

**HONS 195N: CRYPTOGRAPHY  
HOMEWORK #1**

**Problem 1.** What is the message embedded in the following?

3rd March

Dear George,  
Greetings to all at Oxford. Many thanks for your letter and for the Summer examination package. All Entry Forms and Fees Forms should be ready for final despatch to the syndicate by Friday 20th or at the very latest, I'm told, by the 21st. Admin has improved here, though there's room for improvement still; just give us all two or three more years and we'll really show you! Please don't let these wretched 16+ proposals destroy your basic O and A pattern. Certainly this sort of change, if implemented immediately, would bring chaos.

**Problem 2.** In one of Dorothy Sayers' mysteries, Lord Peter is confronted with the following message:

I thought to see the fairies in the fields, but I saw only the evil elephants with their black backs. Woe! how that sight awed me! The elves danced all around and about while I heard voices calling clearly. Ah! how I tried to see—throw off the ugly cloud—but no blind eye of a mortal was permitted to spy them. So then came minstrels, having gold trumpets, harps and drums. These played very loudly beside me, breaking that spell. So the dream vanished, whereat I thanked Heaven. I shed many tears before the thin moon rose up, frail and faint as a sickle of straw. Now though the Enchanter gnash his teeth vainly, yet shall he return as the spring returns. Oh, wretched man! Hell gapes, Erebus now lies open. The mouths of Death wait on thy end.

He also discovers the key to the message, which is a sequence of integers:

7876565434321123434565678788787656543432112343456567878878765654433211234

- (a) Decrypt the message. [*Hint: What is the largest integer value?*]
- (b) If the algorithm is known but not the key, how secure is the scheme?
- (c) If the key is known but not the algorithm, how secure is the scheme?

**Problem 3.** The message

jajsymtzlmbfqpymwtzlmymjafqqjdtkymjxmfibtbtjkjfyfymnkjfwstjanq

was encrypted using a shift cipher. Decrypt the message. [*Hint: What are the most common letters?*]