

Net Phi
...inter(Net Phi)losophy

PHIL 407, University of Oregon, Winter of 2013



Course Details:

Instructor: Dr. Colin Koopman, koopman@uoregon.edu
Instructor Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30p-4:30p in PLC 333
Course Meetings: Mon & Wed 12:00p-1:50p in PLC 314
Course Website: <http://lore.com/Net-Phi.1>
Course Website Code: VTCN8P

Course Description:

This is a course in Net Phi, i.e., in *Inter(Net Phi)losophy*. The presupposition of the course is that emerging internet socio-technologies are ushering in conditions for new ethical, political, and cultural forms and norms that we have yet to confront, and for which we lack conceptual resources. If we are willing to think of philosophy as the work of creating, fabricating, and testing conceptual resources, then we find ourselves in an interesting philosophical moment with respect to the internet, networks, computers, information, and other related socio-technological emergences.

Though there will be a fair bit of traditional philosophical material covered in this course, our subject matter itself is hardly canonical. We will thus press ourselves into service *as philosophers* and attempt to *do philosophy* in this course, which means (on at least one plausible interpretation) thinking experimentally about pressing cultural contests for which concepts have yet to stabilize. In this course, you should not expect to learn about philosophy except by way of doing philosophy.

This course will be structured as follows. We will begin in Part I with readings in advanced internet theory, drawing from contemporary work that launches off of major philosophers in Pragmatist and Continental philosophy. Beginning at the general, we will then descend at the mid-way point of the term to the particular and focus in Part II on a more specific domain of inquiry, namely issues of privacy, specifically personal information privacy in the context of the internet.

Course Texts:

You will need to buy the three books listed below—I have not ordered these through the DuckStore and so you will need to purchase them through Amazon or some other retailer. All other readings will be made available as PDFs through the course website.

- Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006)
- Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007)
- Adrian Mackenzie, *Wirelessness: Radical Empiricism in Network Cultures* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010)

Course Reading & Seminar Schedule:

Date	Primary Assigned Reading	Suggested Background Readings (Assigned for Presenters)
Introductory Topics in Net Phi		
M 1/7	Presentation of Course Syllabus “Communication” by Bruce Clarke	
W 1/9	“Cybernetics” by N. Katherine Hayles “Information” by Bruce Clarke	
Part I: Contemporary Net Phi		
M 1/14	Wendy Chun, <i>Control & Freedom</i> , pp.1-76	Foucault, <i>Discipline & Punish</i> , selections
W 1/16	Wendy Chun, <i>Control & Freedom</i> , pp. 77-170	Chun, <i>Programmed Visions</i> , selections Chun, “Crisis... Sovereignty & Networks”
Th 1/17	<i>Required Special Event: Wendy Chun lecture, 12p-1:30p in EMU Fir Room</i>	
M 1/21	[No class for MLK Day]	
W 1/23	Wendy Chun, <i>Control & Freedom</i> , pp. 171-303	Nancy, <i>Experience of Freedom</i> , selections

M 1/28	Alex Galloway & Eugene Thacker, <i>The Exploit</i> , pp. 1-63	Deleuze, "Control and Becoming" Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies"
W 1/30	Alex Galloway & Eugene Thacker, <i>The Exploit</i> , pp. 63-101	Foucault, <i>The Will to Know</i> , Part V
M 2/4	Alex Galloway & Eugene Thacker, <i>The Exploit</i> , pp. 103-166	Galloway, <i>The Interface Effect</i> , selections Galloway, "Networks"
W 2/6	Adrian Mackenzie, <i>Wirelessness</i> , pp. 1-86	James, ... <i>Radical Empiricism</i> , selections
M 2/11	Adrian Mackenzie, <i>Wirelessness</i> , pp. 87-144	Mackenzie, <i>Transductions</i> , selections
W 2/13	Adrian Mackenzie, <i>Wirelessness</i> , pp.145-215	James, "The Will to Believe" Deleuze, <i>Bergsonism</i> , selections
Part II: Problems of Information Privacy in Networked Contexts		
M 2/18	Readings to be announced from selections such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Warren & Louis Brandeis, "Right to Privacy" • Alan Westin, "Privacy and Freedom" • Ruth Gavison, "Privacy and the Limits of Law" • Judith Jarvis Thompson, "The Right to Privacy" • Daniel Solove, <i>Understanding Privacy</i> • Helen Nissenbaum, <i>Privacy in Context</i> • Phillip Agre, "Surveillance and Capture: Two Models" • Zizi Papacharissi, <i>A Private Sphere</i> • Anita Allen, <i>Unpopular Privacy</i> 	
W 2/20	Readings to be announced (depending on class interests)	
M 2/25	Readings to be announced (depending on class interests)	
W 2/27	Readings to be announced (depending on class interests)	
M 3/4	Readings to be announced (depending on class interests)	
T 3/5	First Round papers due in my office under my door by 4pm (and/or via email as announced)	
W 3/6	[No class due to instructor conference]	
Concluding: Net Phi Today and Tomorrow		
M 3/11	Readings to be announced (depending on class interests)	
W 3/13	Readings to be announced (depending on class interests)	
M 3/19	Final Papers due in my office under my door (and/or in another format to be announced).	

Course Assessment & Required Student Work:

To pass this course, you must achieve a passing grade in all of the following five areas (meaning that if you entirely neglect one of these assignments, you will fail the course):

1) Seminar Participation - 15%

- a. You are expected to attend class and contribute to discussions. All our meetings will provide ample time for discussion. Students in this course should not expect to be able to passively attend our meetings and 'soak up information'. Participation in this course means active involvement and engagement. This means that you need to come prepared to each meeting with questions, ideas, and provocations. That is the only way we will be able to successfully *do philosophy* in this course.

2) Reading Questions Posted to Course Website - 5%

- a. You must come to every class session with evidence of preparation for our meeting. By every Monday and Wednesday at 11am (this is a firm deadline) you should post a question or comment to our course website pertaining to that session's primary

reading by our primary author. Your posts should be concise (one paragraph maximum—two sentences is ideal). Please start a new discussion thread if necessary (i.e., if by the time you post nobody else has started a new thread).

3) In-Class Team Presentations - 30%

- a. You will partner up with another student in the class to develop an in-class presentation at the beginning of a class session during Part I of the course. The presentation will be focused on one of our suggested background readings. Most students will present in pairs, but given our numbers, for a few of our sessions (namely those on 1/16, 2/4, and 2/13) I will need to ask a few of you to volunteer to present twice, though it may also be an option for a few of you to present individually.
- b. Presentations should be between 20 and 25 minutes in length. Please time yourself so that you do not go over. If you have more ideas you want to cover in that time than is feasible, consider making a handout with additional quotation and discussion.
- c. Your team presentations should do three things. First, you should briefly summarize the background reading. Second, you should explain why this reading is directly relevant to our primary text. Third, you should discuss some aspect of either the reading itself or our main author's usage of it that is controversial. Since you will be presenting in pairs, this discussion of the controversial aspect of the class should be presented as a debate (with each member of the presentation duo taking opposing sides or positions, to the extent that this makes sense for your text).

4) Paper Topic Discussion Meeting - 5%

- a. The majority of your grade in this course (exactly half of your grade) will be determined by a final research paper. There will be three stages to this paper. The first stage will be meeting with me (during my office hours) to discuss a preliminary paper topic. As the first version of your paper is due in Week 9, you should plan to meet with me to discuss a topic sometime around Weeks 6 and 7. If need be, I will circulate signup sheets for office hour visits at that point.

5) Research Paper, First Final Version - 20%

- a. You will write a short argumentative essay due to me in my office (or another location to be announced in class) on Tuesday of Week 9 as noted on the schedule above.
- b. The first version of your paper that you turn into me should *not* be a draft. It should be a finalized and polished paper. I will give you feedback on the paper and you will make further revisions from there.
- c. You are expected to develop your own essay topic, with the sole constraint being that the essay must address the subject matter and readings of the course.
- d. This version should be about 8 pages (or about 2000-2500 words exclusive of notes and references). Your essay should include assigned primary and secondary readings, as well as indicate research that makes use of additional secondary literature. After I provide you with written comments on your paper, you will revise this essay and expand it into a longer final research essay due at the end of the term.

6) Research Paper, Revised Final Final Version - 25%

- a. You will write a final research essay, which will be a revision of, improvement upon, and expansion upon your shorter argumentative essay from earlier in the term. This essay should engage with one both the assigned primary literature and relevant secondary literature.
- b. This should be about 10 pages in length (aim for 2500-3000 words exclusive of notes and references).
- c. This paper will be due Tuesday of exam week (either in my office or via email, or both, to be announced).