Thesis Permissions Guide

DISCLAIMER
This document has been compiled from my own experiences. Consequently, it should not be taken as a definitive guide to avoid copyright infringement: it is merely to help you along the way. Do your due diligence.

General notes and information
To include a published article in your thesis, you must have the permission of the publishing journal and your co-authors to do so. While it would be nice for to be able to refer to one expert on campus that has all of the information required to do this, I was unable to find one, hence the creation of this document. It is possible that the copyright office has the required expertise, but I did not have time to consult with them for my own thesis.

Try to give yourself as much time as possible to get these required licenses and permission, ideally when you start to assemble your thesis. For co-authors from other labs or who have left your current lab, contact them as soon as you know you will include the article in your thesis, as they may be difficult to track down as they move to different positions. Journals can be either very quick or very slow: individual journals are usually quicker and larger publishing companies take much longer. Even RightsLink (see below) can be problematic, particularly if an article is “In Press” when you are preparing your thesis.

NOTE: While I try to be as comprehensive as possible here, different journals have different regulations dictating the re-use of their material; therefore, each article needs to be examined on an individual basis.

Some general resources for theses and copyright
http://www.biology.ualberta.ca/programs/graduate/current/graduate_student_manual/  
http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/degreesuperv.aspx  
http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/degreesuperv/thesis/~/media/Faculty%20of%20Graduate%20Studies/degreesuperv/thesis/thesespecs.pdf  
http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/thesescanada/index-e.html

Preparation of your thesis:
To include a published article in your thesis, you must indicate the source of the reproduced material. I used footnotes on the first page of each chapter to indicate where the article was reproduced from (in my thesis, I used published papers as individual chapters). Again, the format requirements can vary with the journal (safest is to ask the journal). Example footnotes:

“A version of this chapter has been published. (1) T. J. Donner, I. Sherr, E. Scarpella. (2009). Regulation of preprocambial cell state acquisition by auxin signaling in Arabidopsis leaves. Development. 136: 3235-3246. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1242/dev.037028. Adapted with the kind permission of Development and the Company of Biologists.”

“A version of this chapter has been published. Copyright © 2010 Wiley. Used with permission

**Obtaining permissions**

**Authors**

From my discussions with FGSR, there does not seem to be a specific format required for permissions from authors. I emailed each of my co-authors to request their permission to include the article in my thesis and included a citation to be clear which article I was referring to. This way, even if they only replied with a minimal “Sure”, it was clear which article I was referring to. I then printed off the emails I received and submitted them with my thesis. An ideal form would be as follows:

“I hereby grant you permission to include the following material in your PhD thesis: Donner TJ, Sherr I, Scarpella E. 2009. Regulation of preprocambial cell state acquisition by auxin signalling in Arabidopsis leaves. Development. 136(19):3235-3246.”

**Journals**

Journals have various requirements and conditions for re-use in theses and format of the material. Two useful links for determining how much can be re-used and what is allowed:


However, ALWAYS check with the journal itself; I emailed each journal just to be safe. Typically there will be some link on the journal’s website related to Rights, Permissions, or re-use.

1). **No additional license required.**

Some journals allow authors to re-use/reproduce material from their published articles in their own work, without additional permissions. This may be due to journals returning the copyright to the authors upon publication or a Creative Commons License. The format can however, vary (pre-peer reviewed, post-peer review but before formatting, post-formatting in the journal’s final PDF), so check with the journal.

Example journals: Development, Plant Signaling and Behaviour, EMBO J (and the rest of the Nature Publishing Group). Example language:

“(1) authors may reproduce the article, in whole or in part, in any printed book (including thesis) of which they are author, provided the original article is properly and fully attributed;”

[http://dev.biologists.org/site/misc/rights_permissions.xhtml](http://dev.biologists.org/site/misc/rights_permissions.xhtml)

“If you are the author of this content (or his/her designated agent) please read the following. Since 2003, ownership of copyright in in original research articles remains with the Authors*, and provided that, when reproducing the Contribution or extracts from it, the Authors acknowledge first and reference publication in the Journal, the Authors retain the following non-exclusive rights:
a. To reproduce the Contribution in whole or in part in any printed volume (book or thesis) of
which they are the author(s).”
http://www.nature.com/reprints/permission-requests.html

2). RightsLink. (copyright.com)
Many journals use RightsLink to control permissions and rights requests. Access to RightsLink
requires making and logging into a copyright.com account with an email address. A request for
an individual article requires clicking on the link for Permissions and Rights for the article (see
green boxes below)

From this point, you can choose the options in the boxes, as required for your needs, in order to get your license agreement. Within these license agreements, there may be information as to the required language for footnotes, conditions and types of use allowed, etc.

Example journals: Developmental Dynamics, Mechanisms of Development. Many of the larger publishing companies (E.g., Elsevier, John Wiley) utilize RightsLink.

3). Other?
I did not come across any other options, but they may exist. In any case, it rarely will hurt you to ask the journal. Some smaller journals may only do permissions requests through direct contact.

**Final submission of thesis**
Publication of your thesis requires you to sign licenses with the Library of Canada and the University of Alberta (available through the FGSR website - [http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/degreesuperv/thesis/submissionethesis.aspx](http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/degreesuperv/thesis/submissionethesis.aspx)), which allow them to reproduce copies of your thesis.

I had concerns about the use of the word “commercial” in these license agreements, as most of the author agreements that I had signed did not allow for commercial re-use or for me to transfer my license. I called Theses Canada about this and was told that “commercial” is included in their agreement because when hard-copy theses are submitted, ProQuest, a third-party company, is contracted to digitize these documents (thus, a commercial interaction) and this is the only reason for this language. I did not receive a response from the U of A about their agreement and I am not sure whether the library or the Copyright office is the correct place to go to ask about it.
I individually contacted each journal by email to ask if the signing of these agreements (included as attachments to the email) required additional permissions beyond the previously obtained request to include the article in my thesis/dissertation. None of the journals that I had to contact required additional permissions, suggesting to me that inclusion of an article in your thesis is a relatively common occurrence and does not significantly affect them (be aware of which versions can be included though).

NOTE: My discussions with Thesis Canada also suggested that each of my co-authors would need to sign a Library of Canada release, as well; however, my interactions with FGSR suggested that they had never seen the submission of these releases with a thesis or the lack of these agreements affect the submission of a thesis.

When I submitted my thesis, the license agreements, and all of the required paperwork from the University and the Department to FGSR, I also included hard copies of all of the emails from my co-authors, the license agreements from Rightslink, and copies of the webpages that outline the journals’ Permissions guidelines, to reduce the likelihood of any problems with copyright infringement with my thesis.