



U.S. Copyright Law

Spring 2024

INFO 4940 / 5940, Section 002

Faculty Name(s): Mike Priehs

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Faculty Office Hours: Olin Library 218, by appointment

Credits and Credit Hour Options: 3.0 Credits, Letter Grade

- *INFO 4940: Undergraduate Students; INFO 5940: Graduate Students*

Prerequisites/Corequisites: Prerequisites/Corequisites: None.

Time and Location: This course meets in Snee Hall 1120 on Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:25 p.m. – 2:40 p.m., for a total of 24 sessions.

Course Description

INFO 4940 / 5940 – Special Topics in Information Science

This 3-credit course will provide a detailed look at U.S. copyright law with an emphasis on information technologies. Copyright is a complex legal concept that is especially relevant in an age of digital information. Through lectures, readings, discussions, and assignments, students will examine and assess the ways in which the U.S. copyright system both encourages and regulates creative expression.

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, a student will be able to:

- Explain how the copyright system in the United States functions, including the purpose, mechanics, duration, exclusive rights, and limitations.
- Describe historical trends in copyright and the impact of multilateral treaties on copyright globally.
- Differentiate and describe the various theories of copyright.

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. Each week will include new readings. These readings are all open access, meaning the student will not need to purchase additional course materials. Each weekly reading will be shared on Canvas with links to the freely accessible materials.

Method of Assessing Student Achievement

- **Basis of Grade Determination:** Class participation (10%), reflective writings (20%), mid-term exam (30%), final exam (40%).
- **Grading Scale:**

Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent	Letter	Percent
A+	97-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A	93-96%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%
						F	0-59%

Course Management

- **Academic Integrity**
 - Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values, and the values most essential to an academic community are grounded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations, but in all University relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of University resources. Consult the Cornell Code of Academic Integrity for further information:
<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm>
- **Student Disability Accommodations**
 - Students with Disabilities: Your access in this course is important to me. Please request your accommodation letter early in the semester, or as soon as you become registered with Student Disability Services (SDS), so that we have adequate time to arrange your approved academic accommodations.

- Once SDS approves your accommodation letter, it will be emailed to both you and me. Please follow up with me to discuss the necessary logistics of your accommodations.
 - If you are approved for exam accommodations, please consult with me at least two weeks before the scheduled exam date to confirm the testing arrangements.
 - If you experience any access barriers in this course, such as with printed content, graphics, online materials, or any communication barriers, reach out to me or SDS right away.
 - If you need immediate accommodation, please speak with me after class or send an email message to me and SDS at sds_cu@cornell.edu.
- If you have, or think you may have, a disability, please contact Student Disability Services for a confidential discussion: sds_cu@cornell.edu or visit sds.cornell.edu to learn more.
- **Mental Health and Well-Being**
 - Your health and wellbeing are important to me. There are services and resources at Cornell designed specifically to bolster undergraduate, graduate, and professional student mental health and well-being. Remember, your mental health and emotional well-being are just as important as your physical health. If you or a friend are struggling emotionally or feeling stressed, fatigued, or burned out, there is a continuum of campus resources available to you: <https://mentalhealth.cornell.edu/get-support/support-students>. Help is also available any time day or night through Cornell's 24/7 phone consultation (607-255-5155). You can also reach out to me, your college student services office, your resident advisor, or Cornell Health for support.
- **Use of Artificial Intelligence**
 - You may use AI programs (e.g. ChatGPT) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant Cornell policies.

Course Schedule:

Week, date	Topic	Assignments Due
Weeks 1 & 2	Foundations of U.S. Copyright Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Originality • Idea vs. Expression • Multilateral Treaties 	
Week 3	Multilateral Treaties Fairness Theory / Personality Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Fairness • Personality 	Reflection #1
Week 4	Subjects of Copyright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literary Works • Dramatic Works • Music • A/V Works • Fiction Visual & Architectural Works	
Week 5	Welfare Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilitarian Framework • Incentive Theory Applications / Assessment February Break (Feb. 24-27)	Reflection #2
Week 6	Authorship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sole Authorship • Joint Authorship Works for Hire	
Week 7	Mechanics of Copyright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalities • Duration • Protection 	Mid-Term Examination
Week 8	Rights: Reproduction and Modification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproduction • Appropriation Derivative Works	

Week 9	Rights: Distribution, Performance, and Display <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution • Public Performances Exceptions & Limitations	Reflection #4
Week 10	Fair Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Current Status • Other Approaches 	
Week 11	Spring Break (Mar. 20 - Apr. 7)	
Week 12	Cultural Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premise • Implications • Concerns 	Reflection #5
Week 13	Secondary Liability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Liability • Dual-Use Technology • Technological Protection 	
Week 14	Infringement and Remedies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable Relief • Damages Criminal Penalties	Reflection #6
Week 15	Review	
Week 16	Final Exam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Home 	Final Exam

NOTE: This schedule is subject to change as needed during the semester.