INF 390N: Information Policy: Music, Copyright, and Technology

Unique ID#: 28100
Spring Semester 2017
Mondays: 6–9 p.m.
UTA 1.204

Instructor: Mark A. Davidson, Ph.D., MSIS
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Office Hours: By appointment, email

Objectives

• To introduce the student to the concepts of music and ownership/authorship, music copyright law both in the United States and abroad.
• To provide the student with familiarity with navigating legal documents, both by Congress and various courts.
• To introduce students to the idea of the Commons and alternatives to traditional legal claims of ownership.
• To discuss the public domain and issues of fair use with regard to music scholarship and archiving.
• To provide a history of sound recording and music distribution technologies.
• To familiarize students with the field of forensic musicology and the role of expert witnesses in music copyright cases.
• To introduce students to the legal, moral, and ethical concerns in studying, archiving, and repatriating audiovisual media collections.

About

The intersection of music, copyright, and technology offers a wealth of opportunities for interdisciplinary exploration and discussion and I have designed the course to approach specific issues from both practical and theoretical concerns. No musical or legal background is required, though your knowledge of each will increase by the end of the semester. The course focuses heavily on reading and discussion, with some tailored, specific, and relatively brief assignments towards the end of the semester.

We are fortunate to have a diverse class in terms of students’ personal backgrounds, educational leanings, and professional aspirations, so it is my hope that we can use the richness of these experiences to forward our understanding of the materials. I have an open-door policy regarding your experience in the course, and I urge each of you to speak with me directly about any questions, comments, or concerns that you might have.

Deliverables/Grading

• Class Participation (20%): Students are expected to come to class having done all of the readings, and to be prepared, with notes and questions on the readings, to engage in fruitful conversation about the readings and the larger issues at play therein. You should also be aware of the backgrounds of the authors and the time in which they were writing.
• **Discussion Facilitation (15%)**: You and another classmate will be responsible for helping facilitate one class session between weeks 2 and 11. You will be responsible for developing questions and synthesizing the main concepts of the week, and you will submit your notes and questions to me before class. We’ll divide up the weeks at the first class period.

• **“Blurred Lines” Case Brief (15%)**
  - Write a 3-4-page case brief on the “Blurred Lines” copyright case, including a 1–2-page summary of the case, following general case briefing guidelines, and a 1–2-page analysis of the case that details your own thoughts and insights of the trial. I will provide you with formal guidelines on how to approach the assignment, but these examples will give you an idea of what is expected:
    - [https://www.law.uh.edu/lrw/casebrief.pdf](https://www.law.uh.edu/lrw/casebrief.pdf)
    - [http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1442345.files/Readings%20by%20Number/Sample%20Case%20Brief.pdf](http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1442345.files/Readings%20by%20Number/Sample%20Case%20Brief.pdf)

• **Online Music Archive Presentation (10%)**: Choose an online archive for recorded sound and evaluate it in terms of the following: date produced, overall content and usability, prospective audience for the website (i.e., specialists, general public), technical considerations for the sound recordings, rights and permissions, repatriation or outreach strategies, overall transparency of the materials included therein, and any other features you find discussion worthy. Present your findings to the class. Some websites to consult are the American Memory Project, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, British Library Sounds, Association for Cultural Equity (or other Lomax Online Recordings), etc.

• **Music Streaming Platform Study (10%)**: Choose a platform for music streaming/discovery and create a very brief, point-by-point profile that answers the questions given below. The purpose of the exercise is twofold: You’ll be able to have some expertise in a particular platform, and we’ll develop a master document for the purpose of class reference (I’ll provide you a template). Options include Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora, Tidal, Songza, Deezer, Amazon Prime Music/Amazon Music Unlimited, Google Play Music, Bandcamp, Soundcloud, YouTube, etc.
  - Name, years active, and company/people behind the product
  - Did the platform emerge from another/did it buy out another platform?
  - How it works/what’s it’s selling point (internet radio, on-demand individual song platform, curated streams, exclusive content)
  - What is the cost structure of the platform (cost per month, free option, etc.)
  - How many users are there?
  - What’s the end-user license agreement like?
  - What are the particular perks/selling points of your particular platform? What makes it stand out? What are its shortcomings?
  - How much does it pay artists? What are the licensing agreements with various publishing companies?
Has the platform been in the news for any reason (artist protests, lawsuits, shady dealings, etc.)?

- **Spotify Diary (10%)**: Register for a free version of Spotify and use it over the course of the semester. Keep a diary of what you listen to, when you listen, what music suggestions you get through the various “music discovery” options the platform offers, what ads they tailor to you, etc. We’ll develop this experiment over the course of the semester, based upon students’ personal interests.

- **Final project (20%)**: You will submit a final project for the course the Monday following our last class period. I have given three large options for the final project, though you have a good deal of latitude regarding what you would like to accomplish. Please discuss with me your ideas for your project throughout the semester so that we can decide on the best approach to your particular project.
  - **Reflective Essay/Cumulative Synthesis**: Using your notes, questions, and thoughts from throughout the semester, write a 10–12-page essay synthesizing what you’ve learned in the course about the music, copyright, and technology and the intersections and divergences of these topics. Be reflective/reflexive in your writing. You needn’t try to cover everything in the course, of course; rather, choose larger issues to discuss and create links between them, or focus on specific problems you’d like to explore more fully on your own. What piqued your interest throughout the semester, and/or what topics were particularly distasteful? Which course materials worked for you and which didn’t? How can you bring this knowledge into your life and work? What are your overall thoughts on copyright law and intellectual property rights in the United States (what do you feel works, what might you like to see changed, and how would you accomplish these goals)?
  - **Further Research Project**: If you found something in the course that was of particular interest to you that you would like to explore more fully, or if you are currently working on a project for a thesis, dissertation, or other project that might warrant an discussion of issues related to music, copyright, and/or technology, you have the choice to write a 10–12-page final project.
  - **Alternative Projects**: There are other ways that you can approach the final project. Previous final projects for the course have included conference papers with slide presentations (9–10-page paper, presentation with 25–30 slides); substantive annotated bibliographies; course syllabi; lib guides or other instructional materials, etc.

**Assignment/Grades Breakdown**

- Class Participation – 20%
- Discussion Facilitation – 15%
- “Blurred Lines” Case Brief – 15%
- Online Music Archive Presentation – 10%
- Music Streaming Platform Study – 10%
- Spotify Diary – 10%
- Final Project – 20%
Grades/Points Breakdown
A = 94-100
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B = 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 67-69
D = 64-66
D- = 60-63
F = 0-60

Texts: All texts are available online, through the UT Library system as an e-Book or downloadable article, or will be provided online through Canvas.

Films/Videos: All films and videos are available for online streaming.

Syllabus: This syllabus is subject to emendation if necessary.

University of Texas Student Honor Code
The University’s expectations for student conduct are grounded in the University Code of Conduct: “The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.” University students are also expected to uphold the Student Honor Code: “As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.” University students are also expected to abide by all city, state, and federal laws and statutes and all regulations of the University and The University of Texas System. However, as a community of scholars, the University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than that required simply to avoid discipline. The principles of the Student Honor Code together with the University Code of Conduct should govern and direct student conduct, to promote a safe environment that is conducive to academic success and to ensure that each University student graduates ready to contribute to society as an ethical citizen. [From General Catalog, Appendix C, Chapter 11: Student Discipline and Conduct http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-discipline-and-conduct/]

Documented Disability Statement
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329 3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.
Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).

Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).

Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD’s website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssl/for_cstudents.php

Books available for download (other materials linked in the syllabus):


COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (JAN 23): Course Introduction and Overview

Week 2 (JAN 30): History of U.S. Copyright Law; Philosophical Underpinnings

- Readings:
  - Joanna Demers, Joanna Demers, Steal This Music (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006) Chapter 1, pp. 11–30 (Available through JSTOR)
  - Hirtle/Hudson/Kenyon, Copyright and Cultural Institutions, chapters 1–2, pp. 1–36.

- Further Reading (Not Required):
  - Boyle/Jenkins, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 10, 11
Week 3 (FEB 6): Infringement, Public Domain, Creative Commons

- **Readings:**

- **Further Reading:**
  - Boyle/Jenkins, Chapter 12 (pp. 383–390, 413–424), and Chapter 23.

Week 4: (FEB 13): Copyright in the Digital Age: Digital Millennium Copyright Act, Copyright Term Extension Act (Sonny Bono);

- **Readings:**
  - Hirtle/Hudson/Kenyon, *Copyright and Cultural Institutions*, Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 87–127.

- **Further Reading:**
  - Digital Millennium Copyright Act: https://www.copyright.gov/legislation/dmca.pdf

Week 5 (Feb. 20): Case Week: Fair Use, Secondary Liability, Safe Harbors, Piracy, Torrents

- **Cases Covered:** *Sony/Universal, Campbell v. Acuff-Rose, Napster, Grokster, Authors’ Guild v. Google* (all to be found in readings)

- **Readings:**
  - Boyle/Jenkins, Chapter 13 (pp. 425–441, 450–460, 483–488), and Chapter 14 (pp. 517–540).

- **Film:** *Downloaded*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rwm4p2HYvbo
• **Video:** C-Span: 2 Live Crew Discuss Pretty Woman Supreme Court Case *Campbell v. Acuff-Rose*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRssktqjvOk

**Week 6 (FEB 27): Music and Copyright, Recording Technology, and the Music Business**

**Readings:**


**Week 7 (MAR 6): Musical Borrowing, Ownership, Authorship, and Copyright**

**Readings:**


**Further Reading:**


**Week 8 (Mar 13): Spring Break**

**Week 9 (Mar 20): Musical Borrowing and Copyright, Part 2: Traditional Musics, Ownership, and Authorship**

**Readings:**
- Specific cases in the news (short news articles)
  - “Happy Birthday” lawsuit:
  - “This Land is Your Land” lawsuit:
  - “We Shall Overcome” lawsuit:

**Week 10 (MAR 27): Hip Hop and Sampling**
• **Readings:**
• **Film:** *Copyright Criminals*, https://vimeo.com/9958864
• **Website (Peruse):** WhoSampled.com

**Week 11 (APR 3): Remix Culture and Mashups**
• **Readings:**
• **Film:** *RiP: A Remix Manifesto*, https://vimeo.com/8040182
• **Video:** History of the “Amen Break” documentary, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SaFTm2bcac

**Week 12 (APR 10): Copyright Infringement Case Focus: “Blurred Lines”***
***DUE: CASE BRIEF***

• **Readings:**
  o Begault, Heise and Peltier, “Analysis Criteria for Forensic Musicology”
  o “Blurred Lines” case documents: USC Music Copyright Infringement Resource http://mcir.usc.edu/inplay/Pages/williams.html
  o Other “Blurred Lines” case materials to be assigned.

**Week 13 (APR 17): Archival Ethics, Historical Recordings, Access, Preservation, and Repatriation***
***DUE: ONLINE MUSIC ARCHIVE PRESENTATION***
• **Readings:**

**Further Reading/Exploration:**


***DUE: MUSIC STREAMING PLATFORM***

**Readings:**


**Specific Cases in the News:**

- **David Lowery (Camper van Beethoven, Cracker) and the Spotify fight:**

- **Flo and Eddie vs. Satellite Radio, pre-1972 Recordings and Royalties**

- **Fair Play Fair Pay Act of 2015**


***DUE: SPOTIFY DIARY***
• **Readings:**
  o Eric Drott, *Spotify and Surveillance*

**Week 16 (May 8): ***DUE: FINAL PROJECTS*****