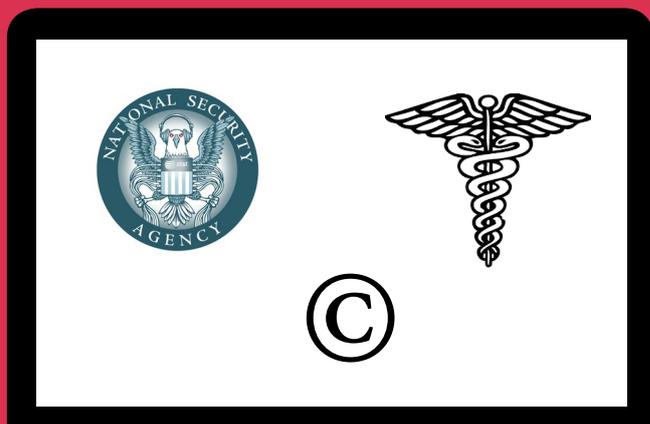


What do courts
say about
e-surveillance?

What are my
rights in the
software I
wrote?

Can a con-
tract protect
a doctor from
malpractice?



WRITING THE LAW OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THREE LEGAL GENRES

Though many folks believe that you can just go to a “law book” and look up the law, the true picture is much more complicated. At least three legal “genres”—statutes, contracts, and court opinions—affect most facets of the law.



STATUTES are laws passed by Congress or state legislatures—but enforcing a statute means going to court, and the courts have the messy job of interpreting the statutes in real situations, often situations that the legislatures did not anticipate.



CONTRACTS are a kind of private law that is binding only on the parties to the contract. But even here, the interpretation of contracts involves the courts, and statutes and common-law principles can govern what terms a contract can have and which terms of a contract are enforceable.



COURT OPINIONS show how courts interpret statutes and enforce contracts. They become precedents—part of the law for future courts.

THREE FACETS OF THE LAW

The law of science and technology provides excellent subject matter for understanding how genres of legal text do their rhetorical work. We will explore three facets of law:



PRIVACY: A survey of what actions by business, government, and private individuals constitute invasion of privacy as well as what limits are placed on the right of privacy.



COPYRIGHTS & PATENTS: An exploration of the law governing creative works and inventions.



HEALTHCARE: Considering how medical science and the law have affected each other.

IS THIS COURSE RIGHT FOR YOU?

Students in a wide variety of fields will find this course prepares them for the legal issues they will encounter in future careers in industry, government, and media, and it provides insights into the American legal system. Students interested in law school should find this course of particular value. (Note that this course does not satisfy any requirements for the Georgia Tech pre-law certificate or minor.)