

# **Hackers: The Ethics and Politics of Information Freedom and Privacy**

## **Anthropology 21243: Intensive Study of a Culture**

**Tues/Thurs Cobb 112 4:30-5:50**

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**Office Hours:** Haskell Hall 236. Time: TBA

### **Brief Course Description**

This course extends some classical anthropological concerns about ownership, creativity, ethics, politics, selfhood, and cultural representation through the lens of computer hacking—a socio-cultural activity that fuses technological production with creative play and is guided by a series of ethical principles. Focusing primarily on the ethics of information freedom and privacy, we investigate how these values have been multiply defined and constituted by different legal, technical and ethical activities of computer hacking—free software production, cyberactivism, privacy through cryptography, and the pranksih games of hacker underground. We pay close attention to how ethical principles are variably represented and thought of by hackers, journalists, and academics. This methodological triangulation will allow us to critically 1) problematize thinking on computer hackers as a socio-cultural group guided by a singular ethic 2) 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 by evaluating the various political effects and ramifications of hacking.

### **Course Format and Requirements:**

I will begin each class with a short introductory lecture that examines the themes and readings for the week. The rest of the class should function to promote class discussion and student-led conversation about the various readings. Active participation in class discussion is vital. At a minimum you should read and reflect on the assigned texts and come to class prepared (1) to give a summary of the thesis and argument of each reading (2) to pose at least one conceptual question about the readings and/or topics under discussion.

There are two writing assignments for this class. Every week you will hand in a one page summary of the week's readings that must be turned in via email no later than 10 am the day of class. You are allowed to skip 2 assignments at your discretion with no penalty. These are graded as check, check plus and check minus. These assignments will help you keep up with your reading and will facilitate class discussion. Please refer to separate sheet for a more detailed examination of writing guidelines and expectations.

**Assignments:** See separate sheet for final exam.

### **Grading:**

Discussion: 25%  
Questions and Papers: 30%  
Final Exam/Research Paper: 45%

### **Readings:**

Unless available on the web, all readings have been placed on reserve at the Regenstein. Additionally, other readings are either available on e-reserve. Since we read significant portions from four books, I ordered them for purchase at the Seminary Coop.

Please note that some articles read more quickly than others – for instance, journalistic articles require less time than theoretical works like John Mill. Therefore, I have marked every reading

with a symbol to indicate the text genre to help you orient and pace yourselves. The symbols should also be thought of as a guide for your writing assignment because you should be thinking critically about how different genres of writing approach hackers. I will also remind you at the end of each class about the nature of the readings we will encounter next and offer one or two questions that will help you approach your reading. @ = Academic, ! = Journalistic and # = Primary text.

Books at the Coop:

- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London: Routledge, [1950] 1990.
- Thomas, Douglas. *Hacker Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2002.
- Graeber, David. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Pear Press, 2004.
- Levy, Steven. *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*. New York: Bantam Press, 1984.
- Stephenson, Neal. *Snow Crash*. Spectra, 2000.

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## Part One: Introduction: The Cultural, Material, and Historical Context

### Week One

#### 1. Tues Jan 4: Introduction

Course Overview, Introductory Lecture, and Presentation of Web Resources

#### 2. Thurs Jan 6: Theoretical and Ethnographic Approaches to Hackers and Subcultures

@ Fisher, Michael. "Worlding Cyberspace: Toward a Critical Ethnography in Time, Space, and Theory" in *Critical Anthropology Now*. (1999) pp. 245-272 and 279-297 (on e-reserve).  
@ Turkle, Sherry. "Hackers, Loving the Machine for Itself" in *The Second Self* pp. 196-237 (on e-reserve)

#### Suggested Reading

Thomas, Douglas "Hacking Culture" in *Hacker Culture* (2002) pp. 5-46

### Week Two

#### 3. Tues Jan 11: Thinking Historically, Material Beginnings, and the Effects of Historical Representation

@ Headrick, Daniel. "Information and its History" and "Communication Information: Postal and Telegraphic Systems" in *When Information Came of Age*. (1999) pp 3-14 pp. 181-210 (on e-reserve).

! Standage, Tom. *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers*. (1999).

#### Suggested Reading:

@ Light, Jennifer. "When Computers Were Women" in *Technology and Culture*. (1999) pp. 455-483.

#### 4. Thurs Jan 13: The Salience of the Culture Concept, the Idea of Sub-Culture, and the Effects of Self-Representation.

@ Sahlins, Marshall. "Sentimental Pessimism and Ethnographic Experience or Why Culture is not a Disappearing Object" in *Biographies of Scientific Objects*. (2001) pp.158-202 (on e-reserve).

@ Hedbridge, Dick. "Subculture: The Meaning of Style" in *The Subcultures Reader*. (1997) pp. 130-142 (on e-reserve).

### Week Three

5. **Tues Jan 18: The Rise of the Hacker Ethic**

- # Raymond, Eric. "A Brief History of Hackerdom" in *OpenSources*. (1999) pp. 19-29 (on e-reserve).
- ! Levy, Steven. "True Hackers" (section 1,2,3) in *Hackers, Heroes of the Computer Revolution*. (1984) pp 17-70 (on e-reserve).

**Part Two: An Introduction to Free/Open Source Software, Privacy, and the Hacker Underground**

6. **Thurs Jan 20: What is Property? What is Not?**

- @ Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift*. (1967). pp. 1-36; 63-81.
- @ Locke, John. "Of Property" in *Two Treatises of Government*. Chapter V pp. 115-126. (on e-reserve).

**Week Four**

7. **Tues Jan 25 : What is Intellectual Property?**

- @ Litman, Jessica "Copyright Basics" in *Digital Copyright* (2001) pp. 15-19 (on e-reserve).
- @ Lemley, et al. "Introduction to Computer Technology, Network Economics, and Intellectual Property Law" in *Software and Internet Law*. (2000) pp. 1-9; 38-45 (on e-reserve).
- @ Boyle, James. *Shamans, Software and Spleens*, Chapter one (1996) pp. 1-16 (1996). (on e-reserve).
- ! Mann, Charles. "Who Will Own Your Next Idea" in *The Atlantic Monthly*. Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/98sep/copy.htm> (1998).
- @ Kelly, Chris. "A Primer in Intellectual Property Law" <http://cnx.rice.edu/content/m11795/latest/>

8. **Thurs Jan 27: The Rise of Free and Open Source Software, New Models for Intellectual Property, New Notions of Freedom and Openness**

- ! Levy, Steven. "The Last of the True Hackers" in *Hackers*. (1984) pp. 415-430.
- # Stallman, Richard and Larry Wall. "Sharing the Source," in *Technomanifestos*. (2002) pp. 240-268 (on e-reserve).
- @ Ghosh, Rishabh "Cooking Pot Markets: Gift Economy" *First Monday* [http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue3\\_3/ghosh/index.html](http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue3_3/ghosh/index.html)

**Week Five**

9. **Tues Feb 1: Free as in Speech, not as in Beer?**

**Guest Lecture:** Geof Stone, Harry Kalven, Jr. Distinguished Service Professor of Law, University of Chicago.

- @ Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. (1857) pp. 41-51; 84-88 (on e-reserve).
- # *What is the Copyleft?* available at <http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/copyleft.html>
- # Schoen, Seth *The History of the DeCSS Haiku* <http://www.loyalty.org/~schoen/haiku.html>
- @ Stone, Geoffrey and Lee Bollinger "Dialogue" in *Eternally Vigilant: Free Speech in the Modern Era* (2002) pp. 1-31 (on e-reserve).

Suggested Reading:

- @ Marcuse, Herbert. "Repressive Tolerance" in *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*. (1969).

10. **Thurs Feb 3: Free and Open Source Software, The Cultivation of a Lived Ethic for Information Freedom and Scientific Openness**

**Guest Participants:** Free and Open Source Software Developers from the Gnome, Debian and Subversion Projects.

@ Kelty, Chris, "Free Software, Free Science" in *First Monday*. Available at [http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6\\_12/kelty/index.html](http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue6_12/kelty/index.html) (2001), (20 pages).

@ Serres, Michel, "Scientific Ethics, A Two-Sided Question" in *README!! ASCII Culture and the Revenge of Knowledge*. 1999 pp. 407-408 (on e-reserve).

## Week Six

### 11. Tues Feb 8: The Hacker Underground: Under What?

# "Pirate Editorial: So You want to be a Pirate" in *High Noon on the Electronic Frontier*. (1999) pp 109-111 (on e-reserve).

# *The Anatomy of a Pirate* available at <http://www.textfiles.com/piracy/anatomy.txt>

! Sterling, Bruce. *The Hacker Crackdown: Law and Disorder on the Electronic Frontier* (1992). Part II pp. 41- 147.

@ Thomas, Douglas. "Representing Hacker Culture: Reading Phrack" in *Hacker Culture*. (2002) pp. 115-140.

**Optional Movie:** War Games (1983)

### 12. Thurs Feb 10: Crypto-Freedom and Privacy.

@ Garfinkel, Simon. "Privacy Under Attack" in *Database Nation*. pp. 1-35 (on e-reserve).

! Levy, Steven "Crypto Rebels" in *High Noon on the Electronic Frontier* (1999) pp. 185-205 (on e-reserve).

# "Encryption, Privacy, and Crypto-Anarchism" (various authors) in *High Noon on the Electronic Frontier*. (1999) pp. 206-214; 237-245 (on e-reserve).

#### Suggested Reading:

@ Singh, Simon. "Pretty Good Privacy" in *The Code Book: The Evolution of Secrecy from Mary Queen of Scots to Quantum Cryptography*. (1999) pp. 293-317 (on e-reserve).

## Week Seven

### Part Four: The Politics of Hacking and Technology, Revisited

### 13. Tues Feb 15: Theoretical Interlude

@ Warner, Michael "Publics and Counterpublics" (2000) pp. 64-124 (on e-reserve)

@/# Riemens, Patrice. *Some Thoughts on the Idea of Hacker Culture*  
[http://multitudes.samizdat.net/article.php?id\\_article=1030](http://multitudes.samizdat.net/article.php?id_article=1030)

@ Galloway, Alex "Hacking" *Protocol*. (2003). (on e-reserve) pp. 146-173.

\*\*\* Please review notes from Fisher, Sahlins, Bakhtin, Fisher, Hedbidge for class discussion.

#### Suggested Reading:

@ Stallybrass and White. "From Carnival to Transgression" in *The Subcultures Reader* (1997) pp. 293-301.

### 14. Thurs Feb 17: Is that Hunk of Metal and Wires and those Zeros and Ones Really Political?

@ Lessig, Lawrence. "Regulability" in *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*. (1999) Part I: pp. 3-30. (on e-reserve).

@ Winner, Langdon. "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" in *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*. (1986) pp. 19-39.

<http://www-personal.si.umich.edu/~rfrost/courses/Women+Tech/readings/Winner.html>

## Week Eight

### 15. Tues Feb 22: The Hacker Habitat, Material Architectures and the Recursive Public Sphere

!/#/ Stephenson, Neal. *In The Beginning was the Command Line*. (1999). Available <http://www.cryptonomicon.com/beginning.html>

@ Pfaffenberger, Bryan. "If I want it, it's OK: Usenet and the (outer) limits of free speech," *Information Society* 12 (1996): 365-388. <http://pfaff.sts.virginia.edu/bphome/docs/pdf/usenet.pdf>

@ Kelty, Chris "The Recursive Public" *Cultural Anthropology* 20:2 (2005):185-214.

Suggested Reading:

! Sterling, Bruce. *A Short History of the Internet*. Available online at ["http://w3.aces.uiuc.edu/AIM/scale/nethistory.html"](http://w3.aces.uiuc.edu/AIM/scale/nethistory.html)

**16. Thurs Feb 24: The Hacker Underground: Performing the Limits of Access**

@ Douglass, Thomas. "Hacking as the Performance of Technology: Reading the 'Hacker Manifesto'" in *Hacker Culture*. (2002) pp. 47-80

In Class Movie: Necrocam

**Week Nine**

**17. Tues March 1: Hackers Under the Threat of the Law**

@ Thomas, Douglass. "Technology and Punishment: the Juridical Construction of the Hacker" in *Hacker Culture* (2002) pp. 175-219.

# Mitnick, Kevin. "Kevin Mitnick's 'Lost' Bio.

[http://www.theregister.co.uk/2003/01/13/kevin\\_mitnicks\\_lost\\_bio/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2003/01/13/kevin_mitnicks_lost_bio/)

# "Congressional Testimony by Emmanuel Goldstein" in *High Noon on the Electronic Frontier* (1999) pp. 165-172 (on e-reserve).

**Optional Movie:** Freedom Downtime (2001) (Documentary made by 2600 on the Kevin Mitnick case which is covered in the Thomas reading)

**18. Thurs March 3: The Open vs the Closed Society**

! Brin, David. *The Transparent Society: Will Technology Force Us to Choose between Freedom and Privacy?* (1998) pp. 3- 27 (on e-reserve).

# Zimmerman, Phil. "How PGP (Pretty Good Privacy Works)/Why You Need PGP" in *High Noon on The Electronic Frontier*. (1999) pp. 179-185 (on e-reserve).

@ Dean, Jodi. "Little Brothers" in *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy*. (2002) pp. 79-113 (on e-reserve).

**Optional Movie:** The Matrix

**Week 10**

**19. Tues March 8: Anarchism Triumphant? A Response to Neoliberal Globalization?**

@/# Moglen, Eben. Anarchism Triumphant. Free Software and the Death of Copyright. *First Monday* [http://emoglen.law.columbia.edu/my\\_pubs/anarchism.html](http://emoglen.law.columbia.edu/my_pubs/anarchism.html)

@ Graeber, David. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Prickly Paradigm Press. (2004)

Suggested Reading

! Finnegan, William. "The Economics of Empire Notes on the Washington Consensus" *Harpers Magazine*. Available online at <http://www.mindfully.org/WTO/2003/Economics-Of-EmpireMay03.htm>

**20. Thurs March 10: Anarchism Cont.**

@ Dale, Bradely. "Open Source, Anarchy, and the Utopian Impulse" *Media and Culture* (7):3 (2004) [http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0406/03\\_Bradley.php](http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0406/03_Bradley.php)

@ Vaidyanathan, Siva. "Introduction." "The Ideology of Peer-to-Peer" and "Culture as Anarchy" *The*

*Anarchist in the Library*. New York: Basic Books.

## Internet Resources

### The Hacker Public Sphere

**Slashdot: News for Nerds, Stuff that Matters**

<http://www.slashdot.org>

**Kuro5hin: Technology and Culture from the Trenches**

<http://www.kuro5hin.org>

**A Directory of Wonderful Things**

<http://www.boingboing.net>

**IRC (Internet Relay Chat)**

<http://www.irchelp.org/>

[http://www.irc.org/history\\_docs/jarkko.html](http://www.irc.org/history_docs/jarkko.html)

### Hacker Culture

**Hacker Culture**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker\\_culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hacker_culture)

**Crypto-Anarchism**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crypto-anarchism>

**Cypher-Punk**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cypherpunk>

**Free and Open Source Software**

<http://echo.gmu.edu/freeandopen/>

**The Hacker Underground:**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic\\_underground\\_community](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_underground_community)

**The Jargon File**

<http://www.catb.org/~esr/jargon/>

### Intellectual Property

**U.S. Federal Code Title 17 (US Constitution (pay special attention to section 8))**

<http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html>

**U.S. Patent and Trademark Office**

<http://www.uspto.gov/>

**US Government Office**

<http://www.copyright.gov/>

**World Intellectual Property Organization**

<http://www.wipo.org/>

### The Politics of Hacking

**Electronic Frontier Foundation**

<http://www.eff.org>

**The Free Software Foundation**

<http://www.gnu.org>

**2600**

<http://www.2600.com>

**Hactivismo**

<http://http://www.hactivismo.com/>

### Local Hacker Groups and Associations

**Linux Users of Chicago:**

<http://www.luni.org/>

**2600 of Chicago** (“reflecting Chicago’s Hacker’s ethical perspective of technology and politics.”)

<http://www.chicago2600.net/index2.shtml>

**UFO: Users of Free Operating Systems**  
<http://ufo.chicago.il.us/>