The interactions of vernacular culture with institutional property regimes are currently the subject of intensive debate between corporations, nation-states, social movements (such as the Creative Commons), and intergovernmental organizations (such as UNESCO, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and the World Trade Organization). This seminar uses such debates as a starting point for considering the tensions between innovation and objectification in cultural processes under capitalism.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. General participation and advance posting of questions. Each student is expected to be present and prepared, ready to discuss the readings. Before 6 PM SUNDAY each student should post to the class listserv a set of questions or points for discussion in class arising from the readings.

2. Lead discussant assignment: 2 per quarter. Each participant will choose two of the weekly topics and present a ten-minute introduction to the main points and problematics of the assigned readings, with some background reading as relevant. You’ll write this up as a “cluster review” situating different scholarly perspectives on a given topic (ca. 5 pages double-spaced); this written version will be due in class when it is presented. There will be some flexibility as to the works covered, depending on student interest and expertise.

3. A research paper (ca. 10 pages, probably more if much exposition or presentation of text is required) on a case study related to the matter of the course. The topic can be adapted to your own interest and expertise, but the paper should show the depth of your engagement with the themes and readings of the course. We will ask you to present a ten-minute précis of your project to the class on the last day.

Office hours. My regular hours are Mondays 11-1 and Thursdays 11:30-1:30 in Dulles 308E. I am having the quarter from hell meeting-wise and may need to do some juggling, so it will be helpful if you can make an appointment in advance.

Absences. The success of a small class depends on the regular attendance of all participants, and in a once-weekly class it is vital for you to attend all meetings. I expect you to be in class except
in cases of meaningful illness or personal emergency. Please consult me if you are having difficulties.

**Plagiarism.** Although the course may problematize the concept, we live under an institutional regime that makes use of it, as follows. Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

**Disability resources.** The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307. If you require accommodation to do the work of the course, please let me know immediately.

**READINGS**

The following books have been ordered at SBX only:


The following book is out of stock at the publisher but I have found a discount copy on Amazon—please try to find it online and we will xerox as necessary:


Other readings are available either online or in pdfs which I will distribute. There is a vast additional literature, which you are urged to help the class explore; I will provide additional bibliography as the course progresses.

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Introductions and overview**

**Part I: Trajectories**
Week 2: The expansion of copyright


Week 3: Commodification and reappropriation in popular culture


Week 4: “Traditional culture”: from appropriation to incorporation


Week 5: Emerging regimes


**Week 6: Counter-movements: the creative commons and the altermondialistes**


Creative Commons. http://creativecommons.org/


**Part II: Frameworks**

**Week 7: Culture as process versus culture as object**


Week 8: Vernacular property and exchange


Week 9: Individual-Community-Network


**Week 10: Reproduction and Innovation**


