Hactivism Fall 2015 - Syllabus

NOTE ABOUT THIS SYLLABUS: The syllabus that is shared with this class is a living document. Please refer to the online version for up-to-date information. It will change and evolve throughout the semester : we have an off-the-shelf template to follow, but the finished version of this class is custom built for the group and our context as we go along.

ARTS 4965-01 CRN: 88646 (undergrad, credits 4.0)
ARTS 6965-01 CRN: 88647 (graduate, credits 3.0)

Professor: Igor Vamos
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Co-Professor: Brandon Costelloe-Kuehn
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Course Outline

This course explores the history, methods, ethos, and goals of hackers with special attention paid to their role in social movements. It broadly interprets the term "hacktivism" to include computer hacking, media hacking and "reality hacking" in the service of social change. Students will gain an understanding of how and why hackers have in recent years emerged as a major social force.

Objectives

Students who successfully complete this courses will be able to:

- • Demonstrate an understanding of what hacking is, how it is perceived, and when it can be called "hactivism."
- •Recall fundamental knowledge about the history of hacking and how it developed as a cultural force.
- •Analyze, discuss, and write about emergent hacking events.
- •Perform their knowledge of legal forms of basic hacking.

Assignments

There will be weekly reading and viewing assignments, as well as some writing assignments. Readings will be discussed in class. Readings will be provided as links to websites or digital downloads. The student's knowledge of these readings will be reflected in the class participation grade.

Attendance

Each class is important. As noted, much of each class will be devoted to in-class, hands-on work as well as lecture and discussion. Invariably, there will be things covered that cannot be made up outside of class. Attendance at classes and participation in discussions is mandatory, and grades will reflect this. More than four unexcused missed classes during the semester will lower a student's grade by one full letter grade.

Please email me if you will not be attending class: vamosi@rpi.edu. (In the case of a request for an excused absence due to extraordinary circumstance-- such as severe illness, family emergency, a written excuse may be required.)

Grades

CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE
Class Participation / Presentations	60%
Writing	40%
TOTAL	100%

Percentage grade: 100-90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, below 60, failing
To get an "A" you must do exceptional work.

"B" is given for work that fulfills the requirements for the class.

"C" grade is sufficient work, but is very average and not excelling in any way.

"D" is poor work or incomplete work.

"F" is a failing grade. Missing too many classes, or failing to submit 50% of assignments can result in a "F".

Policy on Academic Integrity

The RENSSELAER HANDBOOK defines various forms of Academic Dishonesty and procedures for responding to them. Students should familiarize themselves with this portion of the RENSSELAER HANDBOOK and should note that the penalties for plagiarism and other forms of cheating can be quite harsh. A grade of zero will be given on the first assignment where a violation is detected. If there is a subsequent infraction the student will receive a grade of F for the course. If you have any question concerning this policy before submitting an assignment, please ask for clarification.

Course Calendar

1.0 – 9/1 : Introduction

OVERVIEW: What is hacking?

Are there practices that we could call "hacking" before computers?

Slide presentation on activism and reality hacks:

Tricksters from Mytho-history, Daniel Dafoe and Jonathan Swift, the Suffragettes, Gandhi and Civil Disobedience, Rosa Parks, MLK Jr, The Yippies, etc.

Guerilla gardening
http://www.guerrillagardening.org
http://www.guerrillagrafters.org
https://fallingfruit.org

Computer Hacking Roots - Phone Networks

Phone Phreaking: Basic overview. Wikipedia here.

Watch:

1979 Interview with Captain Midnight (John Draper) here. Remarkably dull and droll video: "this one is using high resolution color graphics… and it behaves exactly like a real spaceship would behave"

1984 Steve Wozniak lecture on pranking here.

Wikileaks Selections from Juice Rap News

Watch [this one](#) and think about Hillary!

Hyde, Lewis "Trickster makes this world."

Timely things:
TTIP stuff
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABDiHspTJww&feature=youtu.be
TTP (US-Pacific companion to the TTIP)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNsHAHQh4Es
Climate Stuff
Last week - KKK tuba guy
[War Driving with Coco the Cat](#)

2.0 – 9/8: Getting to know each other… and some secrets

Watch "The Yes Men are Revolting" and Discuss
Watch: Wikileaks scene, outtake of "The Yes Men are Revolting"
Discussion: what questions do you have for Julian Assange? Professor will go to the Ecuadorean Embassy to find out the answers direct from the horse's mouth.

3.0 - 9/15: Outlaws or Heros?

DUE TODAY: come to class with your fruit trees mapped out!
In class 1 we talked about Guerilla gardening and how that might be considered hacking. We talked about finding and mapping fruit trees, so that we could pick the fruit and make excellent beverages, quenching the thirst generated by the exercise of our brains. The assignment is twofold:

1. Find and map a fruit tree in public space. Use [this website](#) to map it. Take a photo of the tree and post it to [this](#)google slideshow. We can decide together which ones to go pick… and maybe we can even go pick right then and there. bring your best picking clothes..
2. Find a non-fruit bearing tree, that should perhaps be providing food, identify what kind it is, and assess the possibility of a graft
   http://www.guerrillagrafters.org
        More grafting info [here](#).

4.0 - 9/22: Climate Week!

◻Thought Experiment:
What are three things that need to be hacked? Make an "elevator pitch" for the thing that needs hacking most.

This is [Climate Week in NYC-](#) lots of events and stuff.
Please read about [Climategate hacking scandal](#), that arguably set climate policy back a few years back in 2009. Ultimately it was a case of bad press for climate science rather than scientific fraud as the hackers and allies alleged, but it the 'conspiracy' stories stood.
Discussion: what are the repercussions of hacking for nefarious political purposes? Are there Consider [THIS](#) - The relationship of climate change to ongoing refugee crisis worldwide. Have you heard anyone describe Syrian crisis as climate-related?

DISCUSSION:
Anonymous and hacking-related arrests. [Barret Brown](#) was using 5 million documents hacked by Anonymous (Jeremy Hammond, founder of http://www.hackthissite.org was convicted of doing it). We talk about this!

READ:
"[The Strange Case of Barrett Brown](#)" by Peter Ludlow, The Nation June 13, 2013
Video: [Barrett Brown busted](#)

Watch: ["Spin"](#) Brian Springer, 1995
Video about US elections - satellite feeds collected by Brian Springer and then compiled into a 60 minute video that peels back the curtain to show how candidates, news media, etc. really think

Reading:
Steven Levy, Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution
Whole book at [this link](#) currently (if nothing else try chapter 2!)

Watch: "We Steal Secrets: The Story of Wikileaks" Directed by Alex Gibney, 2013, 2 hours 10 minutes. Seems like it is at [this link](#) at least till its taken down!

Read : Annotated transcript of We Steal Secrets by Wikileaks:
Question: Do you feel like Gibney's film has integrity? Why did Gibney make *this* film? Who do you believe, Wikileaks or Gibney?

Watch: Strange Culture (dir. Lynn Hirshmann) The story of how Steve Kurtz and the Critical Art ensemble were accused of "Bioterrorism"Steve Kurtz case

5.0 – 9/29 - Beautiful Trouble, Meaningful Mischief ▢

Watch:
The Ambassador, Dir. Mads Brugger
Discussion: What "hacks" are needed for this work?
Is this Hactivism? What is the goal here?

http://motherboard.vice.com/blog/headroom-hacker

SNOWDON: NOW ON TWITTER!
Exercise: what other people have been pardoned in history? Group research document here.
Note: are there special questions you might have for Snowdon? Igor will be interviewing him on Saturday the 10th of October.

Reading:

Cypherpunk: Story of Julian Assange
http://www.themonthly.com.au/julian-assange-cypherpunk-revolutionary-robert-manne-3081
Raffi Khatchadourian, "No Secrets: Julian Assange's Mission for Total Transparency," The New Yorker.
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/06/07/100607fa_fact_khatchadourian
Watch Julian Assange, "Why The World Needs Wikileaks," TED Talk.
http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_assange_why_the_world_needs_wikileaks.html
Optional Reading and Background:

Jay Rosen, "The Afghan War Logs Released by Wikileaks, The World First Stateless News Organization," Press Think.
http://archive.pressthink.org/2010/07/26/wikileaks_afghan.html
Farhad Manjod, "The WikiLeaks Paradox. Is radical transparency compatible with total anonymity?" Slate. www.slate.com/id/2262066/

Bradley Manning: Collateral Murder

ww.collateralmurder.com

Monday, October 5, 7-9pm
Sustainability Film Series

Russell Sage Lab 3303

Bidder 70 tells the story of Tim DeChristopher, a college student who bid on land that was slated for oil and gas development -- despite having no money to complete the deal. DeChristopher was indicted and served prison time for his actions; many compare his actions to the civil disobedience of Gandhi and Martin Luther King. DeChristopher went on to co-found Peaceful Uprising, an organization dedicated to a "livable future" and climate justice. See reviews in The Hollwood Report, The New York Times, and The International Film Journal.

6.0 – 10/6   Bootlegging

IT is CIDER DAY!

WOW! this is a really nice talk, thanks for the heads up Kibo!
"Haunted by Data" by Maciej Ceglowski
http://idlewords.com/talks/haunted_by_data.htm
and the same talk on youtube

Anna Notaro, "The Lo(n)g Revolution: the Blogosphere as an Alternative Public Sphere?," available at http://reconstruction.eserver.org/064/notaro.shtml

Recommended Reading:

Elizabeth Kolbert, "The Things People Say," The New Yorker. Available http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2009/11/02/091102crbo_books_kolbert?currentPage=all

7.0 – 10/20: Counterintelligence, Stupid ▢

IN CLASS SPECIAL GUEST!
Ellen Foster will take you on a cyber-feminist hacker tour!

Special Software testing Assignment / Favor
Chris Smith is a filmmaker who made the first Yes Men film (and also made some good movies- please have a look at Sundance Award-winning [American Movie](#) if you get a chance, it's great.) Now he has made [this app called Rex](#). It is kind of cool… in theory it could end up being like a version of YELP that actually works (as in: the reviews will be less bullshitty, because you'll trust the reviewers a bit more). Anyway, Chris asked me if i knew anyone who might be able to pick this thing apart - or to evaluate whether its working. Please download and test this software on your phone:
invite is: REX.is/here - invite code: friends
Then, after giving it a whirl. please fill out survey at: https://admin39.typeform.com/to/mw14Gk

TODAY IN CLASS:
Watch either this:
[The Internet's Own Boy](#), Documentary about Aaron Schwartz
Discussion: Demand Progress, Net Neutrality, etc.
Or this: [We are Legion](#) (About Anonymous)

Some background on the hacker crackdown…
In order to understand contemporary private/public ventures in counterintelligence, it is important to understanding precedents. To do this we will explore the COINTELPRO program of Hoover's FBI in the 1960's, which targeted Black, Puerto Rican, and Native American advocacy groups as well as elements of the counterculture movement. Please first get an overview with the Wikipedia entry on [Cointelpro](#).
Watch this [anniversary program](#) on the murder of Fred Hampton from Democracy Now.

Thinking of becoming a corporate spook?

Roll Your Own Cointellpro with this creepy software-

http://www.ntrepidcorp.com/tartan/overview.php#free-trial

make sure to watch the video!

WATCH some other videos:

Cointelpro films: video about Hoover's racist FBI anti-communist program

primary sources black panthers newsreels clips link here, Off the Pig film

Other doc excerpts here

Some other strange stories from the counter-revolution included CIA involvement in Latin American politics, here is a strange artifact from that era:

the freedom fighters manual:

http://www.ballistichelmet.org/school/free.html

that's the government's manual, and here is what the CIA was also doing according to a CBS report:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQ9fgi7IZSk

and if you think that is odd, remember Iran Contra? Try this.

8.0 – 10/27: A Week Without Google

Nicholas Carr, "The Omnigoogle," Rough Type. Available at

http://www.roughtype.com/archives/2008/09/google_at_10.php

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Nicholas Carr, "The Cloud's Chrome Lining"

☐http://www.roughtype.com/archives/2008/09/the_clouds_chro.php

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Holman W. Jenkins, "Google and the Search for the Future," Wall Street Journal.☐Available at http://online.wsj.com/article/NA_WSJ_PUB:SB10001424052748704901104575423294099527212.html☐

Siva Vaidhyanathan, "Google and Aptocracy," The Googlization of Everything.□ Available at www.googlizationofeverything.com/2010/08/google_and_aptocracy.php

GAMING

Gonzalo Frasca, " vs NarratiSimulationve: Introduction to Ludology," available at www.ludology.org/articles/VGT_final.pdf □

WATCH:
Julian Dibbell, Play Money: Gold Farms, Game Studies Available a:t
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQfKDff4d2M

Play: molleindustria.com games

Recommended Reading:
Alex Galloway, Gaming, Chapter 1

9.0 – 11/3: MOVIE NIGHT!

following up on Internet's own Boy:
http://www.forbes.com/sites/thomasbrewster/2014/08/06/aarons-law-is-doomed-leaving-us-hacking-law-broken/

10.0 –11/10: BioArt with Rich Pell
In Class:

Short vids on the Center for PostNatural History

Chat with Rich Pell about Center for PostNatural History and other things..

Institute for Applied Autonomy Vids:
https://vimeo.com/93028290

https://vimeo.com/66402170

DIYSECT videos here

Art [does not equal] Terrorism vid

11.0 – 11/17: Peer Production▢ // Secrecy, Anonymity, Collectivism // *F for Fake*

Yochai Benkler, The Wealth of Networks, Chapter 3, available at
http://www.benkler.org/Benkler_Wealth_Of_Networks_Chapter_3.pdf

Recommended Reading:Yochai Benkler and Helen Nissenbaum, "Commons-Based Peer Production and Virtue," The Journal of Political Philosophy. Available at
http://www.nyu.edu/projects/nissenbaum/papers/jopp_235.pdf
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Christopher "Moot" Pole, "The Case for Anonymity Online, TED Talk. Available at
http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/christopher_m00t_poole_the_case_for_anonymity_online.html?awesm=on.ted.com_8Mmx

Watch Gabriella Coleman, "Old and New Battles over Free Speech and Secrecy," available at
http://turbulence.org/blog/2010/04/13/free-speech-anonymous-vs-scientology▢
13 + 16 + 21 + 10 = one hour

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Short Vid: "Hacktivism: Utilizing Tech for Social Action"

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For the Bob Ross fans out there.. *F for Fake* (1973), about 90 minutes, directed by Orson Welles, director of *Citizen Kane* (often called "the best film ever made").

Reading:

Danah Boyd, "Quitting Facebook is Pointless, Challenging Them to Do Better Is Not,"
Apophenia. Available at
http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives/2010/05/23/quitting-facebook-is-pointless-challenging-them-to-do-better-is-not.html

Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the Revolution will not be Tweeted." Available at
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell□

Recommended Reading:

Marco Deseriis, "No End in Sight: Networked Art as a Participatory Form of Storytelling,"
available at
http://deseriis.networkedbook.org/no-end-in-sight-networked-art-as-a-participatory-form-of-storytelling□□

BJ Fogg, "Mass Interpersonal Persuasion: An Early View of a New Phenomenon," available at
www.bjfogg.com/mip.pdf

Case Studies: Diaspora, Web 2.0, Suicide Machine
Take this Lollypop

12.0 – 11/24: Digital Social

Kevin Kelly, "The New Socialism: Global Collectivist Society Is Coming Online," available
www.wired.com/culture/culturereviews/magazine/17-06/nep_newsocialism□

Jaron Lanier "On Digital Maoism: The Hazards of the New Online Collectivism," available at

http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/lanier06/lanier06_index.htmlpoo

Watch Rip: A Remix Manifesto, USA, 2009. Available at http://ripremix.com/getdownloads/▫

Watch Lawrence Lessig on laws that choke creativity, TED Talk,
http://www.ted.com/talks/larry_lessig_says_the_law_is_strangling_creativity.html▫

Citizen Four Screening

13.0 – 12/1: Second of Final Day!!!

14.0 - 12/8 Final Party

http://www.stimulator.tv/