

University of Tennessee policy ([Board Policy BT0024](#)) is that instructors generally retain the copyright to the instructional materials that they produce for use in the classroom. This includes materials such as:

- course syllabi
- in-class handouts
- assignments
- Keynote, Powerpoint, and Prezi presentations, and similar material
- audio and/or video recordings posted to Canvas or other cloud-based repositories
- quizzes and exams (including practice quizzes) and their answer keys
- exam review guides and similar material
- guides to writing essays, lab reports, book reviews, etc.
- evaluation rubrics
- and much, much more

The main exception to this general rule is when the creation of instructional materials is specially commissioned, which might be the case, for example, if the materials were developed using grant or contract funds.

Because instructors retain the copyright to their instructional materials, they can control the distribution or redistribution of these materials. It is a violation of copyright law for a student to upload instructional materials to a third-party aggregator website, such as CourseHero or StudyBlue, without the instructor's permission.

To deter students from doing this, an instructor can affix a copyright statement to their instructional materials, and can also explain in the course syllabus that it is a violation of both copyright law and University policy for students to share these materials with others by uploading them to these websites.

The University of Tennessee policy that students violate when they do this is [University Policy IT0110](#), "Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources". To ensure that students know that they are bound by this policy, you may want to refer to it in your course syllabus. The relevant sections of the policy are quoted here:

2. Users WILL ...

k. Respect and honor the rights of other individuals with regard to intellectual property, privacy, freedom from harassment, academic freedom, copyright, and use of University resources

3. Users WILL NOT ...

e. Commit copyright infringement, including file sharing of video, audio, or data without permission from the copyright owner

5. Copyrights and Licenses

a. Violation of copyright law or infringement is prohibited by University policy and state and federal law. Any unauthorized use of copyrighted material, may subject the User to discipline as a violation of one or

more provisions of the general standard of conduct in the student handbook or to discipline under the Code of Conduct in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures

A sample copyright statement that instructors can affix to their instructional materials is:

- For materials that were created new for the current course: © Robert Hinde, 2020
- For materials that were revised over multiple years: © Robert Hinde, 2018 to 2020

The [Office of the General Counsel](#) can advise instructors regarding the “takedown” process that can be used to request removal of copyrighted material from websites such as CourseHero and StudyBlue.

Instructors are welcome to use the following statement (or an adaptation thereof) in their course syllabi to deter students from copyright infringement:

The instructor of this class owns the copyright to the syllabus, handouts, assignments, quizzes, and exams associated with the class. All presentations developed by the instructor, as well as the instructor’s lectures, are also protected by copyright, whether these presentations and lectures are delivered live in-class, shared through Zoom or other videoconference platforms, or uploaded to Canvas or similar sites.

Sharing any of this material without the written permission of the instructor is a violation of copyright law, and is therefore also a violation of the University’s policy on acceptable use of information technology resources (UT policy number IT0110). That policy states that students will not commit copyright infringement, “including file sharing of video, audio, or data without permission from the copyright owner”, and that file sharing is a violation of the university’s student code of conduct. I will report all such violations to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.