

S. Sloane

Fall 2012

E633: Special Topics in Discourse Studies: Writing and Ownership

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All kinds of imitation, and all imitations whatever, sink into that class of poetry which we read to ladies at a tea-table; and then give to the servant, that he may not burn his hands in carrying off the tea-urn. –Alexander Fraser Tytler (1790)

Nothing, said [these tasteless lawyers], can be an object of property, but which has a corporeal substance; the air and the light, to which they compare an Author's ideas, are common to all; ideas in the MS state were compared to birds in a cage; while the Author confines them to his own dominion, none but he has a right to let them fly; but the moment he allows the bird to escape from his hand, it is no violation of property in any one to make it his own. – Sir James Burrows' "Reports on the Question Concerning Literary Property" –qtd. In Disraeli 30 (1776).

[Criminal authors are marked by] a fundamental detachment – of writing from context, of speaking from voice, of a proper name freed from its body in forgery, and of a body freed from its proper name in imposture. – Susan Stewart (1994).

In principle a work of art has always been reproducible. –Walter Benjamin

Why is some plagiarism art, and other plagiarism is a crime? What does it mean to take someone else's identity and write her story as your own? What is the relationship between Kathy Acker's literary experiments and the original *Don Quixote*? How do we decide what is intellectual property; how do we know when to cite someone else's words or ideas? E633 Writing and Ownership takes an historical view of patterns of plagiarism, notions of intellectual property, and conventions of authorial attribution and borrowings since the passage of the first copyright statute to the new Access to Knowledge Movement (A2K). Grounded in contemporary theories of rhetoric and composition, the course will explore the legal nature of authorship, evolving ideas of intellectual (particularly literary) property and ownership, the detachment of authorial name from authorial composition, patterns of textual appropriation, and even forgery. Starting with literary examples of borrowings, appropriations, and meditations on authorship and ownership, we will then move to Stewart's discussion of authorial practices we might call plagiarism today. We will follow up with rhetoric and composition's views of pluralizing plagiarism, and we will whisk forward to the twenty-first century's amalgams and pastiches of online texts, music piracies, fabricated memoirs, plagiarized images, verbal thefts, poetic reworkings of existing texts, and storytelling chicanery in online fiction generators. A rich and unfolding topic for a course, Writing and Ownership is itself constructed within a cultural moment that questions paper-based conventions of authorial attribution, and studies the anonyms, allonyms, pseudonyms and copyright violations committed by lads of the Edinburgh literati to platforms from Flickr to Facebook.

Required Texts

Pluralizing Plagiarism (Howard and Robillard)
Labyrinths (Borges)
Access to Knowledge in the Age of Intellectual Property (Krikorian and Kapczynski)
Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation (Stewart)
Don Quixote: A Novel (Acker)
Don Quixote (Cervantes)
Selections assigned by your professor

Course Requirements

This class is reading intensive. You should plan on reading at least 150 pages a week for the duration of this course. Complete the reading assignments on time, and come to class prepared for discussion. That means carefully reading the texts, marking specific pages and passages for discussion, looking up any words you don't know, and coming to class with questions and/or observations about the day's reading. As a class community, we will all help each other understand the readings and figure out their significance to questions of who owns what writing and how.

Forum Postings (20%)

Twenty percent of your course grade will be determined by weekly postings to our Writing Studio class Forum. In order to receive full credit for this portion of the class, you will complete **FIFTEEN** Forum Postings. The following guidelines apply:

- Post a thoughtful, competently written, one-page response to one of the weekly prompts by midnight on Thursday.
- Read and post brief responses to at least two of your classmates' postings by midnight on Sunday. Make sure that your responses are as thoughtful and considerate as any you would wish to receive. No credit will be given for postings that are disrespectful, inattentive, or otherwise inappropriate.
- Prompts will be posted directly before class every Monday evening.
- Forum Postings will be graded on their complexity of thought, demonstration of knowledge and understanding of previous course readings, and clarity and creativity in the kinds of responses. Completing 15/15 postings of sufficient quality will earn a grade of 100%, 14/15 postings will earn a grade of 93.3%, 13/15 will earn a grade of 86.7%, etc. Postings that are poorly written, insubstantial, or inappropriate will earn no credit. Failure to consistently respond to your classmates' postings will have additional negative effects on your grade.

Presentations (20%)

Each student will give two presentations of 20 minutes about one of the articles under study. Your presentation should guide other students to the history of the work and its author, the importance you see in it and why, and its rhetorical structures. In the past, students have included group activities, hand-outs, quizzes, games, Power Point and Prezi presentations, or YouTube clips (short ones) and photographs. Be creative and responsible, combining innovative presentations with a seriousness of purpose.

Participation (20%)

This class will demand a presence, attentiveness, and collaboration that may not be familiar to students. Students are expected to contribute to class discussions by offering thoughtful remarks, referring to specific passages and phrases in the book under discussion, and by completing in-class writing assignments with the same attention to detail. At the beginning of the semester we will start to go over some of the basic descriptions of the structure of narratives and how to read rhetorically. We will also cover some basic feminist theories and reader-response theories of reading and writing. By the end of the semester, students are expected to know these terms and to apply them to the work under discussion.

Drafts and Final Paper (40%)

Each student is required to write a long paper for this class on a topic of his or her own choosing, related to writing and ownership. Creative work is certainly allowed, but it must be asking a question about writing and ownership or presenting an argument or making a case about some point in writing and ownership debates. The professor must approve all topics in advance. More details about the drafts leading up to the final draft will be available in the course handout on this set of assignments. See the week-by-week schedule for due dates.

Grading

The University uses +/- grading on final grades, and thus the grades in this class will incorporate +/- calculations on a 4.0 scale where:

A+ = 4.0; A = 4.0; A- = 3.667; B+ = 3.334; B = 3.00; B- = 2.667; C+ = 2.334; C = 2.00; D = 1.00; F = 0.00

Excessive absences override all these noted percentages for class assignments.

Honor Pledge

At the end of every assignment you turn in, you must write the Colorado State University Honor Pledge by hand: *"I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance."*

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all classes. However, it is my experience that sometimes life does take an unexpected turn, and that it can be unreasonable to expect a student to miss no classes in a single semester. Therefore, my attendance policy is this: students may miss up to *the equivalent of one week's worth of class, which is ONE CLASS ONLY*, no questions asked. You should use this absence for sickness, broken limbs, weddings, funerals, or to take a mental health day. **Your final grade will go down 10% for each additional class you miss, with the only exceptions to be determined on a case-by-case basis, and then only if you have made *prior* arrangements with your instructor.** Reasonable accommodation will be made to allow individuals to observe their established religious holidays. Such accommodation, in the case of a student, might be the rescheduling of an exam or giving a make-up exam, altering the time of the student's presentation, releasing a graduate assistant from teaching or research responsibilities, for example. Please see your professor in advance to alert her to the need for such accommodation.

Writing Center

Students who wish to use writing center resources may either visit the physical location, Eddy 06, or visit its extensive website: <http://writing.colostate.edu>. The CSU Writing Center is a free service offered to all members of the CSU community. Students, faculty, and staff all use the service, and it is *not* solely for those who have learning disabilities, are inexperienced writers, or have been required to use the center by their instructors. *Students of all levels and abilities use the CSU Writing Center.* While the students who work at our writing center will not proofread for you, they will work *with* you on any other aspect of the writing process, from brainstorming to polishing the final draft.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Provisions for alternative testing arrangements and other accommodations are readily available to those students who have *written documentation* of their disabilities. Please see your instructor outside of regular class time immediately upon your enrolling in the class to discuss these services or any disability you may have for which you are requesting accommodation.

Many thanks in advance for your candor relating especially to hearing disabilities or visual impairment – we will shift the class assignments to accommodate your needs, as much as is possible.

See your instructor with any questions about disability accommodations.

Week by Week Readings

Unit One: Literary Reflections on Writing and Ownership

What does literature suggest about how we might think about writing and ownership? What does Borges tell us about the relationships among readers, writers, and texts, and how historical context matters? What does Kathy Acker show us about where we draw the line between appropriate and inappropriate borrowings?

August 20 *Class Introduction: Rhetoric, Poetics, and Plagiarism*

Labyrinths: "Borges and I" (in-class handout)

August 27 **Read:** *Article from The History of the Book ("Copyright and the Creation of Literary Property," handed out in the previous class) and the following selections from Labyrinths:*

"An Invitation" by William Gibson, starting page xi.
"Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," starting on page 36.
"The Circular Ruins," starting on page 45.
"The Library of Babel," starting on page 51.
"The Secret Miracle," starting on page 88.

September 3 **NO CLASS (UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY)**

September 10 **Read:** *Borges and Cervantes. We will discuss the following selections today:*

In Labyrinths:

"Partial Magic in the Quixote," starting on page 193.
"A Note on (toward) Bernard Shaw," starting on page 213.
"Parable of Cervantes and the Quixote," starting on page 242.
"A Problem," starting on page 244.
"Everything and Nothing," starting on page 248.

In Don Quixote: *From the beginning of book to the end of Chapter XVIII.*

September 17 **Read:** *Acker, Cervantes*

In Acker's Don Quixote: A Novel: *"The First Part of Don Quixote: The Beginning of Night" (the beginning through page 37).*

In Cervantes' Don Quixote: *From Chapter XIX to the end of Part Three (Chapter XXVII, pages 146-243)*

September 24 **Read:** *Acker, Cervantes*

In Acker's Don Quixote: A Novel: Part II through the end of the book.

In Cervantes' Don Quixote: From Chapter XXVIII to Chapter XXXV (pages 247-337).

WRITING DUE: BRING TWO-PAGE PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PROJECT

Unit Two: Historical Questions and Examples of Plagiarism, Authenticity, and Representation

What are some historical precedents to the kinds of imposture, forgeries, and plagiarism possible today on the Web? How is authenticity understood in different historical contexts? What does it mean to represent something, what are the mimetic relationships among what is told, what is imagined, and what is?

October 1 Read: Crimes of Writing

Introduction to Crimes of Writing, starting on page 3.

"Psalmanazar's Others," starting on page 31.

"Notes on Distressed Genres," starting on page 66.

October 8 Read: Crimes of Writing

"Scandals of the Ballad," starting on page 102.

"The Birth of Authenticity in the Progress of Anxiety: Fragments of an Eighteenth-Century Daydream," starting on page 132.

"Exogamous Relations: Travel Writing, the Incest Prohibition, and Hawthorne's Transformation," starting on page 173.

October 15 Read: Crimes of Writing

"Ceci Tuera Cela: Graffiti as Crime and Art," starting on page 206.

"The Marquis de Meese," starting on page 235.

"Coda: Reverse Trompe L'Oeil/The Eruption of the Real," starting on page 273.

WRITING DUE: COMPLETE ROUGH DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER, 10+ pages.

Unit Three: Contemporary Questions about Plagiarism, Authenticity, and Representation Within and Beyond the Classroom

What does it mean to plagiarize today, in an academic context? How is intellectual property being understood outside the academy today, in medical, activist, or developing world contexts, among others? What is the A2K movement and how does it understand intellectual property in all contemporary contexts? What does it mean to be "authentic" in a digital world, or to be an activist concerned with intellectual property rights?

October 22 **Read:** *Pluralizing Plagiarism* (complete book)

October 29 **Read:** *Access to Knowledge: In the Age of Intellectual Property*

“Preface,” starting on page 9.

“Access to Knowledge: A Conceptual Genealogy,” starting on page 17.

“Access to Knowledge as a Field of Activism,” starting on page 57.

“The Emergence of the A2K Movement: Reminiscences and Reflections of a Developing-Country Delegate,” starting on page 99.

November 5 **Read:** *Access to Knowledge: In the Age of Intellectual Property*

“The Revised Drug Strategy: Access to Essential Medicines, Intellectual Property, and the World Health Organization,” starting on page 127.

“IP World—Made by TNC, Inc.,” starting on page 197.

“The Idea of Access to Knowledge and the Information Commons: Long-Term Trends and Basic Elements,” starting on page 217.

“The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Book,” starting on page 277.

“Beyond Representation: The Figure of the Pirate,” starting on page 353.

November 12 **Read:** *Access to Knowledge: In the Age of Intellectual Property*

“Open-Access Publishing: From Principles to Practice,” starting on page 475.

“Back to Balance: Limitations and Exceptions to Copyright,” starting on page 517.

“Nollywood: How It Works—A Conversation with Charles Igwe,” starting on page 595.

“A Copyright Thriller versus a Vision of a Digital Renaissance,” starting on page 607.

“Social Mutations in the Future,” starting on page 613.

“Options and Alternatives to Current Copyright Regimes and Practices,” starting on page 627.

“The Golden Touch and the Miracle of the Loaves,” starting on page 633.

November 19 **NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING WEEK)**

Unit Four: Learning from Each Other

November 26 Class Presentations

December 3 Class Presentations

WRITING DUE: COMPLETE DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER, 15-20 pages, to be emailed to the professor by midnight on December 12.