

ENG 363-01
Spring 2021
MWF 12:00-12:50
Professor Pauley

Copyright in the Digital Age



What does it mean to own a book—not just a *copy* of a book, but the right to produce copies of it in the first place?

Why does the estate of Marvin Gaye get about half a cent any time somebody streams “Blurred Lines”, but Clyde Stubblefield never saw a dime from the appearance of samples of “Funky Drummer” in more than 1,600 tracks by artists ranging from Public Enemy to Ed Sheeran?

If you’re a creator, to what extent can you draw on work that’s come before you for inspiration? What protections do you have for your own work, once it’s out in the world?

Copyright is a legal framework meant to recognize and secure intellectual property. But some have argued that our current copyright system stifles creativity by keeping works out of the public domain, where they could be used as inspiration for *new* creative works, or as fodder for remixes and mashups.

This class will explore the meanings, history, uses, and abuses of copyright. How did ideas of “literary property” emerge in the age of the printing press? Can anyone own art or ideas? How have questions of copyright shifted and altered as the means of copying have shifted from mechanical to digital?

This course fulfills the “Professional Experiences” requirement in the English major’s Creative Writing concentration. The course also can be applied to the “Multimedia Writing, Form and Analysis” concentration in the New Media Studies major.”