USEFUL TIPS

**Copyright for Students**

Generally, students have much more freedom to use copyrighted material than faculty and staff.

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

**Do I need to get permission to use copyrighted work in my class assignments?**

No, you are free to use copyrighted works in your class assignments without getting permission from the copyright owner.

**Plagiarism**

**What is the difference between copyright and plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is *an ethical breach*.

* Plagiarism is a violation of the University’s Honor Code. Plagiarism is academic dishonesty and could ruin your academic career. ***Note on essay mills:* Submitting someone else’s work (even if you paid them for it) is plagiarism AND an honor code violation.**
* There are no exceptions to plagiarism.

Copyright is *a legal concept*.

* If you infringe someone’s copyright, you could be liable for money damages or asked to remove the infringing content.
* There are several exceptions that allow you to use someone else’s work without permission.

To avoid plagiarism, you should *attribute* anything you use.

**Attribution = creator, title of work, source, and license**

[**For more information about avoiding plagiarism**](https://guides.library.txstate.edu/avoiding-plagiarism)

**What is self-plagiarism?**

Self-plagiarism is when you use your own previously published work without disclosure or attribution. To avoid self-plagiarism, disclose your work, including your thesis or dissertation, when you submit your work to journals for publication. Many journals now use plagiarismdetection software, which will find your thesis or dissertation because your thesis or dissertation will be online. If you fail to disclose at the time of submitting your article, you may be rejected by that publication.

**Who owns the copyright in your work?**

You own the copyright in anything you create for a course.

If you find your work republished without permission on someone else’s web page, you can request the web page take down your work.

If you have created work with other students or with faculty, they may share ownership with you.

**How do I get permission to use a graph, figure, photograph, or table in my thesis or dissertation?**

**THESIS AND DISSERTATION**

You may be able to rely on the right to fair use to use someone else’s work in your thesis or dissertation. However, if you intend to publish from your thesis or dissertation, your publisher will require permission to use copyrighted material in your work.

The easiest way to get permission is to send an email to the copyright owner. For a journal article, this is usually the editor of the journal. For a book, you should contact the publisher. For a photograph, contact the photographer directly. In your email include the following:

* Title of your thesis or dissertation
* Briefly describe your work and the context in which you use their work
* Identify the work you want to use (a citation)
* The estimated date your thesis and dissertation will be released
* Let them know that your thesis or dissertation will be uploaded to Digital Collections and will be available for worldwide, online access and discovery
* Ask for permission to use the work in your work
* Include a request that, if they are not the copyright owner or agent, they let you know who to contact for permission

**Embargo**

If you plan on publishing a book or series of journal articles based on the same work in your thesis or dissertation, you have the option to embargo your thesis or dissertation for a year or two. The embargo will keep the electronic version of the thesis or dissertation from being released online. For more information about embargo options, contact the Graduate College and your advisors before submitting your thesis or dissertation.

**For more information and questions about copyright, contact the** [**Copyright Officer**](mailto:copyrightoffice@txstate.edu?subject=TRACS%20Best%20Practices)**, Stephanie Towery or check out the resources available at the Texas State** [**Copyright Office**](http://www.library.txstate.edu/about/divisions/research-learning/copyright.html) **and the** [**Copyright Research Guide**](http://guides.library.txstate.edu/copyright)**.**