available on the first day of class]

The following is a “working schedule.” Class materials are subject to change based on the interests, understanding, and general pace of the class. It is your responsibility to keep on top of any schedule changes, whether you are in class or not. If you have a concern about any of the materials, please speak to me.

Week 1

September 5: Introductions

Hitt, Jack and Paul Tough
1990 “Is Computer Hacking a Crime?” Harpers Magazine

Levy, Steven
1984 Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution [part one]
Coleman, Gabriella  

Robert Graham, David  
2012  “No, "hacker" really does mean "hacker"”  
http://erratasec.blogspot.ca/2012/08/no-hacker-really-does-mean-hacker.html

Rosenbaum, Ron  
1971  “Secrets of the Little Blue Box.” *Esquire Magazine*  
http://www.webcrunchers.com/crunch/stories/esq-art.html

**Listen to before class:**  
http://www.radiolab.org/2012/feb/20/long-distance/

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**Week 2**

**September 12: Free and Open Source Software**

Levy, Steven  
1984  “Epilogue.” *Hackers*

Stallman, Richard  
1985  “The GNU Manifesto”  
http://www.gnu.org/gnu/manifesto.html

Kelty, Chris  
2008  *Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software* [Introduction, Chapter 6, and Chapter 3 and in that order]

Coleman, Gabriella  
2013  *Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking* [Introduction, Chapter 2, 5, Epilogue]

Benjamin, Walter  
1986  “Author as Producer.” *Cultural Resistance Reader*

**Recommended:**

Hesse, Carla  

Hall, Stuart  
1987  “Variants of Liberalism.” *Politics and Ideology*

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**Week 3**

**September 19: Contexts and Places of Making// Making Stuff, Ethical Making**

Doctorow, Cory  
2009  *Makers* [read ½ of the book]

Polleta, Francesca,  
1999  “Free spaces’ in Collective Action.” *Theory and Society*

Pfaffenberger, Bryan
1996  “If I Want It, It’s OK: Usenet and the (Outer) Limits of Free Speech.” The Information Society

Coleman, Gabriella
2013  “Two Ethical Moments in Debian.” Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking

MaxiGas
http://peerproduction.net/issues/issue2/peer-reviewed-papers/hacklabs-and-hackerspaces/

Recommended:

Pettis, Bree
2011  HackerSpaces: The Beginning!

Week 4

September 26: Craft and Craftiness

Doctorow, Cory
2009  Makers [Finish]

Sennet, Richard
2008  The Craftsman [pp. 8-11 50-52, 240-252, 262-265; optional but recommended and included 37-45]

Coleman, Gabriella
2013  “Craft and Craftiness.” Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking

Seibel, Peter
2009  Coders at Work: Reflections on the Craft of Programming [selections]

Borgmann, Albert
1984  “Device Paradigm” Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life

Detienne, Marcel and Jean-Pierre Vernant,
1991  “Antilochus’ Race.” Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society

Hyde, Lewis
1998  Trickster Makes the World [Introduction and selections]

Listen to the NPR podcast before class:

The ‘Wild And Woolly’ World Of Bulletin Boards

After Hours Movie:

BBS: The Documentary (2005, Jason Scott)
[2 DVDs otherwise, we will be pulling an all nighter]

Recommended:

Fuller, Mathew
2008  “Elegance.” Software Studies: A Lexicon

Monfort, Nick
Week 5

October 3: The Underground

Sterling Bruce
http://www.dina.kvl.dk/~abraham/crackdown/crackdown_5.html#SEC5

Thomas, Douglass
2003 Hacker Culture [chapter 2, 4, 6]

Poulsen, Kevin
2008 “Teenage Hacker Is Blind, Brash and in the Crosshairs of the FBI.” Wired

Zines:
http://www.phrack.org/issues.html?issue=65&id=13#article
http://web.textfiles.com/ezines/EL8/ [selections TBD]
http://gonullyourself.org/ezines/ZF0/zt0%204.txt

Listen to before class, Kevin Mitnick keynote HOPE:
http://www.thefifth-hope.org/mp3/mitnick-1.mp3
http://www.thefifth-hope.org/mp3/mitnick-2.mp3

After Hours Movie:
War Games (1983)

Week 6

October 10: The Industry and “the Man”

Editorial/2600
The Victor Spoiled

Johnston, Jessica
2009 Technological Turf Wars: A Case Study of the Computer Antivirus Industry
[Introduction, chapter 1, chapter 2]

Ensmenger, Nathan
2010 “The Black Art of Programming.” The Computer Boys Take Over

Altman, Mitch
http://peerproduction.net/issues/issue-2/invited-comments/hacking-at-the-crossroad/

The Rise of Antisec Movement [URLS, provided separately]

Guido, Dan
2008 “Is the security industry like a lemon market?”
Week 7

October 17: Piracy

Anonymous
http://www.textfiles.com/piracy/warez.txt

Editorial
1999 “So You Want to be a Pirate?” High Noon on the Electronic Frontier

Liang, Lawrence
2011 “Beyond Representation: The Figure of the Pirate.” Access to Knowledge in the Age of Intellectual Property
http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/chapters/189095196Xchap15.pdf

Biggs, John
2012 “Avast, Me Hearties: How The Pirate Bay Changed The Way We Steal”
http://techcrunch.com/2012/02/09/avast-me-hearties-how-the-pirate-bay-changed-the-way-we-steal/

Andersson, Jonas
2012 “The origins and impacts of Swedish filesharing: a case study, JoPP”
http://peerproduction.net/issues/issue-0/peer-reviewed-papers/the-origins-and-impacts-of-swedish-filesharing/

Fleischer, Rasmus
2006 Pirate Party Speech
https://torrentfreak.com/piratbyran-speech/

gmaxwell
2011 “Papers from Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society”
https://thepiratebay.se/torrent/6554331

In class movie:

Steal this Film (Alan Toner, Jaime King 2006)

Week 8
IN DEPTH: THE POLITICS OF Secrecy, Anonymity, AND TRANSPARENCY (or how to Understand Anonymous and Wikileaks)

October 24: Crypto, Anonymity, and Dissent

Zimmerman, Phil
1999 “How PGP Works/Why Do You Need PGP?” High Noon on the Electronic Frontier

Greendberg, Andy
2012 This Machine Kills Secrets: How WikiLeakers, Cypherpunks, and Hacktivists Aim to Free the World’s Information [chapters TBD]

Sunstein, Cass
2003 Why Societies Need Dissent [Introduction and chapter 5]

Thoreau, Henry David
1848 “On Civil Disobedience”
http://art-bin.com/art/odisob.html

Assange, Julian
1996 “State and Terrorist Conspiracies”
http://cryptome.org/0002/jaconspiracies.pdf

Week 9

October 31: Roots

Greenberg, Andy
2012 This Machine Kills Secrets: How WikiLeakers, Cypherpunks, and Hacktivists Aim to Free the World’s Information [chapters TBD]

Knuttila, Lee
2011 “User unknown: 4chan, Anonymity and Contingency.” First Monday

Auerbach, David
2012 “Anonymity as Culture: Treatise.” Triple Canopy
http://canopycanopycanopy.com/15/anonymity_as_culture__treatise

Hyde, Lewis
1998 “Speechless Shame and Shameless Speech.” Trickster Makes this World

Dominguez, Ricardo
2002 “Electronic Disturbance: An Interview.” Cultural Resistance Reader

Epstein, Barbara

Week 10

November 7: The Politics of Hacking

(no class but please read these pieces in anticipation of the following weeks)

Soderberg, Johan
Forthcoming “Determining social change: The role of technological determinism in the collective action framing of hackers. New Media & Society
Week 11

**November 14: Understanding Anonymous**

Coleman, Gabriella  
2012  “Our Weirdness Is Free. The logic of Anonymous—online army, agent of chaos, and seeker of justice”  *Triple Canopy*  
http://canopycanopycanopy.com/15/our_weirdness_is_free

Coleman, Gabriella  
2012  Am I Anonymous?  *Limn*  
http://limn.it/am-i-anonymous/

Deseriis, Marco  
2012  Is Anonymous a New Form of Luddism?  
http://www.thething.it/snafu/?p=711

Norton, Quinn  
2012  How Anonymous Picks Targets, Launches Attacks, and Takes Powerful Organizations Down  
http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/07/if_anonymous/

Bakhtin, Mikhail  

Galloway, Alex  
2010  “Networks.”  *Critical Terms for Media Studies.*

Kenneth Cmiel  
1994  “The Politics of Civility.”  *Sixties: From Memory to History*

Corman, Josh and Brian Martin  
2011/2012  “Building a Better Anonymous” [we will split the class up to read different sections to this 8 part series and we will have mini-presentations of the main arguments]  
http://blog.cognitivedissidents.com/2011/12/20/building-a-better-anonymous-series-part-0/

Anonymous 2012  
2012  Anonymous Does Not Need Fixing  
http://www.xspeaks.tk/

Anonymous  
2012  Digital Sit-ins: DDOS is legitimate civil disobedience.  
http://anonyops.org/post/1658162289/digital-sit-ins-ddos-is-legitimate-civil-disobedience

**Listen to before class:**  

**After Hours Movie:**
We are Legion: The Story of the Hacktivists (Brian Knappenberger, 2011)

Recommended:

Bogad, Lawrence
2006 “Tactical Carnival: Social movements, Demonstrations, and Dialogical Performance.” A Boal Companion

Olson, Parmy
2012 We are Anonymous. Little and Brown: NY

Week 12

November 21: The Broader and Historical Context

McCordy, Patrick
2013 “From the Pentagon Papers to Cablegate: How the Network Society Has Changed Leaking.” Beyond WikiLeaks

Coleman, Gabriella
2013 “Anonymous and the Politics of Leaking.” Beyond Wikileaks

Chomsky, Noam
1999 “Domestic Terrorism: Notes on the State System of Oppression” New Political Science
http://www.chomsky.info/articles/199909-.htm

Shorrock, Tim
http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2005/01/spywho-billed-me

Mueller, Robert
2012 “Combating Threats in the Cyber World: Outsmarting Terrorists, Hackers, and Spies.” RSA Speech

Lipick, Martin
http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2MG877.html [summary only]

Kravets, David
2012 “We Don’t Need No Stinking Warrant: The Disturbing, Unchecked Rise of the Administrative Subpoena.” Wired Threat Level
http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/2012/08/administrative-subpoenas/

After Hours Movie:

Secrecy (Peter Galison, Rob Moss 2008)

Week 13

November 28: Media and Spectacle

Lynch, Lisa

Deabord, Guy
1994 “Separation Perfected.” The Society of the Spectacle
Philip, Whitney
Television and New Media
https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/12204

Gitlin, Todd
2009 “The Media in the Unmaking of the New Left.” The Social Movements Reader

Couldry, Nick

Listen to Before Class:

“Guy Debord predicted our distracted society”
http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/mar/30/guy-debord-society-spectacle