Remix culture can be defined as a set of activities, practices, and artistic movements centered around the creative use, re-use, juxtaposing and innovative (re)combining of existing media and information. Within contemporary contexts, the term remix is most often associated with its digital iterations—including video mash-ups and the use of music sampling in hip hop. However, the cultural and philosophical origins of remix culture pre-date the digital revolution, and its basic principles and practices have a long and important history as tools of political resistance, critique and subversion.

Interest in—and engagement with—remix culture is growing, and can now be found across a wide range of academic and institutional contexts, from public libraries and classrooms, to courtrooms and museums. Youth programs, such as the Chicago Public Library’s Youmedia project, increasingly incorporate remixing as a key skill set for entering into participatory culture and developing digital literacies. Meanwhile, the social, political, ethical and legal implications of remix culture, which draws heavily if not primarily on existing (i.e. published and copyrighted) content, are frequently at the center of broader debates about the nature and value of digital culture, cultural ownership, citizenship and authority in the information age.

In this course, we will approach remix culture from many perspectives: as a genre, as an aesthetic, as an analytic framework, as a set of existing practices, and as a sort of cultural movement. We will examine core concepts and practices involved in remix culture(s), focusing on the ways in which these practices implicate issues and questions that are central to developing a better understanding of the information society: from the alleged rise of piracy and plagiarism in the digital age, to growing concerns about the enclosure of the commons, to enduring hopes about the potential democratization of cultural production and distribution. We will examine some of the theories and academic discussions that have now emerged around remixing, many of which make important contributions to theories of postmodernity and the significance of pastiche and bricolage within late capitalism, not only within the contexts of art, self-expression and identity, but also within political movements, counter-hegemonic actions and technological innovations. We will explore arguments by key critics and champions of remix culture, and discuss its impact on traditional concepts of authorship, ownership, creativity and originality—concepts that hitherto have provided much of the foundation upon which popular conceptualizations of “mass culture” (and a significant amount of cultural policy) often rest.

The course design revolves heavily around experiential learning. Students in this course will take part in a collaborative “remixing” of the syllabus, determining the order in which the weekly topics will be examined, and thereby having a significant impact on their own learning trajectories and how themes are paired and juxtaposed within lectures and class discussions. Students will actively participate in course delivery, in the form of monthly film screenings, for which the context and discussion will be determined as student-led group projects. Lastly, the course includes opportunities for students to
engage in an innovative form of collaborative, scholarly remixing, through an experimental assignment design in which the theories and analytic frameworks discussed in class can be applied, tested and problematized first hand.

Topics to be covered in this course will include:
- The relationship between derivative works and creativity
- Questions of authorship, ownership, copyright and the commons
- Emerging theories about remix culture and transmedia intertextuality
- The function and centrality of “remixing” within academic research
- The role of participatory culture/fandom in digital (hegemonic and grassroots) cultures
- The politics of remix and potential for subversion, rebellion, re-appropriation and critique

Goal and Objectives
- Explore the idea of remix as an analytic framework found and applicable across a wide variety of contexts.
- Explore the role of remix culture and associated issues, opportunities and challenges within information studies and professions.
- Examine and problematize current law/regulation and common (popular) assumptions pertaining to remix, such as copyright, fair dealing, creative commons and criminality.
- Develop a better understanding of the role and importance of the author and the bricoleur within contemporary, and especially digital, media, culture, art and society.
- Situate the debate around remix within broader debates and controversies pertaining to digital culture, including issues of information access, transparency, cultural imperialism, enclosure.
- Formulate strategies for properly incorporating remix into academic and professional practice.

Format
Weekly lectures will be delivered seminar-style with an emphasis on class participation and discussion, incorporating in-class exercises and guest lectures.

Monthly screenings and panel presentations (including inter-panelist discussion and Q&A)

Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites. The course is open to both Master's and PhD students.

Course Materials
Required:

Recommended

**NOTE:** Additional required and recommended readings available online (see schedule for details).
Screenings: To be held in Media Commons Room 1 (Robarts, 3rd floor)
• Feb. 9, 3-6pm: *RIP: A Remix Manifesto* (2009) Dir. Brett Gaylor
• Mar. 8, 3-6pm: *Rebirth of a Nation* (2010) Dir. DJ Spooky
• Mar. 29, 4-6pm: *Sita Sings the Blues* (2008) Dir. Nina Paley

Additional Sites of Interaction:
• Course blog: http://inf2320remixculture.blogspot.ca/
• Twitter hashtag for this course: #INF2320
• Students will be expected to join online class groups as they emerge/in association with group panel projects (e.g. Youtube, Pinterest, Tumblr)

Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Remix the Syllabus</em></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Jan. 19 + Mar.1</td>
<td>Participation in an in-class collaborative activity (x2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mid-Term Essay</em></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Feb. 23</td>
<td>1,500 to 2,000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Term Paper: Remix the Mid-Term</em></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Apr. 11</td>
<td>3,500 to 4,500 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Presentation (“real time” and online components) and Discussion</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Once over the course of the semester</td>
<td>Active participation in a panel discussion organized around one of the screenings (10min presentation + Q&amp;A + creation of an online artifact)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment 1: Remix the Syllabus**
In-Class Activity (Jan. 19 (Week 2) and Mar. 1 (Week 7)): 10%
Collaborative activity where students get a chance to restructure the order and make additions to the weekly readings/lecture schedule, and come up with a fourth selection for the film screening series. Twice over the course of the semester (near the start and midway point) the class will break into small groups to discuss ways to transform (and ideally improve) the syllabus by adding to and/or re-ordering the reading schedule. Each group will come up with a change they would like to see implemented, which they will then present to the rest of the class. Groups will debate the merit of each change, and vote to either approve or reject. Grades will be given based solely on active participation in the activity (i.e. evaluation will not be based on the remix outcome).

**Assignment 2: Mid-Term Essay**
1,000 – 1,500 words (due Feb. 23 (Week 6)) 30%
Students will write a mid-term essay on the course-related topic of their choice. The essays should be between 1,500 – 2,000 words length, and follow the format of a discussion paper or argumentative essay, drawing on primarily academic sources and touching upon concepts and theories covered in the first 6 weeks of the course. Suggested (optional) topics for this assignment will be discussed during an in-class brainstorming sessions, which will be scheduled in advance. This paper will serve as a foundation text (or first draft) for the end of term paper.
Learning Objectives:
• To build and demonstrate a working knowledge of your term paper topic, including a clearly articulated familiarity with relevant issues, debates and controversies (where applicable).
• To demonstrate thoughtful, informed engagement with the course materials, by drawing upon and synthesizing key concepts explored in the readings, lectures, class discussions and individual course work completed in the first part of the semester
• To engage critically with the relevant theories, and establish your own stance or position on a specific topic (of relevance to the course)—one that is firmly grounded in the existing literature, supported by logical and balanced arguments, as well as illustrative examples.

Assignment 3: Term Paper (i.e. Remix the Mid-Term)
3,500 – 4,500 words (due Apr. 11 (Week 13)): 35%
Students will adopt a unique approach for this assignment, in keeping with the themes and issues discussed over the course of the semester, by writing a term paper that consists of a substantive “remix” of another student’s mid-term essay. The topic of the term paper must relate to the course in terms of the issues and arguments discussed, as well as in terms of the approach and structure.
Students will choose their own topic and Suggested (optional) topics for this assignment will be discussed during two in-class brainstorming sessions, which will be scheduled in advance.

Learning objectives:
• To demonstrate an ability to apply remix as an analytic (academic) framework.
• To demonstrate an ability to critically apply remix as a creative, aesthetic and/or literary approach.
• To demonstrate thoughtful, critical and informed engagement with both your source materials and your paper topic, that is grounded within relevant theories, previous research and social issues.
• To engage in innovative and ethical ways with notions of authorship and attribution.

Panel Presentation/Discussion/Online Artifact 25%
Students will sign up to participate in a group panel discussion organized around one of the monthly screenings (mandatory part of the course). The group will be in charge of introducing the film. Following the screening, the group will then present a series of individual, yet coordinated, “commentaries” (short presentations) on a particular aspect of the film, as it relates to the course and course readings. Each of the panel presentations will include time for an open discussion between panelists and with the audience. In addition to the panel itself, each group will collaborate in the creation of an online “companion” site that displays themes, questions and issues raised during the panel. This online artifact can include multi-media components, mash-ups or other creative elements.

Guidelines for Assignments
All assignments should be written as clearly and cleanly as possible (i.e. thoroughly proof read for typos, spelling and grammar, hanging sentences, etc.), in a formal but accessible academic language. The overall “look and feel” should be professional (i.e. no crumpled papers or faded printing). The required format for written assignments is as follows:
• Typed, 1.5 space, 11 or 12 point font, one-inch margins, page numbers in the upper or lower right hand corner. Double sided printing is fine, as long as it’s legible.
• Align paragraphs in a standard way and avoid superfluous indentation.
• The document must be stapled together – no loose pages, no paperclips.
• No cover page required, but be sure to include your name & student number on page 1.
• Total word count should be indicated at the end of the essay.
• Use of footnotes/endnotes is permitted, but these should be used sparingly.

NOTE: Assignments that do not meet a minimum standard (in terms of legibility, formatting and proof reading) will be returned for re-submission, with late penalties in full effect.
Referencing
The American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is the most commonly used in academic writing in the social sciences. I recommend that you use APA for this course, as it’s good to get used to the style that you will likely be using over the course of your graduate career (and beyond). That said, if you think you have a valid professional reason for using another style, you are invited to talk to the instructor at least two weeks before the assignment is due and request that an exception be made. Permission to use referencing styles other than APA will be granted on a case-by-case basis, but only to students who make arrangements in advance.

The key here is that quotes and sources must be properly and consistently cited, using:
(a) in-text citation (including author name(s), year and page number); and
(b) a full list of references or bibliography at the end of your paper.

This is a necessary component of academic writing, as well as a good safeguard against inadvertent forms of plagiarism. It is particularly crucial in this course, as attribution, author rights, copyright, moral rights and plagiarism are among the dominant themes and a key learning objective is demonstration of understanding and engagement with these very concepts (both in class and in your assignments).

Images and Multimedia Content
Students can (and probably should!) include mixed and multimedia content in their assignments as long as they follow the Canadian Copyright Act's current exceptions for fair dealing, in that the images must only be used for the purposes of criticism or review, and each work used must be accompanied by: (a) the source; and (b) the name of the author(s) (if given in the source).

Acceptable Secondary Sources
As graduate students, you are expected to use a majority of academic (i.e. peer reviewed) sources when writing your term paper. Students are very much allowed, but not at all limited, to use course readings and other sources referenced in lectures in their own papers. Additional sources and relevant journals that are recommended by the instructor are also acceptable. However, students are strongly encouraged to track down the resources that are best suited to their specific area of interest or inquiry, rather than rely too heavily on those provided in class. Media texts (books, comics, television episodes, films, videogames, etc.) should be used and referenced as needed, but must always be treated as artifacts of study and analyzed accordingly.

Late Papers
Unless a formal extension has been negotiated with the instructor in advance of the due date, late assignments (defined here as an assignment submitted after the deadline) will be penalized by one full letter grade per week (e.g. from A to A-), for a maximum of two weeks. After that point, late assignments will no longer be accepted. Late papers will not receive detailed feedback or comments.

Extensions
Extensions on assignments within the term must be negotiated in advance, and may require supporting documentation (e.g. doctor’s note). Students must email requests for extensions to the instructor at least 24 hours prior to the due date. Exceptions will only be made in extenuating circumstances. Extensions beyond the end of the term in which a course is taken are subject to the guidelines established by the School of Graduate Studies (Which can be found here: http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/track/extsn.htm).

Grading
Grading for this course will follow the iSchool’s official Guidelines to Grade Interpretation of letter grades, as well as the University’s policy on Graduate Grading and Evaluation Practices. These sources define grades in the A range as “excellent” and grades in the B range as “good.” Please refer
to the guidelines for detailed descriptions of these categories. Assignments will be graded and returned within 2-3 weeks of submission.

**Ground Rules**

Each student in this course is responsible for **keeping up with the course materials**, which includes (all) the required course readings, videos and websites, as well as topics, debates and concepts discussed in class. Students are expected to **attend lectures** and to take their own lecture notes (PowerPoint slides are a sad substitute for your own thoughts and observations). You are expected to **participate in class discussions**, and are encouraged to use your laptops/mobile devices during class to look up relevant information that will contribute to the discussion in a meaningful way. At all times, remember to **be respectful** of the instructor and of your classmates—turn off the sound on your computer AND phone, and do NOT browse sites that may be offensive or illegal, or that might be deemed irrelevant to the task of taking this course. Students should arrive on time and are expected to stay for the duration. If you miss a class, you are entirely responsible for obtaining any information or materials given in class, either from your classmates or online. Unauthorized recordings of the lectures are not permitted.

**Students with a Disability or Health Consideration**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach the instructor and/or the Accessibility Services Office (http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/) as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff is available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner arrangements are made - the quicker we can assist you.

**Writing Support**

The SGS Office of English Language and Writing Support provides free writing support to graduate students. Services are designed for both native and non-native speakers of English, and include non-credit courses, single-session workshops, individual writing consultations, and online resources. Students are encouraged to use these services as needed.

**Academic Integrity**

The iSchool has a strict zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism, as defined in section B.I.1. (d) of the University’s *Code of Behavior on Academic Matters*. Before you embark on your first writing assignment, please make sure that you:

- Consult the University’s site on Academic Integrity: http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/
- Acquaint yourself with the Code and Appendix “A” Section 2; http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm
- Review the material you covered in Cite it Right;
- Consult the site *How Not to Plagiarize*: http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize
## Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

| Week 1: | **Introducing Remix Culture**  
Overview of key terms (Web 2.0, UGC, mash-ups, remixes, etc.) and exploration of “remix” as genre and as analytic framework |
|---|---|

| Week 2: | **Questions of Authors and Authenticity**  
Changing notions of the author and the importance of the author, relationship(s) between authors, law and technology. |
|---|---|

| January Screening | **Kill Bill Volume 1** (2003) Dir. Quentin Tarantino  
Jan. 26 3-6pm in Media Commons Room 1 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panel Theme:</strong></td>
<td>Remixing Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panelists:</strong></td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Week 3: | **Creative Influence**  
The role and history of copying, derivative works and hommage within culture and in creative processes |
|---|---|
### Week 4: The Public Domain and the Commons
From public to creative, evolving notions of the “commons”

#### Readings

#### Recommended

### Week 5: Remix Theory and Transmedia Intertextuality

#### Readings

#### Recommended

### Week 6: Copyright and Fair Dealing Wars

#### Readings

#### Recommended
- *Bill C-11 – Revised Copyright Act of Canada* (2012) [e-book] [http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/402644](http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/402644)
### February Screening

Feb. 9 3-6pm in Media Commons Room 1

- **Panel Theme:** Legal Remix  
- **Panelists:** TBD

### Week 7: The Politics of Remix Technologies

Open source vs. anti-circumvention technologies, DRM, hacking and modding, ideologies and economic models

#### Readings

#### Recommended

### Week 8: Remixed the Public Sphere

Political, feminist, queer and other radical remixes

#### Readings

#### Recommended

### Week 9: The Global Remix Project

#### Readings

#### Recommended
- Blue Box Demo, interview with Gnawa M3allem Amlil (part of the “remix ←→ culture” project) [online]. Retrieved from [http://vimeo.com/70082965](http://vimeo.com/70082965)
### March Screening #1

**Rebirth of a Nation** (2010) Dir. DJ Spooky  
Mar. 8 3-6pm in Media Commons Room 1

**Panel Theme:**  
Remix Politics  
**Panelists:** TBD

### Week 10: Prosumption, Fandom and Free Labour (UGC)

**Readings**  

**Recommended**  

### Week 11: Cultural Rights and Moral Rights

**Readings**  

**Recommended**  
### Week 12: *Multiple Literacies and Remix as a 21st century skill*


### March Screening #2

- **Sita Sings the Blues** (2008) Dir. Nina Paley  
  **Mar.29 4-6pm in Media Commons Room 1**

| Panel Theme: | Remix Rebels |
| Panelists: | TBD |

[Reading List Service provided and links accessed by the Information Services Unit at the Inforum: Winter term, 2014]

### Best way to contact me: sara.grimes@utoronto.ca (average response within 2-3 business days)

**Drop-in Office Hours:** Thursday 11a-12p, Room 7021A (Semaphore Lab), 7th floor Robarts Library