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# Harvard's Copyright<sup>x</sup> Program

by Kailyn Middleton

While working in Resource Sharing the last three years, it has behooved me to have a general understanding of copyright. Having found it an interesting field for even longer, I was thrilled to learn about the [Copyright<sup>x</sup>](#) program offered every spring from Harvard Law School and Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society. The twelve-week course is completely free and open to anyone with the sole caveat that enrollment is limited. The course is taught through a combination of pre-recorded lectures by William Fisher, Professor of Intellectual Property Law at Harvard and creator of the Copyright<sup>x</sup> program; weekly readings; and a weekly synchronous Zoom class.

There are several affiliated courses, including a library-specific section taught in 2022 by Katie Zimmerman, Director of Copyright Strategy at the MIT Libraries. During the application process, I indicated that I work in a library, and the form provided space to state if I would like to be added to the library section. Although it was not a guarantee I would be selected for this section, or at all, I did get into the library-specific course, which I can attest is taught largely the same as the regular sections. The main difference was that this course spends two weeks on Fair Use rather than Rights Covered by Copyright. This is obviously much more pertinent to library work, but the drawback is that the Rights section spends one week covering two weeks of information: six recorded lectures and four required readings. This made for a very dense week, but the rest of the course was very well paced.

The lectures are updated as needed to properly reflect recent Supreme Court rulings and are generally very easy to follow. They range in length, but an average week's lectures usually total around an hour and a half. The readings are most often sections of copyright law and judicial opinions, which are often far fuller of snark and puns than I assumed they would be,<sup>1</sup> but also include news articles. The synchronous discussions were often the highlight of my week and really aided in solidifying the learning from each unit. Additionally, Katie created a Slack channel we could use to keep in touch between classes, and she has kept that open for us beyond the course. It is a treat to continue to network and also see the new happenings in copyright that my colleagues share.

The only assignment of the course is the final exam. This is optional, but passing it is required to receive the certificate. It is the same exam used in the version of this course taken by Harvard Law School students, but it was stressed that the pass rate is about the same between the two groups. Additionally, the Copyright<sup>x</sup> website [includes previous exam questions and sample answers](#), which I found incredibly helpful for practicing for the final. I had four days to complete the exam and could use any resources at my disposal as long as I did not consult another person. It was recommended that I set aside around eight hours to complete the exam, but I spent the majority of two days rewording my essays to squeeze as much information as possible into the word limit. I doubt most people will feel the need for this much time. The exams often pertain to relevant works or trends, which made reviewing and taking the exam surprisingly fun. After the exam, it took about a month to receive my grade and certificate.

Similarly, the wait time between registering and acceptance/rejection can be lengthy. The registration period for Copyright<sup>x</sup> is in fall. I registered for the course in late October but did not receive notification of acceptance until January - about two weeks before the start of the course. I recom-

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mend [signing up for the mailing list](#) to be reminded when registration opens. I cannot recommend this course highly enough to anyone interested in copyright with time to dedicate to a more traditional course schedule.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 I particularly recommend *Sony BMG Music Entertainment v. Tenenbaum* and *Lindsay v. The Wrecked and Abandoned Vessel R.M.S. Titanic*.