
title: Art of Surveillance

Art of Surveillance

Instructor David Rueter

<http://davidrueter.com>

drueter@saic.edu

Department of Art and Technology Studies

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Spring 2015

M W 6PM - 9PM

112 S Michigan, Room 416

Office hours by appointment only

Course website:

<http://github.com/davruet/artofsurveillance>

Course Description

This hybrid studio/seminar course investigates how artists have engaged the mechanisms and implications of surveillance, paying special attention to the major shifts that are currently underway. Questions of modernism, postmodernism, privacy, the construction of individual identity, and counter-surveillance are investigated through close analyses of theoretical texts and contemporary art since the 1960s. Connecting theory to practice through workshops in the lab and in the streets, the studio portion of the class demonstrates techniques such as computer vision, location tracking, social network analysis, embedded computing, and systems vulnerability analysis. Students will each complete and present to the class an independent research project that addresses contemporary surveillance, choosing either a written research paper or documentation of an artistic investigation.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Apply contemporary philosophical ideas, through writing and artistic practice, to surveillance and artistic responses to surveillance.
- Gain or develop technical research and experimentation skills needed for analyzing and repurposing networked consumer software / hardware
- Conceptually disassemble technologies, social practices, and social artifacts, and critically interrogate them through writing or artistic interventions, using critical tools

borrowed from feminist theory, media studies, philosophies of aesthetics, and political theory.

Class Participation Guidelines

- Come to class prepared to discuss the day's assigned reading and share your relevant references.
- Participate fully in the discussions and final critique -- be generous with your attention and work to generate a constructive discussion. Help make sure that critiques and discussions are helpful and non-threatening spaces where everyone's voice can be heard.

Law

Big scary warning about the law:

Please, please, please, keep me informed about what kind of experiments you are planning **if they involve computers you don't own**. The space we're entering in this class is fraught, politically and legally. For artistic and academic reasons, the law can be a subject of interest. In addition, students must understand how the law might relate to their personal practice. Computer abuse laws are written broadly and enforced selectively. In this country's heightened climate of official anxiety, an aggressive prosecutor might consider the work of an artist as a threat to national security or social order. As a general rule, systems of power go to great lengths to protect what they consider vital infrastructure. Surveillance systems are considered an infrastructural pillar by the US government and others, as are computer networks in general. Computer networks are also some of the most vulnerable and difficult to secure foundations of national infrastructure. Instead of helping to build resilient technological defenses, which would make surveillance and other means of control more difficult, part of the federal government's strategy so far has been to use draconian legal measures against individuals it identifies as threats, to make examples of them. Aaron Swartz, Kevin Mitnick, Barrett Brown, and a number of other so-called "hackers" have run afoul of the system, and have have been threatened or punished with prison sentences typically reserved for murderers. Prosecutors and the law do not distinguish civil disobedience from terrorist threats. In the case of networked computers, the legal line between speech and crime is very fuzzy. There are many things that might seem innocent, or protected by freedom of speech, that could actually land you decades in jail.

So, please, let's all try to stay out of federal prison.

The Critical Art Ensemble has a good analysis of Electronic Civil Disobedience:

<http://www.critical-art.net/books/ecd/ecd2.pdf>

Course Requirements

1. Initial 5-10 minute introductory presentation. Tell us about your background and artistic / academic practice. Due 1/28
2. Completion of all required readings, participation in class discussions, and contribution of one independently researched topical reference outside of the reading per class discussion.
3. Completion of an independently developed artistic or academic project, and participation in an in-class final critique of this project. Graduate thesis projects or advanced undergraduate projects developed for other classes can be used for this assignment, as long as two requirements are satisfied: **a.** students must inform the instructor that they are using the project to satisfy other academic requirements, and **b.** the project must substantially engage one or more of the major themes of this course. Written projects are acceptable, as long as they are presented to the class as a 20-minute lecture. Projects are due at the final critique, on 5/4 or 5/6.
4. 15-minute in-class presentation of the research and ideas pertaining to the in-process final project. Due 3/2
5. Group article presentation: Form a small group (2 or 3 students), select an article from the academic journal *Surveillance and Society* (or another short academic text of your choosing) and lead an in-class discussion of the text. Introduce the topic in a 10-minute mini-lecture that includes art-historical and technological references that contribute to the article. Presentation date will be arranged in consultation with the instructor, so that it can be paired with an existing topic.

Final Critique

Students may opt to exhibit their final project in a public space of their choosing within the Chicago Loop. This is not a requirement, but it is encouraged. On 5/4 (and perhaps also on 5/6, depending on the number of public projects), we will walk from site to site to view and critique these public projects. Please feel free to invite anyone who might be interested in attending.

Suggested reading / viewing

Empson's 7 Types of Ambiguity: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7QULkgn3ho>

eds. Levin, Thomas Y., Ursula Frohne, Peter Weibel Ctrl [Space]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother: Exposition, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Du 12 Octobre 2001 Au 24 Février 2002. Karlsruhe: ZKM, 2002. Print.

Larsen, Lars Bang, *Networks*

(much more to come in a separate resources document, stay tuned!)

Films

The Lives of Others

The Conversation

Attendance Policy

The Undergraduate Division requires that faculty members keep accurate attendance records and call for attendance at all classes. Students should miss class only with reasonable cause. If a student needs to miss class with reasonable cause, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to receive instruction for how to make up for the missed class. It is the instructor's responsibility to give this information to the student. Missing class for other than a reasonable cause may jeopardize the student's academic standing in the class.

If a student misses MORE than three classes, whether or not for a reasonable cause, the student will fail the class, if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal with a grade of "W." Deadlines for withdrawal: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 (fall semester); Wednesday, March 26, 2014 (spring semester). If a student attends FEWER than three classes the student's financial aid, merit scholarship, academic standing, and/or immigration status will be compromised, regardless of an individual faculty member's modifications of these recommendations.

Reasonable cause to miss a class might include: * Illness or hospitalization (the student should contact Health Services, who will relay information to the faculty in whose class the student is enrolled) * Observation of a religious holiday * Family illness or death

Lateness

Class will begin promptly at 1PM. Don't be late!!

Three late arrivals counts as one absence.

Assignments turned in more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

Official Plagiarism Statement

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) prohibits "dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the School" (Students' Rights and Responsibilities, Student Handbook). Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. One plagiarizes when one presents another's work as one's own, even if one does not intend to. The penalty for plagiarizing may also result in some loss of some types of financial aid (for example, a No Credit in a course can lead to a loss of the Presidential Scholarship), and repeat offenses can lead to expulsion from SAIC. To find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, you can (1) go to the Current Students Dashboard on the saic.edu site, under Campus Resources select the Academic Advising link, and click Guides and Forms. The Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee produced a handbook that can be found there. Or (2) read about it in the Student Handbook under the section Academic Misconduct.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students

with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health or chronic physical condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) by phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to all of your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. Accommodations are not retroactive. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located on the 13th floor of 116 South Michigan Avenue.

Writing Center Information

The Writing Center MacLean Center Basement, 112 S. Michigan Ave., B1-03

Fall and Spring Semester Hours Monday–Thursday 9:00 a.m.–7:15 p.m. Friday 9:00 a.m.–5:15 p.m.

SAIC offers free, hour-long writing tutorials at the Writing Center, which is located in the basement of MacLean. Tutors are available to assist all currently enrolled students with any stage of the writing process.

Appointments To schedule an appointment with a Writing Center tutor, students first need to create an account through the online sign-up system.

Once students have set up their own account, they may sign up for appointments. Weekly standing appointments are available upon request. When students come to their tutoring appointments, they should make sure to bring their assignments with them and have any work printed out.

Online schedule instructions are available outside of the Writing Center suite (in the hallway outside of the MacLean Center B1-03).

Contact Information Leila Wilson, Writing Center Coordinator: lwilson@saic.edu or 312.345.3588

Writing Center Suite: 312.345.9131 (Call to see if there are any last-minute openings.)

Schedule

1/26 - Introduction, tour of introductory concepts, roadmap.

New Surveillance (post-surveillance?) A new age of surveillance, with three key "moments:" 9/11, Facebook, and Snowden

Panopticism, The Technological Sublime, Oligopticism, Media Ecologies and Evil Media, Actor-Network Theory, Politics of Aesthetics, Intersectionality of Surveillance, Digital Bodies, Big Data, Global Computation

ANT Catalog: <https://www.eff.org/document/20131230-appelbaum-nsa-ant-catalog>

1/28 - Initial introductions

2/2 - Panopticism and the Sublime

Required reading: Foucault, Michel. "The Birth of the Prison," *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Pantheon, 1977. Print.

<http://foucault.info/documents/disciplineandpunish/foucault.disciplineandpunish.panopticism.html>

2/9 - Post-panopticism

Required reading: Deleuze, Gilles. Postscript on the Societies of Control:

https://files.nyu.edu/dnm232/public/deleuze_postscript.pdf

Workshop: WIFI sniffing and intervention with OpenWRT

2/11 - Ubiquitous Computing

Required reading: Critical Art Ensemble, "Electronic Civil Disobedience," *Electronic Civil Disobedience and Other Unpopular Ideas* <http://www.critical-art.net/books/ecd/ecd2.pdf>

Workshop: Arduino and ESP8266 wifi module

2/16 - The Standard Object

Required reading: Excerpts from Fuller, Matthew, and Malina, Roger, *Media Ecologies: Materialist Energies in Art and Technoculture*.

2/18 - Media Ecologies and Evil Media

Required reading: Excerpts from Fuller, Matthew, and Goffey, Andrew, *Evil Media*

<http://www.spc.org/fuller/texts/towardsevil/> **Workshop:** iPhone / android iBeacon detection/spoofing

2/23 - Bio-Surveillance

Class visit: Heather Dewey-Hagborg

Required reading: TBD

2/25 - Multiple Scales: The Stack and Global Computation

Workshop: Software Defined Radio

3/2 - Intersectionality of Surveillance: Feminist Surveillance

Studies

Required reading: Selections from Dubrofsky, Rachel E., *The Surveillance of Women on Reality Television: Watching The Bachelor and The Bachelorette*

Presentations: in-progress research

3/4 - Politics of Visibility

Required reading: Ranciere, Jacques, TBD

Class field trip: Film - "Does the world exist, if I am not watching it?" at Gallery 400, 7PM - 9PM

3/9 - Politics of Visibility

Workshop: Encryption

3/11 - Gamification

Required reading: O'Donnell, Casey, "Getting Played: Gamification and the Rise of Algorithmic Surveillance," in *Surveillance and Society*, vol 12 #3

<http://library.queensu.ca/ojs/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/view/played/player>

3/16 - Digital Bodies / Flecks of Identity

Required reading: Latour, Bruno, "What Baboon Notebooks, Monads, State Surveillance, and Network Diagrams Have In Common," <https://civic.mit.edu/blog/natematias/what-baboon-notebooks-monads-state-surveillance-and-network-diagrams-have-in-common>

3/18 - Digital Bodies / Flecks of Identity

Workshop: Digital Doppelganger self-portrait

3/23 - The Politics of Anxiety

Required Reading Critical Legal Thinking, "Six Theses on Anxiety and the Prevention of Militancy", <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2014/04/17/six-theses-anxiety-prevention-militancy/>
Crawford, Kate, "The Anxieties of Big Data", <http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/the-anxieties-of-big-data/>

3/25 - The Politics of Anxiety

Workshop: Mapping, analyzing, and rendering social networks

3/30 -- Big Data Epistemology

Required Reading van Dijck, Jose, "Datafication, dataism and dataveillance: Big Data between scientific paradigm and ideology," <http://library.queensu.ca/ojs/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/view/datafication/datafic>

4/1 -- Big Data Epistemology

Workshop:

4/6 - Oligopticism

Required Reading Latour, Bruno, *Paris: Invisible City* http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/downloads/viii_paris-city-gb.pdf

4/8 - Oligopticism

Workshop: Computer vision, Automated License Plate Recognition

4/13 - Final Project workshops and consulting

4/15 - Final Project workshops and consulting

4/20 - Final Project workshops and consulting

4/22 - Final Project workshops and consulting

NO CLASS 4/27 and 4/29: CRITIQUE WEEK

5/4 - Final project critiques and discussion

5/6 - Final project critiques and discussion