What is computer security?

- Keep “bad things” from happening
- Distinguished by presence of an adversary

Two sides of security

- Defenders / white-hats / good guys
- Attackers / black-hats / bad guys
- Each side’s strategy depends on the other
- In some ways like a game

Classic security goals

- Confidentiality
- Integrity
- Authenticity
- Availability

Managing risk

- Threat model, likely adversary goals
- Expected damage
- Expected attack rate
Course areas

- Software security
- OS security
- Cryptography
- Network application security
- Other topics

Software security

- Security bugs aka vulnerabilities
  - Some specific to low-level languages like C, others not
- Arms race
  - Attack techniques
  - Defenses against unknown bugs
  - Countermeasures against defenses
- Defensive programming and design

OS security

- Classic area for secure design and security policies
  - Some specific examples from Unix/Linux
- Access control and capabilities
- Multi-level security and mandatory access control
- Assurance and trust

Cryptography

- Mathematical techniques for protecting information
- Symmetric-key techniques (e.g. AES)
- Public-key techniques (e.g. RSA)
- Cryptographic protocols
- What can go wrong (lots!)

Security and the network

- Network protocols, basic and “S”
- Firewalls, NATs, intrusion detectors
- Web servers and web clients
- Network malware and network DoS

Short topics

- Privacy-enhancing network overlays
- Security and usability
- Electronic voting
Learning goals

- Think like your adversary
- Recognize and eliminate vulnerabilities
- Design and build systems securely
- Apply security principles to research problems

Outline

- Big-Picture Introduction
- Course Logistics

Instructor information

- Stephen McCamant
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Teaching assistant

- Aditya Pakki
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Prerequisites

- Undergraduate-level OS, e.g. 4061
- Machine code and compilation
  - E.g. 2021, transitive for 4061
- Useful: networks (4211)
- Graduate level maturity and resourcefulness
- C, Unix, (Perl | Python | Ruby | ...)

Reading materials

- Posted on the course web site
- Download, perhaps with library proxy
- Read before corresponding lecture
- Readings and lecture may not match
  - Both may appear on exams
Textbook

Evaluation components

- 10% Written exercise sets (5)
- 15% Hands-on assignments (2)
- 20% Midterm exam
- 25% Final exam
- 30% Group research project

Exercises

- Five sets, roughly by topic areas
- Do individually or in groups of 2
- Mostly thinking and writing, not much programming
- Submit one set per group, plain text or PDF, via Canvas

Hands-on assignments

- Two assignments, by large topic divisions
- Do individually or in groups of 2
- Mostly programming and attacking
- Draws heavily on your C and Unix skills
- First up: penetrate-and-patch HA1

Exams

- Open book, open notes, no laptops/calculators/phones
- Mix of multiple-choice/true-false and short-answer
- Midterm: Tuesday March 5th in class
- Final: Thursday May 9th 4:00-6:00pm
- Mark your calendars!

Group research project

- Single most important and time-consuming part of course
- Groups of 3-5, preferably 4 or 5
- Engage with a recent research paper
  - Reproduce and extend, or
  - Reproduce and attack
Project milestones

- Pre-proposal (due Feb. 6)
- Progress meetings and reports (monthly)
- Short in-class presentation (last two weeks)
- Paper-style final report (due May 6)

Pre-proposal (Feb. 6)

- Who: group members
- What: paper you’re engaging with
- Why: are you suited for this project
- How: preliminary action plan
- When: available times for progress meetings

Project evaluation

- 15% Originality
- 15% Scholarship
- 30% Strength of evaluation
- 40% Individual contribution

Late assignments

- Due dates usually 11:59pm Central Time
- 1 sec late - 23:59:59 late: 75%
- 24 hrs - 47:59:59 late: 50%
- 48 hrs - 71:59:59 late: 25%
- After that: 0

Collaboration, within groups

- Main kind of collaboration expected in class
- Think about how you structure your collaboration
- For best results, but also to learn from teammates

Collaboration, between groups

- Be careful: “no spoilers”
- OK to discuss general concepts
- OK to help with side tech issues
- Sharing code or written answers is never OK
External sources

- Many assignments will allow or recommend outside (library, Internet) sources
- But you must appropriately acknowledge any outside sources you use
- Failure to do so is plagiarism

Security ethics

- Don’t use techniques discussed in class to attack the security of other people’s computers!
- If we find you do, you will fail, along with other applicable penalties

Academic misconduct generally

- Don’t cheat, plagiarize, help others cheat, etc.
- Minimum penalty: 0 on assignment, report to OCS
- More serious: F in course, other OCS penalties

Course web site

- Department web site under csci5271
- Also linked from my home page ~mccamant

Canvas

- Assignment submissions
- Discussion forums
  - Including: group formation

Challenging course aspects

- Stressing C, low-level, and Unix skills
- Thinking like an attacker
- Thinking like a researcher
- Time management
**Hands-on Assignment 1**

- Weekly attacks 2/1-3/1
- Attack a badly coded mail server (BCMTA)
- Test your attacks using Linux virtual machines

**Exploiting BCMTA**

- BCMTA runs as super-user (“root”)
- Bugs allow a regular user to gain root privileges (shell)
- Challenge: many steps from bug to working exploit
- Challenge: bugs fixed over time

**Detailed material starts Thursday**

- Registration reminders
- Readings, projects, exercise 1
- See you on Thursday!