**OVERVIEW**

In this paper, you'll describe the origin, use, influence, and mechanics of a code or cipher of your choice. There are many codes and ciphers we won't have time to explore in detail in this course. This assignment will provide you with a chance to explore a piece of the history of cryptography that interests you personally—and to share that exploration with an authentic audience.

Your “paper” will take the form of a blog post between 1,000 and 1,250 words that will be submitted for publication on the blog Wonders & Marvels (www.wondersandmarvels.com), a history blog edited by Vanderbilt professor Holly Tucker. You can read student posts to Wonders & Marvel from the 2012 offering of this seminar here: http://www.wondersandmarvels.com/category/cryptography-vanderbilt.

You’ll need to adopt a writing voice appropriate to Wonders & Marvels, interest your audience in your chosen code or cipher, and explain the mechanics of your code or cipher (enciphering, deciphering, decryption) in ways your audience can understand. The technical side of your post is the closest you’ll come to the kind of writing that mathematicians do, so be sure to be clear, precise, and concise. This assignment will require some research on your part, and you’ll need to cite your sources in your blog post.

Your work will be graded on the degree to which your writing is both interesting and accessible to the Wonders & Marvels audience, as well as the completeness of your exposition of your chosen code or cipher. See the rubric for this assignment for more details. Please consider this rubric as a guide to my expectations and not a binding contract on my grading. I reserve the right to make changes to the rubric during the grading process.

**PROCESS**

Friday, October 10th – Your paper topic is due by the start of class. Since these papers will run on Wonders & Marvels, it doesn’t make sense to have two papers on the same topic. If two of you want to write on the same cipher, it’s first come, first serve, so send me your paper topic as soon as you can. Please note that the topics addressed by the 2012 Wonders & Marvels posts are off-limits for this assignment.

Wednesday, October 15th – First drafts are due to me by email by the start of class. I'll grade these and provide feedback by Wednesday, October 22nd.

Wednesday, October 29th – Second drafts are due via email to me and Dr. Tucker (holly.tucker@vanderbilt.edu) by the start of class.

- I'll grade these, and your final grade on the assignment will be the average of your first draft and second draft grades.
- Meanwhile, Dr. Tucker will read your second drafts for possible publishing on Wonders & Marvels. As editor, she will likely request changes to your drafts before posting.
Friday, November 7th – Revisions are due to Dr. Tucker (and me) via email by the start of class, if you’re interested in having your post run on Wonders & Marvels. (If not, you’re done at the previous stage.) Dr. Tucker will give final approval to run your posts on Wonders & Marvels.

Friday, November 14th – All posts to run on Wonders & Marvels need to be queued up and ready for publication. Wonders & Marvels runs on WordPress, just like our blog, so this should be fairly straightforward. I’ll help with the logistics of this process.

Week of November 17th – Your posts will run on Wonders & Marvels, likely spread out over Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, all contributing to the buzz for *The Imitation Game*, opening Friday the 21st.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Please familiarize yourself with Vanderbilt’s Honor System. I’m encouraging a lot of sharing and collaboration in this course, but your work on your paper assignments should be your own. Please be careful not to plagiarize. The Writing Studio has a great set of resources on working with sources in academic writing ([http://is.gd/LGUCDb](http://is.gd/LGUCDb)). We’ll spend some class time exploring plagiarism and academic integrity more generally.

If your life is falling apart and you are tempted to plagiarize to save time or get a good grade, please see me instead. I would rather grant you an extension than send you before the Honor Council.