INFO 4250 / LAW 6882
SURVEILLANCE AND PRIVACY

Fall 2016
Tues / Thurs 2:55-4:10
Phillips Hall 219

Prof. Karen Levy
Gates Hall 207
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Office hours: Wednesdays 2:30-4:30, or by appointment

TA: Lauren Kilgour
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Office hours: Fridays 2:00-4:00, or by appointment

Prerequisites: INFO 1200, graduate standing, or instructor permission

Course website: http://www.karen-levy.net/teaching/
readings available on Blackboard

OVERVIEW and GOALS

This course explores the social, legal, and ethical facets of surveillance and privacy.

New information technologies collect and analyze data across all sorts of life contexts, and at multiple scales. Data collection is a primary mechanism through which states govern their citizens, corporations make money from their customers, and individuals manage their everyday relationships. Privacy concerns are fundamental to the design and deployment of sociotechnical systems, and all forms of data collection entail choices (often very difficult choices) about how information is gathered, stored, combined, and used.

In this class, we explore the history and theory of surveillance from multiple perspectives, and investigate how privacy is conceptualized and deployed in response to surveillant systems. We'll discuss how surveillance and privacy are situated in law and culture; the emergence of surveillance in law enforcement, workplaces, institutions, and families; and the relationships among surveillance, power, and marginalization of vulnerable groups. We consider avenues through which surveillance is resisted, including technological and policy-based design strategies to mitigate the effects of data collection.
By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Articulate precise analyses, critiques, and proposals related to contemporary privacy and surveillance debates.
- Analyze the interactions among legal, technical, social, cultural, and economic aspects of surveillance and privacy.
- Evaluate the relationship between surveillance and social inequality.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course readings can be read online or downloaded on Blackboard. The readings for this course are interdisciplinary—we'll be reading legal cases, law review articles, social scientific analyses, popular media accounts, and primary source materials. You might find some of these forms of reading challenging; part of the goal of the course is to familiarize you with different types of work in this area.

Sometimes, we'll discuss the readings in detail in class. Other times, we'll use the readings as background for in-class discussion. You should feel free to ask me, the course TA, or your colleagues if you have questions about the readings (or bring them up in class).

GRADING and ASSIGNMENTS

The breakdown for grading in this course is as follows:

- Class attendance and participation 15%
- 3-page issue response papers (3 x 15% each) 45%
- Final research project (10% proposal; 30% final product) 40%

Class attendance and participation

You are required to attend class prepared. This means that you will have thoughtfully completed the day’s readings, and will be ready to participate in class conversation.

A NOTE ON DISSENT:
We'll be discussing many issues that are controversial and politically sensitive. If you’re thinking carefully about the topics in this class, you’re likely to disagree at some point with me, with the readings, and/or with your colleagues. These points of tension and disagreement can be the most intellectually productive component of the course!
strongly encourage you to voice your opinions in ways that are (1) respectful of others’ opinions and (2) well-considered/supported by evidence or experience. We’ll devote some class time to discussing how to formulate arguments thoughtfully.

**A NOTE ON TECHNOLOGY:**
You are permitted to use a laptop, tablet, or other digital device during class time *if* it is in the service of the course (taking notes, referencing readings, etc.). However, *please refrain from using these devices for any other purpose during class time*.

**Issue response papers**

You will be required to write three short issue response papers during the course of the semester. The prompts for these papers will be announced as the course progresses, but each will involve applying course readings and discussions to new contexts or questions. None should involve significant external research. Deadlines are indicated in the weekly schedule below.

Papers should be no shorter than 3 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point standard font (roughly 750 words) and submitted via Blackboard. Papers are due *before class begins* on the due date; no late papers will be accepted.

**Research project**

There is no final exam for the course. Instead, you will be expected to complete an independent research project that draws on course themes. I intend for the final project to be a way to bring course topics into dialogue with your own interests, experiences, and skills, and to require external research. More information about the final project will be discussed as the semester proceeds.

The anticipated format of the final research project will be a 12-15 page double-spaced paper, including a bibliography. However, I am open to other formats (e.g., building a prototype or a website) upon specific advance approval. I am also open to students working together in teams of two to complete the final project, though the final product must reflect twice the work (e.g., the paper would need to be twice as long). I especially encourage teams to find ways to bring different skillsets and disciplinary backgrounds to bear on the project.

Final project topics and formats will be developed in consultation with me and your course TA as the semester progresses, and will include a 1-page research proposal, worth 10% of your course grade.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
You are expected to observe Cornell’s Code of Academic Integrity in all aspects of this course. The code states that:

Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. ... Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. ... A Cornell student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times. In addition, Cornell students have a right to expect academic integrity from each of their peers.

Among other duties, academic integrity requires that you properly cite any idea or work product that is not your own, including the work of your classmates or of any written source. If in any doubt at all, cite! If you have any questions about this policy, please ask me or the course TA.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE
(subject to change)

1  WELCOME

Tues 8/23  [no readings]

2  THE EYE


Chiel, Ethan. “New York City Has Been Shining Surveillance Lights on its Black Population for the Last 300 Years,” Fusion (May 19, 2016).

3  CONTROL


4 THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY


5 CONTEXT


6 THE STATE

Thu 9/8 Andrusewicz, Marie. “Apple Opposes Judge’s Order to Unlock San Bernardino Shooter’s Phone.” (Feb 17, 2016).


7 THE POLICE


8  THE CAMERA

Thu 9/15

*** Assignment #1 due before class begins ***


9  THE CORPORATION

Tue 9/20


10  MARGINALIZATION

Thu 9/22


11  WORK [I]

Tue 9/27


*** Thu 9/29 – NO CLASS ***
**WORK [II]**

Tue 10/4


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**THE INTERNET OF THINGS**

Thu 10/6

*** Assignment #2 due before class begins ***


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*** Tue 10/11 – Break ***

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**CARE**

Thu 10/13


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**ONLINE COMMUNITIES**
guest lecture by Amanda Levendowski

Tue 10/18


16 MACHINE LEARNING

guest lecture by Solon Barocas

Thu 10/20


17 DESIGN

Tue 10/25


18 THEATER

Thu 10/27

Mann, Charles C. “Smoke Screening.” Vanity Fair (Dec 20, 2011).


Molotch, Harvey. 2012. Against Security: How We Go Wrong at Airports, Subways, and
*Other Sites of Ambiguous Danger*. Chapters 1 and 4.

### 19 DECOYS

**Assignment #3 due before class begins**

**Tue 11/1**


Grimmelmann, James. "*Harry Potter and the Mysterious Defeat Device.*" *Slate* (Sep 22, 2015).


### 20 RUMORS

**Thu 11/3**


Alexander, Leigh. "*Why the Rumor that Facebook is Listening to Your Conversations Won't Die.*" *Motherboard* (Jul 31, 2016).

Shure, Caitlin. "*How Secret Spying Programs Affect the Clinically Paranoid.*" *Scientific American* (Jul 1, 2013).

### 21 TATTLETALES

**Tue 11/8**

Crawford, Kate. "*When Fitbit is the Expert Witness.*" *The Atlantic* (Nov 19, 2014).

Levy, Karen. "*Rape is Not a Data Problem.*" *The Atlantic* (Oct 30, 2014).

Simonite, Tom. "*Tesla Knows When a Crash is Your Fault, and Other Carmakers Soon Will, Too.*" *MIT Technology Review* (Jun 8, 2016).

Geuss, Megan. "*Using New Corvette’s Valet-Recording Tech Could Be A Felony in Some States.*" *Ars Technica* (Sep 26, 2014).

### 22 SEX [I]

**Thu 11/10**

**Proposal due before class begins**


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**23**  
**SEX [II]**  

**Tue 11/15**  


**Listen:** Shahani, Aarti. “Smartphones Are Used to Stalk, Control Domestic Abuse Victims.” *All Things Considered* (Sep 15, 2014).

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**24**  
**(IM)MOBILITY**  
guest lecture by Lauren Kilgour  

**Thu 11/17**  


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**25**  
**RESISTANCE [I]**  

**Tue 11/22**  

**Skim:** United States Central Intelligence Agency. 1944. *Simple Sabotage Field Manual*.

*** Thu 11/24 – Break ***

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**26**  
**RESISTANCE [II]**  

**Tue 11/29**  

Thu 12/1


*** Final papers due 12/15 ***