



# PICT8080

## Cyber Conflict, Cyber Espionage and Information Warfare

Session 1, Online-flexible 2025

*School of International Studies*

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#### Disclaimer

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Jennifer Williams

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MCrim or MPICT or MCP ICT or GradDipPICT or GradDipCPICT or PGCertPICT or GradCertPICT or GradCertCPICT or MPICTMIntSecSt or MCP ICTMIntSecSt or MIntSecStud or GradDipIntSecStud or MInfoTech or MSecStrategicStud or MIntell or MCTerrorism or M CyberSec or GradDipSecStudCr or GradCertSecStudCr or MSecStrategicStudMCrim or MSecStrategicStudMIntell or MSecStrategicStudM CyberSec or MSecStrategicStudMCTerrorism or MIntellMCrim or MIntellM CyberSec or MIntellMCTerrorism or M CyberSecMCTerrorism or M CyberSecMCrim or MCTerrorismMCrim or Master of Cyber Security Analysis or MInfoSystMgmt or MInfoTechCyberSec or MInfoTechNetWork or admission to BSecStudMCTerrorism or BSecStudMCrim or BSecStudM CyberSecAnalysis or BSecStudMIntell or BSecStudMSecStrategicStud or (10cps at 6000 level or 10cps at 8000 level)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides an overview of the new and developing threats that cyberspace brings in terms of global security and the implications for corporate, law enforcement and national security responses. The course will analyse cyber attacks involving both nation state actors and non-nation state actors with political motives (including terrorists) through historical, operational and strategic perspectives. Students will gain an understanding of various definitions of cyber espionage, cyber terrorism, cyber warfare and information warfare. They will also be able to analyse how nation states and non-nation state actors utilise the Internet as an attack vector in information warfare to infiltrate digital systems to gain control of critical infrastructure. The unit is interactive and students are expected to actively participate in seminars and online discussion forums.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

**ULO1:** Understand and differentiate characteristics and typologies of different cyber threats and trends in the cyber space.

**ULO2:** Analyse the technical, social and political drivers of information warfare, cyber conflict and cyber espionage.

**ULO3:** Analyse how nation-states and non-nation-state actors utilise the Internet as an attack vector in information warfare to infiltrate digital systems and gain control of critical infrastructure, through the use of case studies.

**ULO4:** Develop the ability to conduct independent and collaborative research through written presentations.

## Assessment Tasks

| Name           | Weighting | Hurdle | Due     |
|----------------|-----------|--------|---------|
| Quiz           | 30%       | No     | Week 4  |
| Case Study     | 30%       | No     | Week 7  |
| Research Essay | 40%       | No     | Week 13 |

### Quiz

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 15 hours

Due: **Week 4**

Weighting: **30%**

Quizzes will periodically test understanding and application of key concepts and frameworks from the course.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and differentiate characteristics and typologies of different cyber threats and trends in the cyber space.
- Analyse the technical, social and political drivers of information warfare, cyber conflict and cyber espionage.
- Analyse how nation-states and non-nation-state actors utilise the Internet as an

attack vector in information warfare to infiltrate digital systems and gain control of critical infrastructure, through the use of case studies.

- Develop the ability to conduct independent and collaborative research through written presentations.

## Case Study

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Case study/analysis

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 20 hours

Due: **Week 7**

Weighting: **30%**

### Cyber Attack Case Study

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and differentiate characteristics and typologies of different cyber threats and trends in the cyber space.
- Analyse how nation-states and non-nation-state actors utilise the Internet as an attack vector in information warfare to infiltrate digital systems and gain control of critical infrastructure, through the use of case studies.
- Develop the ability to conduct independent and collaborative research through written presentations.

## Research Essay

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Essay

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 40 hours

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **40%**

### Research Essay on Specific Cyber Issue

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and differentiate characteristics and typologies of different cyber threats and trends in the cyber space.
- Analyse the technical, social and political drivers of information warfare, cyber conflict and cyber espionage.

- Analyse how nation-states and non-nation-state actors utilise the Internet as an attack vector in information warfare to infiltrate digital systems and gain control of critical infrastructure, through the use of case studies.
- Develop the ability to conduct independent and collaborative research through written presentations.

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<sup>1</sup> If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

<sup>2</sup> Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

## Delivery and Resources

### UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes attending/watching lectures, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn, participating in iLearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- All students are expected to make significant contributions to online activities.
- In most cases, students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks to pass the unit.

### REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for this unit's required readings are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site. Electronic copies of required readings may be accessed through the library or will be made available by other means. A helpful guide including shortcuts for accessing journal articles is available at: <https://www.mq.edu.au/about/facilities/library/covid-19-response/journal-survival-guide>

### TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

- Computer and internet access are essential for this unit. Basic computer skills and skills in word processing are also a requirement.
- This unit has an online presence. Login is via: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>.
- Students are required to have regular access to a computer and the internet. Mobile devices alone are not sufficient.
- Information about IT used at Macquarie University is available at <http://students.mq.edu>

[u.au/it\\_services/](https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/172379/unit_guide/print)

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE

- Responsible and ethical use of Generative AI is allowed.
- The burden of verifying any and all information generated using Artificial Intelligence is on the student. Failure to verify information (including the legitimacy of citations and the content of these citations) may constitute a violation of academic integrity, at which point further investigation and penalties may apply.

## SUBMITTING ASSESSMENT TASKS

- All text-based assessment tasks are to be submitted, marked and returned electronically. This will only happen through the unit iLearn site.
- Assessment tasks must be submitted as an MS Word document by the due date. Assessment due dates in this guide are indicative only and may be adjusted by the course convenor.
- Most assessment tasks will be subject to a 'Turnitin' review as an automatic part of the submission process.
- The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners but must be lodged through Special Consideration: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

[n](https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration)

## LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, **a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted**, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11:55 pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessments (including essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings, etc). **Late submission of time-sensitive tasks** (such as quizzes/tests, discussion board tasks, etc) **will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.**

## WORD LIMITS FOR ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Stated word limits include footnotes and footnoted references, but not bibliography, or title page.
- Word limits can generally deviate by 10% either over or under the stated figure.
- If the number of words deviates from the limit by more than 10%, then penalties will

apply. These penalties are 5% of the awarded mark for every 100-word deviation from the word limit. For instance, if a paper is 300 words over or under, it will lose  $3 \times 5\% = 15\%$  of the total mark awarded for the assignment. This percentage is taken off the total mark, i.e. if a paper were graded at a credit (65%) and was 300 words over, it would be reduced by 15 marks to a pass (50%).

- The application of this penalty is at the discretion of the course convener.

## REASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE SEMESTER

- Macquarie University operates a Grade Appeal Policy in cases where students feel their work was graded inappropriately: <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>
- Per the Grade Appeal Policy, individual works are not subject to regrading.

## STAFF AVAILABILITY

- Department staff will endeavour to answer student enquiries in a timely manner (usually 2 business days). Work email is not monitored outside regular work hours, over the weekend, or during public holiday periods.
- Students are encouraged to read the Unit Guide and look at instructions posted on the iLearn site before emailing staff.

# Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>).

[du.au](#)) and use the [search tool](#).

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

## Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [connect.mq.edu.au](https://connect.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

## Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)



- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

## Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Changes from Previous Offering

Participation is no longer an assessable element of this course.

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Unit information based on version 2025.02 of the [Handbook](#)