

# {reticulate}

PSY-GS 8875 Behavioral Data Science



Overview: Week 1

## Readings

- Breiman - 2001 - two cultures (see “articles” on Brightspace or [GitHub](#))

## Optional

- none

- Introductions
- Preliminaries
- Generative AI and Retrieval-augmented Generation
- {reticulate}
- Syllabus AI

Introductions

# Introductions

- ➊ Preferred name
- ➋ Department
- ➌ What do you want to get out of this course? Any specific methods?

Preliminaries

# Preliminaries

- R
- Toolchains?
- GitHub (Desktop)
- Slack?
- NCDS dataset



## Core Documents

Syllabus

Schedule

Office hours: [alexander.christensen@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alexander.christensen@vanderbilt.edu)

## Course Structure

- Technical introduction to method(s)
- Application and activity
- **Activities** will be turned in on Brightspace the following Tuesday by midnight (11:59:59pm)
- **Final project**: application of at least three methods covered in this course to data (preferably your own data!)

Generative AI

# Generative AI



- Language generation
- Coding (debugging and generation)
- Image generation
- Video generation
- and more...

- Use it!
- Considered engagement in this course
- Encouraged (and expected) to help you learn and explore materials

- Coding in R will be a significant part of this course
- With generative AI, minimal experience is necessary
- If you've only used the free version of ChatGPT (GPT-3.5), then you might think AI sucks at coding...

- Well, GPT-3.5 does suck at coding
- But newer models (including GPT-4) are much better at coding and are super handy for writing and studying code
- You can “augment” models to make them better too



Retrieval-augmented Generation (RAG)

# Retrieval-augmented Generation

Large language models (LLMs) are trained on an enormous amount of text data

- **Pro:** generalizes across many contexts
- **Con:** lacks domain-specific or specialized knowledge
- **Con:** model might “hallucinate” answers because...
  - out-of-date information
  - there is no relevant information to retrieve
  - LLMs are sentient and messing with you (not actually...yet)

ChatGPT EGA example. . .

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. . . or use a tool designed for the task: [SciSpace](#)

# Retrieval-augmented Generation

**Solution:** give the model access to specialized knowledge to let it draw from a more specific context

So... how can we make LLMs better at coding (in R or any other language)?

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So... how can we make LLMs better at coding (in R or any other language)?

What about for coding in this course?

**{reticulate}**

{reticulate}

**{reticulate}**: R package to interface with Python

- seamless integration between R and Python
- do Python without leaving R
- equivalent for Python-to-R: {rpy2}



## Syntax

```
import("module")  
# import module into environment  
  
module <- import("module")  
# assign module to an object (preferred)  
  
module$function  
# use function in a module
```

Why bother? Why not learn Python instead?

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- Most social sciences (and statisticians) use R
- Switching between software is inefficient. . .
- . . . and can lead to reproducibility issues

Syllabus AI

To get some hands-on practice with `{reticulate}` as well as retrieval-augmented generation, we'll index our syllabus

This Shiny app is going to index this course's syllabus and course schedule as a “quick” look-up resource

Guided Activity. . .

## Potential Uses of RAG

- coding help (e.g., R manuals)
- literature search (e.g., relevant references)
- study guides (e.g., develop questions from material)

## At Home Activity

- Use one of the following free-to-use models to upload the Syllabus:
  - [Perplexity](#)
  - [Claude 2](#)
  - Our example's LLAMA-2
- Ask the following questions and submit the responses on Brightspace:
  - Who is the professor for PSY-GS 8875?
  - What is the grading policy?
  - Where can I find data?



# Readings for Next Week

## Readings

- ESL Chapters: 3.1, 3.2, 4.4, and 4.4.1
- HML Chapters: 4.1-4.5 and 5.1-5.5

## Optional

- none