

Copyright Infringement 3 and Plagiarism via Election 2016

Compiled by Sheila Jones, CJE, JEA Mentor for her mentees – Fall 2016

Accusations of copyright infringement, especially as related to unauthorized use of music, and plagiarism against the presidential candidates and their family and campaigns have filled print, online, and social media throughout this past summer. The high school press often covers presidential elections using their community filter, and this year is no exception, but this year covering the election provides a two-fer: getting a close up view of copyright and plagiarism as well. The links below will give you an overview of the fracas that roiled up this summer.

If you are not well versed in copyright law and the legal and financial consequences of abusing it or just need a review, you might first want to check out my two previous webquests on copyright infringement. Go to www.jonesclassesonline.weebly.com, click on the “JEA Mentoring” tab on the left, and then click on “Mentoring Webquests” for PDFs of all previous mentee webquests.

[Personal note on politics in the journalism classroom: Colorado has a Student Freedom of Expression law that grants students the rights of free speech. Therefore, they are free to cover and comment on elections. I strongly believe they should. Using the news that these elections generate to teach journalism concepts, skills, and law and ethics is a great way to develop the critical thinking necessary for students both as citizens and as journalists – in this context law and ethics. In order to promote students’ critical thinking, I would play devil’s advocate to whatever points of view they espoused, getting them to examine many perspectives. I wanted their viewpoints to be taken for their own, not to be a reflection of my positions. Despite that, I did have a few accuse me of putting words in their mouths, but over the years my reputation for nonpartisanship grew, as did the students’ reputation for critical thinking, and their news reflected a variety of well thought out perspectives. This approach worked for me. Given the contentiousness of this election year, consider what you feel your role should be.]

A primer from NPR – “Music in Political Campaigns 101”

NPR discusses the ways in which politicians can legally use artists’ music and identifies three rules that govern legal use, but which also describe the legal pitfalls that can trip up campaigns.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/therecord/2012/02/29/147592568/music-in-political-campaigns-101>

Artists’ music video – “The Ultimate (Futile?) Statement Against Politicians Misusing Songs”

This article from the *Atlantic* magazine explains the background on the making of a “hammy music video” featuring artists such as Usher, Cindy Lauper, Josh Groban, and John Mellencamp, among others imploring politicians musically “Don’t Use Our Song.” It also includes an imbedded video of John Oliver introducing the video on his HBO show *Last Week Tonight*. Teens will love watching the satiric, yet hard-hitting, video, and you can use it to springboard to a classroom lesson/discussion on the serious topic of copyright infringement.

http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/07/john-oliver-dont-use-our-songs-hbo-usher-michael-bolton-heart/492854/?utm_source=atfb

Trump defies Queen’s request to stop using their music – CNN Money

Republican Presidential Candidate Donald Trump entered the convention stage to accept his nomination to the strains of Queen’s “We are the Champions” despite the group’s previous request that he stop using their music. This article does a good job of giving the background on their denied authorization, explains their position, and shows imbedded Tweets. <http://money.cnn.com/2016/07/19/media/queen-donald-trump-we-are-the-champions/>

Melania Trump Plagiarizes Michelle Obama

While a quick Google search will bring up numerous articles on the striking similarity between Melania Trump’s convention speech and Michelle Obama’s 2008 speech, I chose this Newsweek link because it provides the full speeches of each for comparison, along with an imbedded side-by-side video of each woman’s speech. Your students might gain a better understanding of what is considered plagiarism by analyzing the two speeches together.

<http://www.newsweek.com/melania-trump-michelle-obama-plagiarism-compare-speeches-full-text-481779>

Useful article and links from the Poynter Institute

The legendary Roy Peter Clark authors this look at the Melania Trump plagiarism ruckus. Click also on the link “An Editor’s Guide to Identifying Plagiarism.” This link will also take you to another link that is a **PDF flowchart on plagiarism**. I have attached this PDF to the email you receive as well. What I especially like about the flowchart is the way it distinguishes among different forms of plagiarism. In particular, at the top of the chart it defines “patchwriting,” which is a error that beginning journalists make. Error? Sin! You should definitely have a conversation about patchwriting with your students. <http://www.poynter.org/2016/welcome-to-post-plagiarism-america/422260/>. Here’s another quick Poynter tip sheet to use as well: <http://www.poynter.org/2016/4-guidelines-to-avoid-plagiarising-others-work/424853/>

An important resource for access to copyrighted photos, graphics, etc.

Many photos are free to use through Creative Commons. However, many photos students want to use of candidates and current events are copyrighted and can not be used legally. One available resource to high school publications at a charge is **mctcampus.com** offered through Tribune Media Services. I subscribed to this service when I was advising. At that time, membership involved a one-time charge with a small renewal fee each year. Their sales number and email are in the upper right hand corner of the homepage. As a member, you have a two-week window from the time the photos or content you want are listed to download for free and save. Their handbook explains the exact way you give credit for whatever content you publish. Great resource!