“Treatment” for a new course: “Authors and Owners:”

Essay 1—(Draft Due week 3 of class): close analysis of the front matter of a Shakespeare’s First Folio— Assignment handed out in class on first day.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 1 (to be used in class):
Pick a word in one of the texts of the First Folio—one that appears to be used strangely, or whose definition you do not know, and look it up in the Oxford English Dictionary. Then write a brief paragraph on how this word affects your interpretation of text you have selected.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 2 (to be used in class):

a) Take class field trip to Houghton Library to look at various examples of printed books—Shakespeare quartos and folios, Donne poems, Jonson Folio, 18th- and 19th-century editions of Shakespeare; Blake’s illuminated manuscripts; editions of Lyrical Ballads, etc. Also read chapter provided from Shakespeare and the Book by David Kastan.

b) Pick three passages from at least two texts in the front matter of the First Folio that you think could generate interesting discussion or essay questions about authorship and ownership. Quote and cite each passage according to CMS format and briefly reflect on it, identifying the questions it raises and explaining its importance. Then come up with an interesting essay question that extended analysis of the passages you have selected might address.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 3 (to be used in class):
Read and mark up a model essay on The Declaration of Independence, reconstructing the question from which the thesis or central point might have derived, outlining the structure of the essay, naming two elements used effectively, and finding examples of their effective use.

Essay 2 (draft due week 6 of class)—Contextual analysis: examining a situation (a dispute or problem) involving authorship through the lens of a theory about authorship (Frye, Barthes, or Foucault) or examining a theory of authorship through the lens of a situation (a dispute or a problem) involving authorship.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 1 (to be used in class):

a) Find a term, in the excerpt from The Anatomy of Criticism, The Death of the Author, or What is an Author? that you find particularly difficult or confusing. Explain why it is difficult or confusing. Is the writer making an assumption that others would not? Using a term in a strange or ambiguous way (how strange, how ambiguous)? Using the term metaphorically? or what?

b) Summarize all three theoretical texts (one paragraph each), making sure to say what agenda and argument are, and what kinds of evidence are being considered.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 2 (to be used in class):

a) With a theoretical text from exercise 1 in mind, select a case from among the three or four provided (e.g. Helen Keller, Joe Biden, Jayson Blair, etc.), and formulate a question that you think should be addressed, with available evidence, in a 5-7 page essay (1 paragraph).

b) Explain how or why at least ONE of the theoretical texts considered in Exercise 1 might be relevant for this essay (1 paragraph).

C) Study a Model essay (as above)—perhaps on the discussion of Levinas’s “face of the other” model for ethics in the context of ethical behavior on the Internet.

Essay 3 (draft due week 10 of class): Multi-Source Essay—craft an argument taking a position in ongoing debates over copyright law.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 1 (to be used in class):

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Skim all of the cases supplied online to see what they are about, and how they are decided. Write a 1-sentence summary of each, and be prepared to elaborate for 30 seconds to 1 minute in class, raising any questions you might have about the case.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 2 (to be used in class):

a) Pick one case among those supplied by the instructor, or from somewhere else (if you find one from somewhere else, you must supply it in full to the entire class), and find a place in it that is particularly problematic, or where the reasoning of the decision is particularly difficult to understand. Quote as much as you need to of the passage; then, in a paragraph, say what is interesting, problematic, or in need of further explanation about the passage.

b) List at least three sources, from those I have supplied, or from elsewhere, that might be pertinent to this problem. Summarize the source, providing enough context so that one who is unfamiliar with it might know the essential facts about it, and explain why would be pertinent to the problem. Cite all sources properly.

c) Use your work in this exercise to formulate and write down the draft of an essay question.

Exercise (or Response Paper) 4 (to be used in class)

Study a model essay (this time on the topic at hand). Read an article by Peter Jaszi—“On the Author Effect: Contemporary Copyright and Collective Creativity,” and do the following:

a) State the thesis or central point.

b) Outline the structure of the excerpt in a sentence or two.

c) Describe, in a sentence or two, the way in which the writer establishes AGENDA at the outset.

d) Pick a paragraph of Jaszi’s analysis of the Feist case, the Rogers case, or the Childress case that you find particularly deft as analysis, and, in a sentence or two, explain why you think it works.

e) In a sentence or two, evaluate the effectiveness of the argument as a whole.

Analysis of Film in terms of the theme of authorship (Draft Due Week 12 of Class)—Shakespeare in Love, The Girl with the Pearl Earring, Amadeus, or Sylvia.

Exercise 1 (to be presented in class)—Read excerpt from Timothy Corrigan’s *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*. Select an episode of 5 minutes or less from one film—one that seems in some way problematic or contrary to what one might expect. Screen this in class, using it to justify a question you formulate about the representation of authorship in the film. Take questions.