

CTI Guidance on Course Policies for Using AI

(last updated 9/2/25 by the Center for Teaching Innovation at Salem State University)

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The following guidance is provided to assist you in developing coherent policies on the use of generative AI tools in your courses. We recommend that you adjust the guidance to fit your particular course contexts, as well as provide clarity on AI use expectations in specific assignment descriptions. Please check in with SSU's [Center for Teaching Innovation](#) to talk through specific course contexts and/or potential use-cases of AI and to get recommendations for additional syllabus language. You can also visit the CTI's resource page on [Teaching in the Age of AI](#).

What's New (Fall 2025)

We've added a Start Here section for instructors who may be new to considering AI (pgs 2-4).

Start Here: Teaching In The Age of AI

Information To Help You Develop An AI Syllabus Statement

- **Every AI Tool is Different:** While there are similarities across various AI tools (they may look similar or perform similar functions), it's helpful to understand that each tool may have different data (ie the information it uses to respond to requests), features, data privacy implications (ie policies on what it can do with information you share with it), and functionality (ie the accessibility of the tool to all users), among other distinctions.
- **Student Perceptions of AI Vary:** While a lot of media attention has been paid to student use-cases that deviate from instructor policies, many students here and elsewhere have concerns about AI usage. We have heard concerns related to climate impact, unsanctioned use of copyrighted materials, issues navigating incorrect information (or "hallucinations"), and bias (among other concerns). That being said, some students have cited interest in using AI for a range of reasons: accessibility support, support for neurodivergent learners, interest in aligning with professional use-cases. We encourage instructors to consider making student AI usage optional and to learn more about student concerns by talking to them. You may want to consider a co-created AI course policy, or you may want to note that additional guidance on AI usage may be provided on later course assignments after discussion with students
- **AI Detection Is Imprecise:** CTI cautions against instructors telling students that they "can just tell" that AI has been used on student work. CTI does not recommend any AI "detection" tools marketed to instructors due to tendencies towards "false positives" and the negative impact of surveillance technology on student course experiences (among other reasons). CTI does not suggest that usage of certain words or usage of "em-dashes" might be evidence of AI usage in student writing. Even an incorrect citation may be the result of human error rather than a sign of an AI "hallucination."
- **Prioritize Transparency, Student Success, and Alignment with Course Objectives:** Many instructors are reflecting on what they might redesign in the wake of AI. CTI notes that an assignment that can be outsourced to AI may still be an important activity that aligns with course objectives. Consider how you communicate with students about the value of coursework. Consider the implications of redesigns that solely prioritize "AI resistance." For example, blue books may present accessibility challenges, or your students may not have experience handwriting in Standard English in exam contexts.

What If I Don't Want AI In My Course?

Many instructors have concerns about AI's impact on teaching and learning. CTI recommends that instructors who want to discourage any usage of AI in their courses consider the following:

- **Explain Your AI Syllabus Statement and Course Policies:** We know that some students may overlook syllabus language or assignment prompts. Given the newness of

this topic, we recommend that instructors provide additional context on AI syllabus statements and resurface their statements (and highlight additional AI guidance) at the start of the semester and when introducing required course activities potentially impacted by AI.

- **Course Writing and Research:** Writing and research are two areas that have been most impacted by AI tools. At the start of the semester or in anticipation of course projects involving research and writing, you may want to ask students about their research and writing habits. What tools and resources do they use? What don't they know about? What skills are particularly important to your course activities and assignments? How can you guide students to best practices that don't involve AI? How might you explain why you don't want them using AI in research and writing contexts?
- **Consider AI Integrations:** Some digital tools and platforms that students use (like Grammarly or Microsoft Office Suite tools) may have AI integrations that can be enabled. Some of your students may have questions about the use of these tools. If you are unfamiliar with the specific tool in question, you may want to ask students for information about whether integrations can be turned off, or you may want to discuss alternative tools that provide students with the same capabilities..
- **AI and Assignment Redesign:** As previously noted, not all assignments may need to be redesigned to aspire to "AI-proof" assessment. In most cases, an enterprising student can likely still make use of AI tools to complete most course activities. CTI recommends focusing on assignment redesign efforts that prioritize course objectives, student engagement, and equity. For example, you may ask students to research in physical archives, take part in experiential learning projects with external collaborators and site visits, collaborate on in-class activities with non-digital or hybrid outputs, and develop other activities that align with contemporary best practices in teaching and make it less tempting for students to make use of AI tools.
- **Course AI Policies Vary:** It can be important to let students know that different instructors may have different AI course policies in the event that students have questions. You don't have to defend or justify the course policy of another instructor.

What should I do if I suspect that a student is attempting to submit work created with (or by) AI tools in ways that deviate from course policies?

The inability to tell when AI has been used is one of the more frustrating conditions of teaching in the age of AI. As previously noted, CTI does not recommend the use of AI detection tools or claiming that you "can just tell" AI has been used without providing additional evidence. Here are some strategies that instructors here and elsewhere have used when these situations come up:

- **Modeling AI Usage / Unsanctioned AI Usage:** If you are OK with AI usage in your course, it can help to model to students the tools and use-cases that might help them succeed. Similarly, some instructors who want to discourage AI usage have talked with students about the limitations of AI tools and use-cases by providing specific examples of attempts to use AI to complete coursework. Some instructors pair their own guidance with low-stakes or ungraded assignment activities that help students align with desired AI usage or research/ writing/ coursework approaches. Transparency and clarity can be helpful deterrents. CTI also recommends reminding students to check in (via email, office hours, or other stated preferences for student-instructor communication) before major assignment deadlines if they have questions about AI course or assignment policies
- **Was AI Actually Used Here?:** If you suspect that AI has been used on an assignment or course activity, take a moment to reflect on why you feel this way. Some students have noted that instructors have made false or unverified accusations about AI usage. Do not rush to assert that AI has been used without carefully thinking about the evidence (or lack of evidence).
- **Communicating with Students:** To maintain student trust and engagement, it can be beneficial to schedule some time to talk with students if you suspect that they have used AI in ways that go beyond course policies. CTI recommends that instructors not begin conversations with accusations. Instead, you might have questions or requests for additional information or context on particular aspects of a student submission.
- **Flexibility, Support, and Accountability:** Some students may resort to AI usage because they are having issues with course materials, time management, writing and research expectations. Ask students if they need assistance and consider connecting them to relevant SSU support sectors. Consider how you responded to students struggling with course assignments and coursework before AI's presence. You may think about extending a deadline, asking a student to resubmit work in ways that address concerns, revising assignment parameters. Accountability can also be important in these interactions. You could ask students to propose a specific deadline, identify areas of improvement, commit to reaching out in advance of future assignments if they encounter issues in the future.

Sample Syllabus Statements for the Use of AI Tools in Your Course

Four AI Course Policy Options To Consider

The language provided here is a modified version of "[Course Policies related to ChatGPT and other AI Tools](#)" by Joel Gladd, Ph.D. and is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

Four options are outlined below:

- one where **faculty explicitly define appropriate and inappropriate course use of AI** (this option may be of particular interest to faculty who are already well-versed in AI use-cases and their applicability to specific course contexts)
- one where **faculty require citation and explication of AI use by students** (this option may be of particular interest to faculty who are still learning about AI use-cases and value transparency in documenting student usage; we imagine this syllabus policy could be complemented by assignment prompts that offer further explication and even restrictions on acceptable/unacceptable use-cases)
- one where faculty **co-create AI course policies with students at the beginning of the semester** (this option may be of particular interest to faculty who want to highlight an interest in co-learning about AI literacy with students and incorporate student feedback directly into an AI course policy)
- one where **faculty restrict all use of AI tools** (this option may be of interest to faculty who feel that students can satisfy course objectives without the use of AI; that being said, a restrictive use policy could create additional challenges for faculty later in the semester if AI usage is suspected and its role in completing coursework can not be verified)

If faculty adopt language from one of these policies, they should cite their use or modification of Gladd's course policies in the interest of transparency. Additional information on a Creative Commons 4.0 International License can be found on [the Creative Commons website](#).

AI Policy I: AI use is encouraged with certain tasks but not permitted for certain activities

(instructors may have different ideas of what is encouraged and permitted in specific courses; the example below is a model for how to document those course policies)

AI tools may be used in this course for certain tasks. You are invited to use AI platforms to help *prepare* for assignments and projects e.g., to help with brainstorming. I also welcome you to use AI tools to help *revise and edit* your work, e.g., to help spot confusing or underdeveloped paragraphs, or to simply fix citations.

Additional activities where AI (e.g. chatGPT) is **permitted** may include:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas

- Fine tuning your research questions
- Finding information on your topic
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Checking grammar and style.

The use of generative AI tools is **not permitted** in this course for the following activities:

- Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you or content that you put into a Zoom chat.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI prompt. You are still responsible for fact-checking and verifying information. Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty. Text generated using ChatGPT should include a citation that aligns with specific assignment guidelines regarding expectations of citation.

Please contact me before submitting coursework if you have questions about AI use or citation. Submitting AI-generated work without identifying it as such will be considered a violation of [SSU's Academic Integrity Policy](#). A lack of compliance with course expectations regarding AI usage may negatively impact assignment or course grades.

AI Policy II: AI use must be documented and cited in the interest of transparency.

When submitting work, you must clearly identify any writing, text, or media generated by AI. You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI prompt. You are still responsible for fact-checking and verifying information. Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty. Text generated using ChatGPT should include a citation that aligns with specific assignment guidelines regarding expectations of citation. Some assignments may provide additional guidelines outlining AI usage that is encouraged or not permitted in the context of those course activities.

Please contact me before submitting coursework if you have questions about AI use or citation. Submitting AI-generated work without identifying it as such will be considered a violation of [SSU's Academic Integrity Policy](#). A lack of compliance with course expectations regarding AI usage may negatively impact assignment or course grades.

AI Policy III: AI use will be assessed, discussed, and documented in collaboration with students.

At the beginning of the semester, we will discuss potential uses of AI in course contexts, with an ultimate aim of co-creating an AI course policy that incorporates student perspectives and feedback. We will document this AI course policy and apply it to relevant coursework. A lack of compliance with our co-created course policy regarding AI usage may negatively impact assignment or course grade. Submissions that ignore AI course policies may be considered in violation of [SSU's Academic Integrity Policy](#). Additional details will be provided in future course communications.

AI Policy IV: Any writing, media, or other submissions not explicitly identified as AI-generated will be assumed as original to the student.

This course assumes that work you submit—all process work, drafts, low-stakes writing, final versions, and all other submissions—will be generated by you, working individually or in groups with your classmates. Submitting AI-generated work (created with the aid of tools like ChatGPT) is not acceptable in this course and will be considered a violation of [SSU's Academic Integrity Policy](#). A lack of compliance with course expectations regarding AI usage may negatively impact assignment or course grades.

Please contact me before submitting coursework if you have questions about AI course policies.

Sample AI Syllabus Language from SSU Instructors

Below you will find syllabus language written by colleagues at Salem State University. Interested in sharing your own AI course policy or syllabus language? Please email CTI Instructional Designer Jim McGrath: jmcgrath2@salemstate.edu

Jim McGrath (CTI, History)

Language used in HST 705 (Digital History / IT in History; Summer 2024)

Generative AI Course Policy

We'll be talking a bit about generative AI at the start of the semester. I will walk through some use-cases of particular chatbots (ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot) so you can get a sense of their affordances and limitations. I will also share some perspectives on generative AI from educators navigating its impact.

No one is required to use generative AI in this course. I understand the concerns that many people have about data privacy, bias, climate impact, misinformation, copyright, and other areas. Your first Discussion Board post focuses on generative AI but you will have options to review writing on this topic in lieu of using a tool yourself if you do not want to.

For other course assignments, I am happy to talk to anyone who is thinking about potential generative AI use-cases in the context of completing that work. Some use-cases that may appeal to some students might include brainstorming, imitation writing exercises (to familiarize yourself with particular genres of writing), transcription, translation, or copyediting/revision work. If you are considering uses of genAI tools to create visual media (artwork, images, video content), we can also talk.

If you do decide to use a generative AI tool, I just ask that:

- You discuss this potential use-case via email with me before the assignment due date (with enough time for you to complete said assignment) and we decide on a relevant course of action
- You document usage (disclosing what tool was used and what specific content was generated by said tools)

I reserve the right to request that students revise and resubmit work that makes use of generative AI (particularly if usage extends beyond the course of action previously discussed and agreed upon).

I hope it is clear that I am happy to help you think about potential use-cases of generative AI (and why you might want to avoid specific use-cases) in relation to this course and to digital history more generally. This is a new topic with a lot of moving parts. Transparency and communication on use-cases that impact this class are what I am primarily concerned about at this point in time.

James Noonan (Secondary and Higher Education)

AI Syllabus Language for an undergraduate course:

Using ChatGPT or AI

AI tools, like ChatGPT, can be a helpful resource when gathering information, generating ideas, and crafting and refining your writing. For this reason, I encourage you to make use of these tools (though I encourage you even more to make use of the thoughtful, responsive humans available to support you in the [Mary G. Walsh Writing Center!](#)). When using AI in an academic context, it is critical to distinguish *your ideas* from ideas generated by a tool like ChatGPT. When submitting work for this course, you must clearly identify any writing, text, or media generated by AI, by including a paragraph with your submission explaining what tool(s) you used, what prompts you asked, and how you integrated the output into your work. Finally, be mindful that AI-generated materials are prone to errors or bias. You are responsible for any information you submit based on an AI prompt, which means you are responsible for fact-checking and verifying information.

Please contact me if you have questions about AI use or citation. Submitting AI-generated work without identifying it as such will be considered a violation of [SSU's Academic Integrity Policy](#), which could negatively impact your grade on affected assignments or in the course overall.

Anneliese Worster (Childhood Education and Care)

Use of AI in Work for this Course (modified from AI Policy I under "Four AI Course Policy Options to Consider")

- **AI use is encouraged with certain tasks but not permitted for certain activities**

AI tools may be used in this course for certain tasks. You are invited to use AI platforms to help *prepare* for assignments and projects e.g., to help with brainstorming in the assigned format. I also welcome you to use AI tools to help *revise and edit* your work, e.g., to help spot confusing or underdeveloped paragraphs, or to simply fix citations.

- Additional activities where AI (e.g. chatGPT, Gemini) is **permitted** may include:
 - Brainstorming and refining your ideas
 - Fine tuning your research questions
 - Finding information on your topic
 - Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
 - Checking grammar and style.

- The use of generative AI tools is **not permitted** in this course for the following activities:
 - Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts assigned to you or content that you put into a Zoom chat.
 - Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
 - Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.
- You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI prompt. You are still responsible for fact-checking and verifying information. **Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty. Text generated using ChatGPT should include a citation that aligns with specific assignment guidelines regarding expectations of citation.**
- Please contact me before submitting coursework if you have questions about AI use or citation. Submitting AI-generated work without identifying it as such will be considered a violation of [SSU's Academic Integrity Policy](#). A lack of compliance with course expectations regarding AI usage may negatively impact assignment or course grades.

Additional AI Syllabus Language and Course Policy Options

- [AI Policies](#) (SSU AI and Information Literacy Libguide): SSU librarian Rukmal Ryder has collected a number of helpful resources for instructors interested in learning more about AI, including links to several AI policies.
- [Artificial Intelligence](#): Online resources (including advice on course policies) provided by the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning (Harvard University)
- [Syllabus Resources](#): From The Sentient Syllabus Project, a resource created by and for academics to assist in learning more about artificial intelligence
- [AI Syllabus Policy Statement](#): Language developed by Dr. Torrey Trust (UMass Amherst) to explain acceptable / restricted AI use-cases to students
- [Syllabus Policies for AI Generative Tools](#): A crowdsourced list of policies shared by a wide number of instructors; document started by Lance Eaton (College Unbound)
- [Possible AI Syllabus Statements](#): A collection of links to statements and policies compiled by the Center for Teaching and Learning at Brandeis University

Student Resources for Artificial Intelligence

[Student Guide to Artificial Intelligence](#): Developed by AAC&U and Elon University, designed to be student-facing