

The Arts of Surveillance

Module Outline

Dr. Zach Blas

Spring 2016

ABOUT

In the wake of the 2013 U.S. National Security Agency surveillance revelations and the popular rise of whistleblowers Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning, the reach and implications of global surveillance have become some of the most urgent and pressing issues that we face today. In this module, we will examine digital technologies' historical impact on surveillance and its effects on society, through a consideration of technologies like GPS, biometrics, cryptography, and drones. We will give particular attention to how surveillance devices have become domesticated in the 21st century, with social media and smartphones, turning us into agents of our own surveillance. We will also explore how artistic practices operate at the vanguard of anti-surveillance, by looking at the artwork of Laura Poitras, Hito Steyerl, Trevor Paglen, Surveillance Camera Players, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Adam Harvey, Harun Farocki, among others. We will also discuss activist groups like Anonymous, Wikileaks, Electronic Frontier Foundation, and TOR, focusing on how they mobilize the cypherpunk and masked protester. In addition, we will read a wide-ranging set of texts that span media theory, philosophy, artists' writings, journalism, and art historical documents, including texts by Julian Assange, Gilles Deleuze, Shoshana Amielle Magnet, Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen, Michel Foucault, Alexander Galloway & Eugene Thacker, Toby Beauchamp, Simone Browne, and Philip Agre.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this module should be able to:

- define and analyze key concepts, such as panopticism, control, capture, datavaillance, cloud computing, biometrics, security, privacy, and counter-surveillance
- critically analyze the relationships between artistic practice, politics, and surveillance in the 21st century
- demonstrate an extensive yet focused understanding of artistic practices that engage surveillance aesthetically, politically, practically, conceptually, and speculatively
- perform close readings of major historical and theoretical texts on surveillance, with a particular emphasis on the arts, visuality, and informatics

ASSESSMENT

Formative

1 x 1500 word essay that critically analyzes a way in which you are complicit with surveillance

Summative

1 x 3000 word essay that comparatively analyzes a text and visual artwork

At the end of this document, you will find detailed information on assessment requirements.

GENERAL

Every student is expected to participate in every class. Class discussion and activities are an essential part of this module. It is important that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

While students are permitted to use laptops and tablets for the purposes of note taking, computer note-taking should not detract from your active vocal and visual participation in this class. I ask that you respect this regulation, or laptops and tablets will be banned from the classroom.

Students in this class are required to check their Goldsmiths email account at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

2 x 15 minute tutorials are available for each student during my office hours (RHB 232, Mondays from 3:30pm - 5:30pm). You may contact me for additional guidance at Z.Blas@gold.ac.uk

I reserve the right to revise the module outline throughout the term, based on class discussions and your interest in the texts.

SCHEDULE

12/1 Surveillance, Society, Complicity

John Gilliom and Torin Monahan, "Introduction," *SuperVision: An Introduction to the Surveillance Society* (2013), pp. 1 - 10 [reader]
 Bernard E. Harcourt, "The Expository Society," *Exposed: Desire and Disobedience in the Digital Age* (2015), pp. 1 - 28
 Peter Maas, "Art in a Time of Surveillance," *The Intercept* (2014),
<https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2014/11/13/art-surveillance-explored-artists/>

Art:

Surveillance Camera Players, various, <http://www.notbored.org/the-scp.html>
 Institute for Applied Autonomy, *i-SEE* (2001 - 2003),
<http://www.appliedautonomy.com/isee.html>
 Jill Magid, *The Spy Project* (2005 - 2010),
<http://jillmagid.paas.webslice.eu/projects/article-12-the-spy-series-2>
 Heather Dewey-Hagborg, *Stranger Visions* (2013),
<http://deweyhagborg.com/strangervisions/>

Suggested:

Laura Poitras, "Surveillance Teach-In," *Whitney Museum of American Art* (2012),
<https://vimeo.com/64653198>
 Harun Farocki, *Eye/Machine I-III* (2001 - 2003)
 Toby Beauchamp, "Surveillance," *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2014), pp. 208 - 210
 Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet, eds., *Feminist Surveillance Studies* (2015)
 Michael Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79* (2008)

19/1 Panopticism

Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), pp. 195 - 228 [reader]
 John Gilliom and Torin Monahan, "Chapter 1: My Cell, My Self," *SuperVision: An Introduction to the Surveillance Society* (2013), pp. 11 - 26 [reader]

Suggested:

Bernard E. Harcourt, "Chapter 3: Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*," *Exposed: Desire and Disobedience in the Digital Age* (2015), pp. 80 - 104

26/1 Control and Capture

Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies," *Negotiations* (1992), pp. 177 - 182 [reader]
 Philip E. Agre, "Surveillance and Capture: Two Models of Privacy," *The New Media Reader* (1994), pp. 737 - 760 [reader]

Art:

Nervous Systems: Quantified Life and the Social Question, curated by Stephanie Hankey, Marek Tuszynski and Anselm Franke, Haus der Kulturen der Welt (2016),
https://hkw.de/en/programm/projekte/2016/nervoeese_systeme/nervoeese_systeme_start.php

Suggested:

Stephanie Hankey, Marek Tuszynski and Anselm Franke, eds., *Nervous Systems: Quantified Life and the Social Question* (2016)
 Rita Raley, "Dataveillance and Countervailance," *"Raw Data" Is an Oxymoron* (2013), pp. 121 - 147

2/2 Laura Poitras: *Citizenfour* and *Astro Noise*

Astro Noise: A Survival Guide for Living Under Total Surveillance (2016), excerpts: Jay Sanders, "Introduction" pp. 25 - 35, Laura Poitras, "Berlin Journal" pp. 80 - 101, Alex Danchev, "Troublemakers: Laura Poitras and the Problem of Dissent," pp. 205 - 225 [reader]

Art:

Laura Poitras, *Citizenfour* (2014)
 Laura Poitras, *Astro Noise*, Whitney Museum of American Art (2016),
<http://whitney.org/Exhibitions/LauraPoitras>

Suggested:

Laura Poitras, *Surveillance Teach-In*, Whitney Museum of American Art (2012),
<https://vimeo.com/64653198>
 Glenn Greenwald, *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State* (2015), excerpts: "Introduction" pp. 1 - 6, Ch. 4: "The Harm of Surveillance" pp. 170 - 209, "Epilogue" pp. 248 - 254
 Peter Maas, "How Laura Poitras Helped Snowden Spill His Secrets," *The New York Times* (2013), <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/magazine/laura-poitras-snowden.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>
 Eugene Wolters, "The Mainstream Media Just Discovered Foucault and They're All Wrong," *Verso Blog* (2013), <http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/1366-the-mainstream-media-just-discovered-foucault-and-they-re-all-wrong>

9/2 Metahaven and The Cloud

Metahaven, "Captives of the Cloud: Part I," *e-flux* (2012) [reader]
 Metahaven, "Captives of the Cloud: Part II," *e-flux* (2012),
<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/captives-of-the-cloud-part-ii/>
 Metahaven, "Captives of the Cloud, Part III: All Tomorrow's Clouds," *e-flux* (2013),
<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/captives-of-the-cloud-part-iii-all-tomorrows-clouds/>

Suggested:

Benjamin Bratton, *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty* (2015)

16/2 Reading Week

23/2 Biometrics

Shoshana Amielle Magnet, "Biometric Failure," *When Biometrics Fail: Gender, Race, and the Technology of Identity* (2011), pp. 19 - 50 [reader]

Simone Browne, "Branding Blackness: Biometric Technology and the Surveillance of Blackness," *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (2015), pp. 89 - 129

Art:

Adam Harvey, *CV Dazzle* (2012), <http://cvdazzle.com/>

Suggested:

Nicholas L. Clarkson, "Biometrics," *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2014), pp. 35 - 37

1/3 Security: Airports, Borders, Prisons

John Gilliom and Torin Monahan, "Chapter 6: Security at Any Cost?" *SuperVision: An Introduction to the Surveillance Society* (2013), pp. 108 - 126 [reader]

Paisley Currah & Tara Mulqueen, "Securitizing Gender: Identity, Biometrics, and Transgender Bodies at the Airport," *Social Research* (2011), pp. 557 - 582 [reader]

Art:

Harun Farocki, *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts* (2000)

Suggested:

Toby Beauchamp, "Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11," *Surveillance & Society* (2009), pp. 356 - 366

8/3 Drones

Grégoire Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone* (2015), excerpts: "Prelude" pp. 1 - 10, "Introduction" pp. 11 - 18 [reader]

Derek Gregory, "Drone Geographies," *Radical Philosophy* (2014), pp. 7 - 19

Art:

Omer Fast, *5,000 Feet is the Best* (2011)

Ricardo Dominguez & Ian Alan Paul, *Drone Crash Incident* (2012), <http://www.ianalanpaul.com/drone-crash-incident-2012/>

James Bridle, *Dronestagram* (2013 - present), <http://dronestagram.tumblr.com/>

Adam Harvey, *Stealth Wear* (2013), <http://ahprojects.com/projects/stealth-wear/>

Suggested:

Nicola Abé, "Dreams in Infrared: The Woes of an American Drone Operator," *Spiegel International* (2012), <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/pain-continues-after-war-for-american-drone-pilot-a-872726.html>

T.J. Demos, "War Games: A Tale in Three Part (On Omer Fast's *5,000 Feet is the Best*)" (2012), pp. 77 - 87

Jordan Crandall, "Ontologies of the Wayward Drone: A Salvage Operation," *ctheory* (2011), <http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=693>

15/3 Counter-Surveillance 1: In/visibility

Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker, "Tactics of Nonexistence," *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (2007), pp. 135 - 137 [reader]
 Irving Goh, "Prolegomenon to a Right to Disappear," *Cultural Politics* (2006), pp. 97 - 114 [reader]

Art:

Hito Steyerl, *How Not To Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* (2013)
 Heather Dewey-Hagborg, *Invisible* (2014), <http://biogenfutura.es/>
 Trevor Paglen, *Limit Telephotography* (2008),
<http://www.paglen.com/index.php?l=work&s=limit&i=4>
 Trevor Paglen, *Code Names of the Surveillance State* (2014)
http://www.paglen.com/?l=work&s=code_names_of_the
 Hasan Elahi, *Tracking Transience v2.0* (2002 - present),
<http://elahi.umd.edu/track/>

Suggested:

Hanna Rose Shell, *Hide and Seek: Camouflage, Photography, and the Media of Reconnaissance* (2012)
 Trevor Paglen, "New Photos of the NSA and Other Top Intelligence Agencies Revealed For First Time," *The Intercept* (2014), <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2014/02/10/new-photos-of-nsa-and-others/>
 Trevor Paglen, "Turnkey Tyranny: Surveillance and the Terror State," *Creative Time Reports* (2013), <http://creativetimereports.org/2013/06/25/surveillance-and-the-construction-of-a-terror-state/>
 Metahaven, *Black Transparency: The Right to Know In the Age of Mass Surveillance* (2015)
 Sean Dockray, *Facebook Suicide (Bomb) Manifesto* (2010),
https://www.academia.edu/10423887/Facebook_Suicide_Bomb_Manifesto
 Toby Beauchamp, *Going Stealth: Transgender Bodies and U.S. Surveillance Practices* (2010, dissertation)

22/3 Counter-Surveillance 2: Encryption

Julian Assange with Jacob Appelbaum, Andy Müller-Maguhn, and Jérémie Zimmermann, "Introduction: A Call To Cryptographic Arms," *Cypherpunks: Freedom and the Future of the Internet* (2012), pp. 1 - 6 [reader]
 Finn Brunton and Helen Nissenbaum, *Obfuscation: A User's Guide For Privacy and Protest* (2015)
 TOR, <https://www.torproject.org/>
 HTTPS Everywhere, <https://www.eff.org/HTTPS-EVERYWHERE>

Art:

Trevor Paglen and Jacob Appelbaum, *Autonomy Cube* (2015), <https://paglen.studio/2020/04/09/autonomy-cube/>

Suggested:

Julian Assange with Jacob Appelbaum, Andy Müller-Maguhn, and Jérémie Zimmermann, *Cypherpunks: Freedom and the Future of the Internet* (2012), excerpts:
 "Discussion Participants" pp. 7 - 10, "Editor's Note" pp. 11 - 12, "Note on the Various Attempts to Persecute Wikileaks and People Associated With It" pp. 13 - 20, "Increased Communication Versus Increased Surveillance" pp. 21 - 32

Freedom of the Press Foundation, "Encryption Works: How to Protect Your Privacy in the Age of NSA Surveillance" (2013)

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1 x 1500 word essay

All students will submit a 1000 word essay that critically analyzes a way in which they are complicit with surveillance. You are expected to clearly identify a modality of surveillance (such as CCTV, data aggregation, social media, etc.) as well as indicate what type of surveillance it is (panoptic, capture, control, etc.). The essay's core should consider the circumstances that have enabled you to participate in surveillance as well as how you understand this to impact your life. Does your complicity with surveillance evoke exploitation and oppression, or do you take pleasure in what surveillance enables? This essay is not to be simply a personal reflection but a critical meditation on how you are personally implicated in surveillance today.

Deadline: Your essay must be received by 23 February at 1pm.

Submission details: Upload a digital copy of your essay to the VLE module site, as well as submit a printed copy on due date. The deadline is non-negotiable.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1 x 3000 word essay

At the module's end, you will submit a 3000 word essay on a topic of your choosing related to the module. While there are no set questions, all essays are to be comparative analyses that critically engage at least 1 required text and 1 artwork listed on the module outline. Additionally, all essays must have a bibliography and references, which are not included in the word count.

Style Guide: Please consult the Chicago Manual of Style for information on proper formatting and citations: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Deadline: Your essay must be received by the official Goldsmiths summative deadline. More information will be provided during the term.

Submission details: Upload a digital copy of your essay at the appropriate summative submission website, as well as submit a printed copy on due date. The deadline is non-negotiable.