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Note on GenAI Use in This Class:

Unless otherwise noted during class activities, you may only use GenAI technologies to *aid* or *nuance* your thinking, communication, and learning, but not to *replace* or *subvert* it. See the table below for some examples of allowable and non-allowable uses of GenAI technologies in this class (NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list of examples).

Example of an Allowable Use	Why is this Allowed?	Things to Keep in Mind
Prompting GenAI technologies to generate ideas for a class project.	This might enhance your creative thinking by exposing you to different ideas compared to what you might come up with on your own (GenAI technologies, like ChatGPT, draw from a massive dataset of billions of parameters, which means these tools can introduce you to ideas and concepts from various fields that you might not be familiar with). GenAI writing technologies are also helpful for idea iteration – you can prompt these technologies to give you 50 different iterations of the same idea in less than a few seconds.	It is required and expected that you will start with brainstorming your own ideas first (to aid your creative thinking), rather than letting GenAI do that initial work for you. Also, beware that GenAI might introduce biases into the topic when prompted to generate ideas.
Using GenAI technologies for writing support (e.g., providing feedback to help you improve writing quality, clarity, and expression).	GenAI writing technologies, like ChatGPT, can provide ideas for how to revise a sentence or word, suggest ways to begin a paragraph, offer feedback on how to express your thinking more clearly in writing, review your writing for grammar and spelling errors, and help you match your writing style to a specific tone or audience. If you use GenAI technologies in this way, while also closely examining the feedback and suggestions provided by GenAI, this might support the development of your writing skills.	Make sure to get your thoughts written down first rather than asking GenAI technologies to write the first draft. Writing and thinking are interconnected processes, if you prompt GenAI technologies to write the first draft for you, you are not actively engaging in thinking about the material. NOTE: We also have a wonderful Writing Center on campus! Use it!

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Using GenAI technologies as a study or assignment aid .	GenAI technologies can offer study tips, provide example text/quiz practice questions, design a personalized study guide, design flashcards, give directions for how to complete an assignment, create learning simulations and interactive scenarios to help you think more deeply about the class content, and provide a rubric so you can self-assess your own work. NOTE: Please do not upload my presentation slides or class materials to a GenAI technology without my permission (this is an infringement on my copyright protection!).	GenAI tools are known for making up information and presenting biased output. OpenAI's factuality benchmark found that its best model provided correct answers to fact-seeking questions only 42.7% of the time!! Also, read the N.Y. Times article: "A.I. Is Getting More Powerful, but Its Hallucinations Are Getting Worse." Make sure to double-check the accuracy, credibility, and reliability of any AI-generated information that you use to support your studying or assignment completion.
Prompting GenAI technologies to help make information easier to understand (e.g., explaining technical or academic jargon, providing concrete examples of an abstract idea).	GenAI technologies could potentially be used in ways that reduce cognitive load (see Cognitive Load Theory), such as breaking material into smaller chunks, summarizing and simplifying material, providing an outline of an article to support pre-reading, translating text into your native language, making content more accessible, scaffolding learning, and providing concrete examples.	Overreliance on AI tools, including for cognitive offloading, can negatively impact critical thinking abilities (Gerlich, 2025). For example, asking ChatGPT to summarize an article for you instead of reading the article reduces your ability to critically examine, and learn from, the reading. It is more helpful to read the article first, then review the AI-generated summary for additional assistance.
Using AI and GenAI technologies recommended due to disability .	GenAI technologies can be used to make learning more accessible (e.g., transcripts of recorded audio, closed captions for videos, alt text to describe images for blind/visually impaired individuals, interpretations of complex visual data).	If you have a self-identified or registered disability, consider how GenAI tools might aid your thinking, communication, and learning. You might consider discussing ways to use AI to aid your learning with Disability Services staff on campus.

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Example of a Non-Allowable Use	Why is this NOT Allowed?
Using a GenAI technology to complete an activity or assignment, in part or in whole, for you. NOTE: GenAI agents and AI browsers are banned in this class because they can complete assignments independently and automate work, which eliminates meaningful participation in the learning process.	The activities and assignments in this class are designed to help you build your knowledge and skills related to the course topics so you can meet the course learning objectives. When you use GenAI technology to complete assignments or activities, you miss out on important learning opportunities that can help you build the skills and knowledge that are essential for success in this course, and beyond. Additionally, when you use GenAI technologies to complete an activity or assignment, I cannot accurately assess your actual understanding, thinking, or learning, which prevents me from providing meaningful feedback to support your learning process and growth in the course.
Prompting a GenAI technology to respond to a discussion forum prompt for you.	Discussion prompts are meant to incorporate your voice and your thoughts. Participating in discussions is about building community and relationships as well as actively engaging in your own thinking and learning to communicate with others. Using GenAI technologies for this activity subverts both the social and learning goals of the activity.
Using a GenAI technology (e.g., Slidesgo, Google NotebookLM, Canva) to design a class presentation for you.	Designing a presentation requires you to actively engage in thinking and learning about the material and consider how best to communicate that information to an audience. Prompting GenAI technologies to do this for you subverts your learning and the opportunity to develop your creative communication skills.
Modifying AI-generated work slightly to make it appear as if you created it.	Making minor adjustments to AI-generated text only supports surface-level learning, rather than deep learning (learn more), because the focus is on minor adjustments rather than truly understanding the material.
Prompting a GenAI technology to automatically summarize a complex academic article instead of reading and summarizing it yourself.	Used in this way, you are basically asking a GenAI technology to “read for you.” This offloads your thinking, learning, and the productive struggle of understanding and critically examining the author’s ideas (read: No One is Talking About AI's Impact on Reading). You are also relying on the GenAI technology to do the work of analyzing and making sense of a text; even though these tools are predictability machines

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	that do not have any real understanding of the text (read “The Fundamental Limitations of LLMs”). Also, consider that uploading a copyrighted text (e.g., book chapter, article) to a GenAI technology might be considered copyright infringement since you are giving away copyrighted data to a GenAI technology without permission from the author.
Prompting GenAI technologies to analyze data for you and submitting the data analysis as your own.	Using GenAI technologies to provide solutions for you (in this case, provide data analysis output for you) prevents you from actively engaging with, and learning, the material (read “5 Times Not to Use AI.”) Additionally, GenAI tools are not calculators or math machines, they are predictability machines (they guess which words go together to make the most plausible human-sounding response).
Copying AI-generated text word for word into your written work, but citing it as written by AI .	Please read “The Case For Not Citing Chatbots As Information Sources” and “Good models borrow, great models steal: intellectual property rights and generative AI” and, instead, find an original source to cite. When you put in the effort to find an original source to cite, you are deepening your thinking and learning about that topic and you are giving credit to human authors/artists. However, if you prompt a GenAI technology to create an original source of text or media – something that cannot be traced back to an original source (e.g., a Taylor Swift rendition of the Declaration of Independence) – you can write “This text was generated by ChatGPT [or insert another GenAI technology] in a footnote.”
Using a GenAI technology to create media (e.g., images, infographics, graphic novels, audio, video) for a class project with permission from the instructor.	Considering that GenAI technologies that produce images, audio, video, and other forms of media are built on media stolen from artists without their permission AND that generating media with AI is an energy intensive process, which negatively impacts the environment, you are strongly encouraged to look for media that already exists (e.g., Pixabay images/video; YouTube audio library songs and sound effects; OpenVerse for a variety of media) as Creative Commons or in the Public Domain to include in your class projects. If you cannot find suitable images, visuals, audio, or video for your project, email me to request permission to use AI-generated media.
Uploading/sharing sensitive or personal data with GenAI.	Do not share personal, sensitive, or student information/data with GenAI tools when completing assignments. Doing so risks compromising your privacy and potentially violating privacy laws (e.g., FERPA).

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If you find yourself turning to GenAI technologies to do your work for you, consider setting up a meeting with me to discuss how class activities and assignments can be adapted to support your learning (e.g., if you do not have enough time to complete the class activities and are turning to AI to do the work for you, you could meet with me to discuss flexible deadlines or alternative activities). Additionally, when using ChatGPT and other GenAI technologies, which are notorious for producing misinformation and fabricating information, it is your responsibility to verify the credibility, accuracy, and trustworthiness of any information you use from these technologies.

If I suspect that you have submitted AI-generated work, I will ask you to meet in-person or on Zoom, to discuss the work in question. I will not be using an AI text detector to identify AI-generated work because these tools are notoriously unreliable and especially problematic. Instead, I will be using the [UMass Amherst's Center for Teaching and Learning list of indicators](#) to identify the potential for AI-generated content. If I ask you to meet with me to discuss your work, and the potential use of AI, you are welcome to provide evidence that your work is your own, but you will also be expected to demonstrate your thinking and learning related to the work through a conversation (e.g., if your discussion forum post about critical media literacy is suspected to be AI-generated, I will ask you to respond to some additional prompts about critical media literacy in real time during the meeting, either orally or in text).