

### Optional Essay Questions for the Music and Copyright Course Mus 168/262G

1. “By primarily focusing on ownership patterns and the effects of the corporate ownership of culture, political economists of communication have often ignored many interesting questions that are raised when cultural texts (songs, television programs, etc.) become commodified and subject to intellectual property laws. Of course, the questions they ask are still very important . . . , but many times studies that employ a purely political economic analysis do not examine *cultural practice* to any great extent. When one looks beyond the political economy of cultural production . . . and examines *the location where culture is produced* (e.g., the day-to-day lived experiences of musicians, writers, etc.), a whole new set of questions emerge” (McLeod). Undertake a critical analysis of the issues raised in this statement in relation to themes discussed in class.
2. “The concept of “music” is one of the great smokescreens of cultural analysis. Within the field of “music and copyright” in particular, our use of the concept, in analysis, guides us away from asking too many politically-relevant questions and hinders us when we seek to challenge many of the foundational assumptions of copyright doctrine” (McCann). Undertake a critical analysis of the issues raised in this statement in relation to themes discussed in class.
3. “While copyright law and the ownership of intellectual property may be a confusing concept to many people, it is the lifeblood of many industries, a crucial part of the American economy, and a necessity to authors and producers of creative works. Many of the businesses that comprise the entertainment industry such as book publishing, motion pictures, computer software, and music are based on the ownership and use of copyrighted works.  
Copyright is absolutely crucial to the music industry. While music would certainly still exist without copyright, there could be no industry based on music without copyright. This is due to the fact that the main products of the music industry (songs and sound recordings) are forms of property that are protected by copyright. Without copyright, songwriters and music publishers could not own and derive their income from songs and artists and record companies could not own and derive their income from musical recordings” (Moser). Undertake a critical analysis of the issues raised in this statement in relation to themes discussed in class.
4. “By objectifying and reifying cultural forms – freezing the connotations of signs and symbols and fencing off fields of cultural meaning with “No Trespassing” signs – intellectual property laws may enable certain forms of political practice and constrain others” (Coombe). Undertake a critical analysis of the issues raised in this statement in relation to themes discussed in class.
5. Identify two circumstances in your life which you would consider relevant to issues of “music and copyright”. Undertake a comparative critical analysis of those circumstances and of your participation in those circumstances in relation to themes discussed in class.