Understanding the rules around physical property is fairly straightforward—you have your stuff, and I have my stuff. We can choose to trade or sell our stuff to each other. I can borrow your stuff for a while, but you’ll expect that I’ll return it. Please don’t take my stuff and I won’t take your stuff.

“Intellectual property” leaves room for more questions. When considering concepts like published writing, artistic output, and new inventions, what even qualifies as “my stuff” and “your stuff”? Can it be borrowed or taken? You’re probably familiar with the terms “copyright,” “patent,” and “trademark,” but how do these apply to you from a legal standpoint and on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus? Will you own the intellectual property you create as a student here?

This micro-course will attempt to answer some basic questions you may have about intellectual property, including:

- What is intellectual property and what is it intended to do?
- What are the legally-recognized types of intellectual property and how do they differ?
- What are the important things to know about intellectual property from a cultural, legal, and University of Wisconsin policy perspective?
- Where can you find more help on campus in navigating intellectual property issues?

We hope you’ll find this micro-course helpful as you create your own intellectual property and work with the intellectual property of others at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.