

Copyright for Students

STUDENTS: COURSE SHARING WEBSITES AND FILE SHARING

While you are a student at Ryerson University you receive content to assist in your instruction and help an instructor evaluate your work. This may come to you via Brightspace by D2L, a handout, via email or in the form of a course pack and other means of communication. This content may be material that is your instructor's own copyrighted work, or it may be material copyrighted to another author. You receive that material for the purpose of your own research and/or private study and/or education. This material should not be distributed to others without the appropriate authorization, and if you do so you could face consequences based on copyright or even academic misconduct issues.

WHY IS SHARING FILES I GET IN MY COURSE AN ISSUE?

In some cases this is your instructor's own work, which they own the copyright to, it can't be shared outside of your course. If the work that you share is tests, exams, or assignments it could put you at risk of being seen as contributing to academic misconduct under Ryerson's Academic Integrity policy.

In some cases the material supplied to you in the form of course readings is licensed content that can't be redistributed and/or is given to you only for your personal use for the purpose of the course.

WHAT ABOUT MY OWN NOTES?

If you make notes in your own words (non-verbatim) of an instructor's lecture, you own the copyright of these notes and can share this material, however if you make commercial use of this work, that could be questioned. If you record, copy and transcribe the exact words of a professor you do not own the rights to this copy, so can't share. Best practise is that you should always get permission from an instructor to record their lecture, or film them, or copy their exact words from emails or course communication and share outside of the course. As well, if you post short excerpts of an instructor's work to a non-commercial site, for a fair dealing purpose (such as criticism, review, education, news reporting) then you will need to cite and the use may qualify as fair dealing.

WHAT KIND OF PLACES SHOULD I BE CAREFUL ABOUT SHARING WORK TO?

There are commercial course sharing websites that invite students to share instructors work to get access to other course materials for free or pay a fee for access. If you do share material on these types of commercial sites you should make sure that you are only sharing notes made in your own words and not instructor's syllabi, handouts, tests, exams, assignments, transcripts or videos of lectures, Powerpoint slides, course readings, case studies or library materials etc.

Best practise is you should not share your course materials on the public Internet unless the material is your own notes, you are sure that your use qualifies as fair dealing, you have permission to do so, or the work is not covered by copyright.

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READ YOUR INSTRUCTOR'S SYLLABUS

Your instructor may have text in their syllabus that specifically asks you not to reshare their course materials. You should respect this request and not share material outside of that course. Also carefully read any information about Academic Integrity and what constitutes academic misconduct under Policy 60: Academic Integrity.

HOW POLICY 60 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY APPLIES.

Policy 60, the Ryerson University Academic Integrity Policy (<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>) defines academic misconduct as:

"Any behaviour that undermines the University's ability to evaluate fairly students' academic achievements, or any behaviour that a student knew, or reasonably ought to have known, could gain them or others unearned academic advantage or benefit, counts as academic misconduct."

Specific examples are given, including:

2.8 Unauthorized Use of Intellectual Property

Use of the intellectual property of others for distribution, sale or profit without the authorization of the owner of that material. This includes slides and presentation materials used in a class wherever the owner of those materials has not authorized further use.

2.10 Violations of Specific Departmental or Course Requirements

Instructors may, in order to encourage Academic Integrity, include additional specific requirements as long as these are consistent with this policy. Any additional requirements must be published in the course outline

This means that yes, Policy 60 Academic Integrity may apply if you as a student share your instructor's course materials, especially if your instructor specifically asks you not to do so, or if the material you share are tests, exams, and written assignments that are used in assessment.

Read more about Academic Integrity at Ryerson University here: <https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/>

CONTACT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

If you have questions about Academic Integrity and Filesharing please email: aio@ryerson.ca or fill out the form here: <https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/contact/>

For additional information, or for urgent requests, please call the Academic Integrity Office at 416 979 5000 x3273.

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