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| Supervisor's Name         | Roger S. Fisher   |
| Supervisor Email Address* | rfisher@yorku.ca  |
| Supervisor's Department   | Humanities  |
| Project Title             | "Improvising the law of copyright in music: music publishers, composers, and copyright litigation in Great Britain from 1777 to 1842" |

#### Description of Research Project (1500 characters maximum)

The student researcher will participate in the investigation, transcription, and indexing of documents from several hundred lawsuits that took place between *Bach v. Longman*, the first reported copyright case involving a musical composition in 1777, and the UK Copyright Act of 1842, the first British copyright statute that explicitly included musical compositions. The goal of the research project is to investigate the wealth of legal, historical, and musicological information that lies undiscovered in the unpublished court files from this period. The research project will use a database program (Microsoft Access) and qualitative textual analysis software (Atlas.ti) to encode the documents from several hundred court cases. The wealth of historical data and legal information that can be gleaned from these unpublished court files will be the basis for reconstructing a comprehensive historical narrative for the evolution of early copyright in music.

The handwritten records for each court file consist of documents ranging in length from a few hundred to over three thousand words. Most of the documents are written in a modern style of handwriting that is not difficult to read (apart from some unfamiliar abbreviations and turns of phrase). Some earlier documents are in a style of handwriting that is difficult at first to read.

#### Undergraduate Student Responsibilities (1500 characters maximum)

A student researcher who is interested in graduate work in history or in a career in law will acquire valuable skills and experience by participating in this project.

The student researcher will become familiar with the early history of the law of copyright, will learn about the legal system of eighteenth-century England, and will acquire valuable research skills and experience (such as reading handwritten, historical documents; using database programs such as Microsoft Access and Atlas.ti, and using on-line indexes to search for archival documents).

Transcribing and indexing the handwritten documents under the direction of the primary investigator will be the principal role of the student researcher. The student researcher be instructed in how to transcribe, index and catalog the court documents according to the type of document (for example, bill of complaint, answer, deposition, court order, exhibit), the names of the litigants and witnesses, and the legal and factual issues involved in the lawsuit. The research assistant will also use a database program to encode other names, dates, and key words found in the source documents.

The student researcher will also participate in investigating background information about litigants and other parties using on-line research tools such as the Dictionary of National Biography, the on-line index of documents in the British National Archives, and other resources.

#### Qualifications Required (750 characters maximum)

A student researcher with the following qualifications would be ideal for this project:

1. A background in history, law, or musicology and an interest in learning about the origins of copyright law in eighteenth century England;
  2. An ability to read cursive handwriting;
  3. An ability to focus on details and make accurate notes;
  4. Familiarity with computer software programs such as Microsoft Word and Access; and
  5. Ability to read images of documents on computer screens for long periods of time.
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