HACKER CULTURE & POLITICS

COMS 541 (CRN 15368) 1435-1725
Department of Art History and Communication Studies
McGill University
Professor Gabriella Coleman
Fall 2012
Arts W-220/ 14:35-17:25

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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 hactivism, 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.

Levy, Steven.1984 [1994] *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution.* Doubleday
Doctorow, Cory. 2009 *Makers.* Harper Voyager

BLOGS/SITES YOU MIGHT WANT TO FOLLOW

http://www.wired.com/threatlevel/
http://news.ycombinator.com/
http://lwn.net/
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.

REQUIRMENTS, METHOD OF EVALUATION, AND ASSINGMENTS

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 <u>one unexcused absence</u>. After this, your grade will drop by one half letter for each missed class

Reading Responses   30% (6 total and see separate sheet for grading rubric)
Class Presentation   20% (see separate sheet for grading rubric)
Questions/participation   20% (see separate sheet for grading rubric)
Final Research Project   30% (details will be provided later in the semester)

Grade Breakdown:

Grade	Grade point	Percentages
A	4.0	85 -100
A-	3.7	80 – 84
B+	3.3	75 – 79
B	3.0	70 – 74
B-	2.7	65 – 69
C+	2.3	60 – 64
C	2.0	55 – 59
D (Conditional Pass)	1.0	50 – 54

| F (Fail) | 0 | 0 - 49 |

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 consequences 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
2013   "Hackers." *John Hopkins Dictionary of Digital Media*

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/

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
2002   "The Rise of Intellectual Property, 700 B.C - A.D. 2000: an Idea in Balance." *Dædalus*

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

Week 3

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

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

Polleta, Francesa,
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
2012 "HackLabs and HackerSpaces: Tracing Two Genealogies." *Journal of Peer Production*
http://peerproduction.net/issues/issue-2/peer-reviewed-papers/hacklabs-and-hackerspaces/

Recommended:

Pettis, Bree
2011   *HackerSpaces: The Beginning*!
http://www.brepettis.com/blog/2011/8/31/hackerspaces-the-beginning-the-book.html

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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 Programing* [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
http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=120649723

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

2008   "Obfuscated Code." *Software Studies: A Lexicon*

Week 5

October 3: The Underground

Sterling Bruce
1992   "The Digital Underground." *The Hacker Crackdown*
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*
http://www.wired.com/politics/law/news/2008/02/blind_hacker?currentPage=1

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/zf0%204.txt

Listen to before class, Kevin Mitnick keynote HOPE:

http://www.the-fifth-hope.org/mp3/mitnick-1.mp3
http://www.the-fifth-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]
http://site.ebrary.com/lib/mcgill/docDetail.action?docID=10279967

Ensmenger, Nathan
2010   "The Black Art of Programming." *The Computer Boys Take Over*

Altman, Mitch
2012 "Hacking at the crossroad: US military funding of hackerspaces." *Journal of Peer Production*
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?"

http://seclists.org/fulldisclosure/2008/Jul/399

Greenberg, Andy
2012   "Shopping For Zero-Days: A Price List For Hackers' Secret Software Exploits" *Forbes*

http://www.forbes.com/sites/andygreenberg/2012/03/23/shopping-for-zero-days-an-price-list-for-hackers-secret-software-exploits/

In class video:

Mikko Hypponen: Fighting viruses, defending the net //TED Talk
http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/mikko_hypponen_fighting_viruses_defending_the_net.html

Watch Before Class:

Hackers Testifying at the United States Senate, May 19, 1998 (L0pht Heavy Industries)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVJldn_MmMY

Week 7

October 17: Piracy

Anonymous
1994   "The Lamahs-Guide to Pirating Software on the Internet"
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/ja-conspiracies.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*
http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/3665/3055

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
1988   "The Politics of Pregifurative Politics." *Cultural Resistance Reader*

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*

Coleman, Gabriella
2013   "The Cultural Critique of Intellectual Property Law." *Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking.*

Derrida, Jacques
1992   "Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority" [selections]

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/ff_anonymous/

Bakhtin, Mikhail
1988   "Rabelais and his World." *Cultural Resistance Reader.*

Galloway, Alex
20 10   "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/16585162289/digital-sit-ins-ddos-is-legitimate-civil-disobedience

Listen to before class:
The Hacker Law/On the Media: http://www.onthemedia.org/2011/sep/23/the-hacker-law/

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

McCurdy, 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
2005   "The Spy Who Billed Me." *Mother Jones.*
http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2005/01/spy-who-billed-me

Mueller, Robert
2012   "Combating Threats in the Cyber World: Outsmarting Terrorists, Hackers, and Spies." RSA
        Speech
http://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/combating-threats-in-the-cyber-world-outsmarting-terrorists-hackers-and-spies

Libick, Martin
2012   Cyberdeterrence and Cyberwar. *Rand.*
http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG877.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
2013   "The Leak Heard Round the World? Cablegate in the Evolving Global Mediascape." *Beyond
WikiLeaks*

Deabord, Guy
1994   "Separation Perfected." *The Society of the Spectacle*

Philip, Whitney
Forthcoming "The House That Fox Built: Anonymous, Spectacle and Cycles of Amplification."
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
2003   "Rethinking Media Events." *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach*

Listen to Before Class:

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