

**USC Iovine and  
Young Academy**  
*Arts, Technology and the Business  
of Innovation*

**ACAD 302: Hacker Imagination**

**Units: 4**

**Mon/Wed 10:00-11:50**

**Location:** IYA 210/211

**Instructor:** Douglas Thomas

**Office:** IYA Hall or Zoom

**Office Hours:** By Appt.

**Contact Info:** douglast@usc.edu

**Grader and/or Classroom Assistant/s:**

Erin Jung

**Contact Info:** erinjung@usc.edu

**IT Help:** <https://iovine-young.usc.edu/ait/index.html>

**Hours of Service:** 8:30am - 5:00pm

**Contact Info:** [iyhelp@usc.edu](mailto:iyhelp@usc.edu), 213-821-6917

## **Course Description**

Unlike our popular understanding of innovation and invention, which tells stories the birth of new ideas and individual genius, the story of the hacker imagination is something quite different. Hackers create by envisioning new possibilities in the context of old ideas.

For the purposes of this class, the hacker imagination is the transformation of a specific domain that constructs a new way of seeing the world.

## **Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

In order to explore that notion in more depth, we will examine a collection of hacks by asking four questions:

1. What is the role of imagination in creating a new way of seeing, thinking or doing?
2. What is the context in which those transformations took place?
3. What is the subject of the “hack?”
4. What was changed, transformed, or altered as a result?

While it is impossible to even attempt to catalog each and every person, hack or event that has had such an impact there are some exemplars that we can point to that can help us understand the nature of the hacker imagination.

While we will inevitably touch on the content of many great thinkers and their ideas, the focus of the class will be primarily on the context in which their ideas had meaning.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: None

## **Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

Readings will be available through blackboard and will be comprised of selections from original texts when possible.

## **Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Class Participation is graded based on attendance as well as quality of substantive contributions to class discussions

There will be three assignments. For each section students will lead one discussion based on a reading. Students will present an example of the hacker imagination as an in-class presentation, combined with an essay detailing how that figure provides an example for analysis. Grading Scale: Please note that I do not round grades up.

## Grading Breakdown

| Assignment           | Points     | % of Grade |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Class Participation  | 15         | 15         |
| Discussion Questions | 40         | 25         |
| Group Presentations  | 40         | 30         |
| Group Papers         | 40         | 30         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>135</b> | <b>100</b> |

## Grading Scale (Example)

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

|    |              |
|----|--------------|
| A  | 95-100       |
| A- | 90-94        |
| B+ | 87-89        |
| B  | 83-86        |
| B- | 80-82        |
| C+ | 77-79        |
| C  | 73-76        |
| C- | 70-72        |
| D+ | 67-69        |
| D  | 63-66        |
| D- | 60-62        |
| F  | 59 and below |

## Assignment Submission Policy

Groups will submit their presentation slides and papers on the day of the presentation, uploaded to Blackboard

## Grading Timeline

Presentations will be graded and assessed/critiqued within two weeks following the end of presentations in class.

## Academy Attendance Policy

The Academy maintains rigorous academic standards for its students and on-time attendance at all class meetings is expected. Each student will be allowed two excused absences over the course of the semester for which no explanation is required. Students are admonished to not waste excused absences on non-critical issues, and to use them carefully for illness or other issues that may arise unexpectedly. Except in the case of prolonged illness or other serious issue (see below), no additional absences will be excused. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a grade (e.g., an A will be lowered to A-, and A- will be lowered to a B+, etc.). In addition, being tardy to class will count as one-third of an absence. Three tardies will equal a full course absence.

Students remain responsible for any missed work from excused or unexcused absences. Immediately following an absence, students should contact the instructor to obtain missed assignments or lecture notes and to confirm new deadlines or due dates. Extensions or other accommodations are at the discretion of the instructor.

Automatically excused absences normally may not be used for quiz, exam or presentation days. Using an excused absence for a quiz, exam or presentation, such as in the case of sudden illness or other emergency, is at the discretion of the instructor.

In the case of prolonged illness, family emergencies, or other unforeseen serious issues, the student should contact the instructor to arrange for accommodation. Accommodation may also be made for essential professional or career-related events or opportunities. All accommodations remain at the discretion of the instructor, and appropriate documentation may be required.

### *Fall 2021 addendum:*

- Unless students provide an accommodation letter from USC's Office of Student Accessibility Services or a letter from IYA Student Services detailing visa or travel restrictions, attendance and active participation is expected in the classroom. Any student with such accommodations should submit their accommodation document to the instructor as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations. Either classroom recordings or live remote access to the class via Zoom will be provided.
- Students who are experiencing illness should not attend class in person. Please inform the instructor in advance of any class sessions that you can't attend for medical reasons, and accommodations will be arranged to view recorded lectures and submit alternatives to any missed class participation. Students will not be penalized for not attending class in person under these circumstances.
- In the event that you find yourself experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, in keeping with university recommendations, you should Stay home! This is the best way to prevent spreading COVID-19 as supported by scientific evidence; Please do not come to an in-person class if you are feeling ill, particularly if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems:

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*  
[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)*  
-213-740-9355 (WELL)  
<https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/>

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services provides immediate therapy services for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (e.g., sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking).

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086*  
[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

*USC Policy Reporting to Title IX (213) 740-5086*  
<https://policy.usc.edu/reporting-to-title-ix-student-misconduct/>

The university encourages individuals to report prohibited conduct to the *Title IX Office*. Individuals can report to the university *Title IX Coordinator* in the *Office of Equity and Diversity*.

*Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421*  
[studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.