History 90S Surveillance, Privacy, Transparency

January Term 2021

Swarthmore College   Professor Burke

This course integrates historical, anthropological, technological and philosophical approaches to surveillance and related topics (privacy, transparency, secrecy, data and knowledge management).

This is the first time Swarthmore College has offered J-Term courses. My understanding of the intention of these courses is that they should be intense, focused and distinctive in feel and design from semester-long courses. This syllabus (I hope) matches those intentions. I do not have any specific prerequisites in mind for the course; I hope we will benefit from diverse skills and prior knowledge among the enrolled students. As this class is being taught remotely due to continuing pandemic restrictions, I have also tried to design it with that in mind. We have four meetings each of the four weeks of J-Term.

Class format

Synchronous (Zoom) We will spend about 45-50 minutes discussing the main readings or films for each day.

Synchronous (Zoom) After a short break, we will spend 20-25 minutes in breakout rooms for "open session" discussions on a general topic loosely related to that day's theme. Pertinent knowledge (including course materials) is always welcome in these discussions, but I want them to feel open to everyday knowledge and perspectives.

We will always be done with our synchronous meetings by 2:30 at the latest; most days I would like to be done by 2:15.

Asynchronous: Surveillance Labs + Topical Research Presentations. We will spend 30-45 minutes on a single focused lab experience, conducted independently by each student somewhere between the end of each synchronous session and the beginning of the next day's class. Most of these exercises involve taking notes which will be uploaded to a class forum. A few labs may need to be done with some attention to environmental conditions—e.g., the lab that involves observing people in your area may need to be done when there are people around to observe. A few labs may involve a scheduled meeting with a guest: attendance will be required at these sessions. In the fourth and final week of class, each student will be preparing and uploading a slide presentation on a surveillance-related topic of their choice as part of their lab work. In our last class session, we will be working on a collective statement on surveillance and privacy in 21st Century global society.

A list of the planned labs and some guidelines for labs can be found at the end of this syllabus.

I will give you detailed guidance at the end of each class session about my intentions for the reading or films for the next day's class session. Sometimes I will want you to lightly skim over a variety of material, but there will be times where I want to work closely with a reading or text and will need you to commit

to a more detailed engagement. Most days you will have somewhere between 100-200 pages to read, and we will have a few classes where you need to watch between 30 to 120 minutes of film material.

Assigned work

At the end of the first three weeks, you will be writing a 2 page response to material from that week (including the labs), **due by Sunday night 9pm EST**. You will choose whether to write narrowly about your interpretation of a particular reading or issue or to write a more synthetic analysis of themes and ideas throughout the week.

Your labs will often (though not always) have a note-taking or note-writing component which will be posted to the class site.

You will be working on 20-minute slide presentation in the last week of the class.

You will need to produce your own draft of a statement on the futures of surveillance prior to our last class session. This will need to be posted by the morning of the last class.

Students are expected to be present for all the synchronous meetings during J-Term. Please do not schedule job interviews or other anticipated obligations during those meetings.

Zoom policies

We will be using Zoom for our synchronous sessions. I appreciate students turning their cameras on but you are not required to do so. I ask you to please respect the course and your peers and not use Beulr or other applications that simulate your presence for the class. Please also do not take screenshots of the class sessions or remotely record class sessions without asking permission in advance.

Accommodations

Please contact the Office of Disability Services at Swarthmore to discuss anticipated accommodations needs (or your offices at Haverford and Bryn Mawr).

Books

I have asked the bookstore to order five books for this semester:

Sarah Igo, *The Known Citizen*

Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*

Monahan and Wood, eds., *Surveillance Studies: A Reader*

Katherine Verdery, *My Life as a Spy*

Polo Olaixirac, *Dark Constellations*

We will be reading large proportions of each of these books, so please do get a copy of each. Swarthmore College's Textbook Assistance Program (TAP) should be used by Swarthmore students with demonstrated need; Haverford and Bryn Mawr students should consult with their administrations if they need assistance.

Jan. 4   **Watching Others: Deep Histories and Natures**

Crockford et al, "Baboons Eavesdrop to Determine Mating Opportunities"

Wilkinson et al "Social Learning in a Non-Social Reptile"

Kalinowski et al "Who's Watching Influences Caching Behavior"

Amanda Power, "Under Watchful Eyes", *Lapham's Quarterly*.

Open session: Rules for humans

Jan. 5   **Intelligence and State-Making**

Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System*, Chapters 1, 5 and 8

Open session: How does an organization know what it knows? When does it not want to know it?

Jan. 6   **Intelligence and Empire**

C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence-Gathering and Social Communications in India, 1780-1870*, Chapter 1

Kathleen Keller, *Colonial Suspects: Suspicion, Imperial Rule and Colonial Society in Interwar French West Africa*, Chapter 2

Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia*, Chapter 3

Open session: "Sticking out like a sore thumb": how strangers watch

Jan. 7   **Identification and Surveillance**

Valentin Groebner, "Who Are You", in *Surveillance Studies*

Sekula, "The Body and the Archive", in *Surveillance Studies*

Igo, *The Known Citizen*, Chapter 1 and 2

Open session: Identity verification and identity falsification

Jan 11 **Panopticon, Privacy, Secrecy**

Bentham, "The Panopticon", in *Surveillance Studies*

Chris Berg, "The Origins of Modern Privacy", *The Classical Liberal Case for Privacy in a World of Surveillance and Technological Change*

Grey and Costas, *Secrecy at Work*, Chapter Two

Open session: The uses and abuses of confidentiality in organizational life

Jan 12 **Popular Surveillance and Modern Public Life**

Weegee Archive, https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/weegee?all/all/all/all/0

Rear Window

Igo, *Known Citizen*, Chapter Four and Five

Open session: The ethics of street photography

Jan 13 **Spies and Citizens**

The Prisoner, Episode 1

Katherine Verdery**, *My Life As a Spy***

Open session: Is qualitative social science the same as spying on people?

Jan 14 **Policing, Infiltration, Terrorism, Dissent**

Documentary: *1971*

Film: *BlacKkKlansman*

Greenwald, "No Place to Hide", in *Surveillance Studies*

Open session: The ethics of infiltration

WEEK 3

Jan 18 **Secrecy, transparency and intimacy**

Film: *An American Family*

Igo, *The Known Citizen*, Chapter 7 and 8

"I Was Caroline Calloway", https://www.thecut.com/2019/09/the-story-of-caroline-calloway-and-her-ghostwriter-natalie.html

Open session: Secrecy, family, domesticity and intimacy

Jan 19   **Data and Infopower**

Koopman, "Towards a Political Theory for Informational Persons," in *How We Became Our Data*

Andrejevic, "Surveillance in the Big Data Era", in *Surveillance Studies*

Brunton, "Vernacular Resistance", in *Surveillance Studies*

Open session: Redesigning social and commercial data

Jan 20   **The Visible World**

Film: *The Truman Show*

Norris and Armstrong, "CCTV and the Social Structuring of Surveillance"

Koskela, "The Gaze Without Eyes", *Surveillance Studies*

Open session: A world with cameras everywhere

Jan 21   **Surveillance, Hegemony, Marginality**

Browne, "Dark Matters", in *Surveillance Studies*

Aas, "Crimmingrant Bodies", in *Surveillance Studies*

Mason and Magnet, "Surveillance Studies and Violence Against Women", in *Surveillance Studies*

Puar, "Terrorist Assemblages", in *Surveillance Studies*

Open session: Surveillance and domination

WEEK 4

Jan 25   **The Age of Surveillance Capitalism**

Shoshana Zuboff, *Surveillance Capitalism*, Part I and II

Open session: Surveillance and social media

Jan 26   **The Age of Surveillance Capitalism**

Zuboff, *Surveillance Capitalism*, Part III and Conclusion

Open session: Working groups on the class statement

Jan 27   **Imagining Surveillance**

Pola Olaixarac*, Dark Constellations*

Open session: Working groups on the class statement

Jan 28   **A Statement**

A statement on the futures of surveillance, privacy and transparency

Sometime between February 10-20, we will schedule a virtual "poster session" for your slide presentations, inviting Swarthmore community members to look at your presentations and join us for a discussion of the course.

Surveillance Labs

We have 14 lab exercises that you should spend no more than 45 minutes on during each active class day of the 2021 J-Term. When you are done, you will spend no more than 15 minutes writing lab notes that reflect on the exercise.

Under no circumstances go beyond the boundaries specified in each of these exercises. Do not employ search techniques, apps, or tools that are not specified in the exercise and which violate basic principles of respect for privacy, security or law. Do not access sites, resources or information that is not freely available from public or open sources. Do not access devices, servers, etc., that you are not an authorized and entitled owner and user of. We will discuss in class the "dark side" of some of these labs, e.g., how people get doxxed or get access to other people's Ring doorbell cameras or hack other people's baby monitors, but you are not to *do* anything of that sort while you are in this class or in relationship to the class. During the J-Term I am asking you to avoid any techniques or activities of this kind regardless of your own current skill or knowledge. **I will fail people who substantially and knowingly violate these constraints**.

This class is all-remote. Some of you may be accessing this course from other countries that have different laws or understood rules and constraints on Internet usage. While you have access to the syllabus and online resources through Swarthmore's VPN in a way that should be

safe for our very safe exercises, I am relying on each and every one of you to **gauge your own risks better than I can from a distance**. If you believe that a particular lab exercise might raise concerns in terms of your own country's restrictions, I will provide an alternative exercise or reading that allows you insight into the issues raised in a particular lab. Do NOT do a lab that you believe may draw unwanted attention or hostility or that may feel like a serious unwanted invasion of privacy. Let me know always if you have concerns prior to starting a given exercise.

In the final week of J-Term, we will move from these exercises into independent reading and reports. Each of you will pick an area of interest and read towards creating a 15-minute slide presentation on your reading that will be part of a virtual "poster session" at a later date.

We will spend the last class session working on a joint statement on surveillance, privacy and the human future.

Lab 1 January 4

Spend 45 minutes looking out a window at your place of residence. Take notes on people you see, using any details or observations that seem pertinent to you. Upload your notes to the class site when you are done. If you live in a location too remote to see people, see the list of webcams for **Lab 3** and pick one of the urban webcams *or* observe (without speaking or commenting upon your observation) people in your place of residence (family, friends, roommates).

Lab 2 January 5

Where did Professor Burke grow up?

Where did he go to college? When? Where did he get his Ph.D? When?

What visual avatars does he use online? Can you identify all of them/any of them?

Find the title of two published works by him.

How many weblogs has he participated in since 2003?

Examine his Twitter account. Can you characterize his follower network in terms of common associations or connections to Professor Burke?

Do not search for information about Professor Burke that is not readily available in major search engines. Upload your findings in response to these questions to the class notes.

Lab 3 January 6

You will be given a list of public webcams. Watch one for 45 minutes (feel free to multitask while you're doing it, but have the webcam video window visible at all times while you are doing so). Take notes on anything that strikes you while you are watching. Upload your notes to the class site.

Lab 4 January 7

Pick a middle-sized or bigger US or other world city you have never been to and have no real prior knowledge about. Find a commercially-active street that has a Google Streetview map. "Travel" down this street and take note of 3 businesses you see. Using a standard commercial search engine or relevant app, find 2 discrete pieces of public information about these three businesses (the valuation of the real estate they are in, the ownership of the business, Yelp or other reviews of the business, or other information specific to that business returned from a search). Upload the city, the street, the business names, the information you found and any additional comments or observations to the class notes.

Lab 5 January 11

Federal Election Commission (FEC) Individual Donor Registry

Pick one workplace/employer and then one personal friend, acquaintance or family member in the FEC donor registry. If your friend/family/acquaintance doesn't have donations listed, keep trying until you find someone you know who has a registry entry. (Within reason: if you can't find anyone, that's also interesting.) For the workplace, just read over a few pages of entries if it's a large employer.

https://www.fec.gov/introduction-campaign-finance/how-to-research-public-records/individual-contributions/

Megan's Law registry

Take a short look at the registry entries for Delaware County. **Please note the acceptable use statement on the registry.**

https://www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us/

Active Incident Despatch Status (Montgomery County PA)

Just scroll down to see the last 20 or so entries. Take note of any you think might be interesting to look into further or might draw additional (possibly unwelcome) attention.

https://www.montcopa.org/264/Active-Incident-WebCAD

Upload any notes, observations or reflections you have about these public registries to the class notes.

Lab 6 January 12

Using Ancestry.com via Tripod, research the following:

1. Find a picture of Professor Burke in Ancestry from his high school yearbook. You can use notes from Lab 2 (but no additional searches outside of Ancestry.com) to help. Don't post the picture, but keep a copy of it handy for our conversation in class on the 13th.

2. Pick two public figures, at least one of them dead, and try to trace as much of their family tree as you can on Ancestry.com. Use Wikipedia or other search resources to find out what your celebrity's real name is first and their birthdate and place of birth if known.
3. Pick a friend, acquaintance or distant family member to try and trace without asking them for additional identifying information beyond what you know about them already. Take note of how easy or difficult it is to trace any more about them.
4. Write down any notes or thoughts you have about the kind of information you can find through Ancestry.

Lab 7 January 13

This lab will start with a 15 minute video that I will produce for you. I will be showing you how faculty at Swarthmore and elsewhere are able to carry out certain limited forms of surveillance on student work in courses (online or otherwise). You will then spend the remaining 30 minutes or so looking at the websites Course Hero and Beulr. Your notes should be your reflection on the ethics of surveillance and counter-surveillance in college courses based on these materials.

Lab 8 January 14

We will be meeting via Zoom with Joel Cooper and Nick Hannan of Swarthmore ITS to discuss how they monitor acceptable use policies, how they gauge and react to security threats, how they deal with the college's legal obligations under FERPA and any other topics of interest.

Lab 9 January 18

If you do not already have a copy of the Firefox browser on your computer (and it is permitted to have one on your machine/in your location) download Firefox. You should then download a Firefox plug-in called NoScript and enable it. Explore NoScript's functionality a bit before you begin. Then go to at least **three** major, *legitimate* commercial websites (one should be a major media or news provider, one should be a store or commerce-based site, the other is up to you) and use NoScript to discover and explore the scripts that the site is using. Try to make the site functional with the absolute minimum of active scripts first. Take note of which scripts only become visible once you allow another to run. Do what you can to discover what the various scripts you see in the listing actually do. Upload your notes on the experience to the class site. If you are trying to keep your computer clean of all cookies or tracking information, be sure to remove all information after you have experimented with NoScript. (And you can feel free to uninstall Firefox as well.)

Lab 10 January 19

Pick two people to trace their Twitter and Instagram timelines. One should be a person you know personally, one should be a public figure (celebrity, politician, athlete, influencer, etc.)

Read back their timelines until at least January 2020. If they are frequent posters, feel free to skip back in intervals. Watch for information about this person's *geographical*

location: create a log for each one and note any time you can place this person in a specific place either through direct attribution

Lab 11 January 20

This lab is **TBA:** I'm still working on setting it up.

Lab 12 January 21

Open office hours to discuss your topic for your slide presentation in the coming week.

Week of January 25-28

On the 25th and 26th, you should be working on a 15-minute slide presentation on a topic of your choice within the framework of the class. These presentations will eventually serve as a "poster session" for the course during the first two weeks of the spring semester--we will discuss dates and format.

On the 27th, you should spend at least 45 minutes working on a first draft of your thinking about the futures of surveillance and plan to bring that draft with you to class on the 28th.