

COM 227: Principles of Social Media

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Examining Ethical and Legal Issues in Social Media (A Critical Analysis)

The rapidly expanding use of social media has led to a variety of ethical and legal quandaries. This assignment is designed to start you thinking critically about situations where the legality and ethical implications of actions are unclear. There are no right answers to these questions. Read the following situation and answer the accompanying questions in detail, taking care to show a significant level of understanding and critical thought.

Assignment Guidelines:

- Format as a series of short essays, answering each of the questions completely and to the best of your ability
- Two to four pages double-spaced
- Times or Times New Roman font
- 1-inch margins
- Due Friday, September 23 at 11:59 p.m. (upload to Blackboard)
- Please cite all sources used to support your argument including online articles and information from class lectures and readings

Instagram and the Art World

In April 2015 artist Richard Prince opened a show at the Frieze Art Fair in New York City that featured giant screenshots of other people's Instagram photos. These enlargements, many of them featuring women in provocative poses, were priced at \$90,000 apiece. This use of social media content has earned Prince both praise and scathing critique. Please use the links below, information from class, and any additional research you choose, to answer the questions on the next page.

Links to additional information:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2015/05/25/a-reminder-that-your-instagram-photos-arent-really-yours-someone-else-can-sell-them-for-90000/>

<http://hyperallergic.com/265991/photographer-sues-artist-richard-prince-larry-gagosian-and-his-gallery/>

<http://www.richardprince.com/exhibitions/new-portraits/>

Please answer the following questions:

Q1. Please provide a brief description of Richard Prince's work "New Portraits" and explain why it is controversial

Q2. Do you believe Prince's use of Instagram photos constitutes Fair Use? Why or why not?

Q4. Do you believe Prince's use of Instagram photos was/is ethical? Why or why not?

Q3. This case study looks at re-use of casual social media photos by an artist, but people who make their living in creative professions also have a difficult time protecting ownership of creative works in a social media environment. How (if at all) has content sharing through social sites necessitated changes in how artists and producers (musicians, photographers, videographers, etc.) create and distribute their work?

Q5. What responsibility (if any) do social media users have to respect copyright of creative works?