



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

HACKER CULTURE - 44162

Last update 04-04-2020

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: English

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Naomi Mandel

Coordinator Email: Naomi.Mandel1@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-4:00 pm

Teaching Staff:

Prof NAOMI MANDEL

Course/Module description:

This course will trace the rise of hacker culture from its earliest incarnations in the Tech Model Railroad Club of MIT and the Homebrew Computer Club at Stanford to the cybercollective Anonymous. We will study literary and cinematic representations of hackers and hacking to identify anxieties about technology, the Cold War, globalization, consumer culture, and the Information Age. We will dwell with the cultural touchstones that inform hacker culture itself, and define the ethical and political issues that hacker culture incites.

Course/Module aims:

Technology and culture are in a dynamic relationship, as technological innovation impacts cultural production and vice versa. Our focus on hacker culture will trace this interrelationship of culture and technology to its source: the people who looked at a counting machine and saw the potential for music, art, and interstellar travel. Through our focus on the figure of the hacker (guardian and interloper, freedom fighter and shadowy malevolence) we will articulate the cultural anxieties that inform each stage of the computer revolution.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

*Recognize terms and concepts pertaining to the Computer Revolution and the Information Age.
Connect these terms and concepts to their representation in literature, film, and art.

Design and implement an individual research plan via the presentation and final paper.
Integrate multiple sources by formulating questions.
Formulate individual critical analyses.*

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Seminar

Course/Module Content:

WEEK 1: Introduction: What is a hacker?
WEEK 2 Dr. Strangelove
WEEK 3: The Hacker Ethic
WEEK 4: The PC revolution; cyberpunk; Neuromancer
WEEK 5: Women in Computing; Neuromancer
WEEK 6: The Interface Culture; Neuromancer
WEEK 7: Hacking Goes to Hollywood: WarGames
WEEK 8: The Circle
WEEK 9 The Circle
WEEK 10: The Circle (and film adaptation)
WEEK 11: Autonomous
WEEK 12: Autonomous
WEEK 13; Autonomous and Her

Required Reading:

Novels:

William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1983)
Dave Eggers, *The Circle* (2013)
Annalee Newitz, *Autonomous* (2017)
additional readings will be uploaded to course moodle.

Films:

Dr. Strangelove. Stanley Kubrick, dir. 1964
WarGames. John Badham, dir. 1984.
The Circle. James Ponsoldt, dir. 2017.
Her. Spike Jonze, dir. 2014.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 0 %
Project work 15 %
Assignments 35 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 50 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:

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- 1. In the second half of the semester, we will integrate student presentations to the class. Prior to your presentation, you must meet with me to discuss your plans. In your presentation, you will juxtapose a SHORT passage from the semester's reading with another text of your choice (but you must clear it with me first) and lead class discussion for 10-15 minutes (depending on class size). Your presentation is worth 15% of your grade.*
 - 2. One week after your presentation, submit a 3-page paper in which you reflect on/expand on the discussion you staged. This is your final paper's Rough Draft, and it is worth 25% of your grade.*
 - 3. Your final paper should be approx. 2500 words, and include Works Cited of at least 5 items, 2 of which must be items you found on your own. It is worth 35% of your grade.*