

## Math 115F: Cryptography, Fall 2012 Paper #2 – Expository Paper

### 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 1,500 words that will be submitted for publication on the blog Wonders & Marvels ([www.wondersandmarvels.com](http://www.wondersandmarvels.com)), a history blog edited by Vanderbilt professor Holly Tucker.

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. I'll provide you with a grading rubric soon with more details.

### PROCESS

Your paper *topic* is due by the start of class on Tuesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>. 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.

Your paper is due to me (Dr. Bruff) by midnight on Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, as a Word or Google document. This is the version of your paper that will be graded, so write accordingly. I'll provide you feedback as I did with your first paper.

A revised version of your paper is due to Dr. Tucker by the start of class on Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. She'll either approve your post to run on Wonders & Marvels or ask you to revise and resubmit it.

If your post is approved, you'll be provided with access to an account on Wonders & Marvels, which is powered by WordPress, just like our course blog. You'll prepare your post as a draft post, and Dr. Tucker will schedule it for publication.

### 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 Library has a very helpful guide to understanding plagiarism (<http://is.gd/VCoZcq>), and the Writing Studio has a great set of resources on working with sources in academic writing (<http://is.gd/eBw5Q>).

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.