Weekly demonstration video repository:
https://github.com/Meowcenary/msds434_demo_videos

Before this class, I had limited exposure to Amazon Web Services (AWS) and was unfamiliar with most of the cloud software used. However, my background in Docker, containers, and Linux, along with significant web development experience, helped when new software was introduced quickly. The pace was never overwhelming, and the demonstration videos provided excellent guidance for each step of the final project.

In general, I found AWS to be more intuitive and better documented than Google Cloud. The lecture videos effectively explained how to use Google Cloud for each week's tasks, but I preferred AWS and stopped using Google Cloud as soon as possible. While I didn't particularly enjoy working with Google Cloud, I understand why it was included in the course.

Even though I found AWS more intuitive, it still presented challenges. The biggest hurdle was setting proper permissions for different services, which often caused issues that were difficult to debug. Creating the predictive model with SageMaker was another challenge, but troubleshooting permissions was far more frustrating. While I was impressed with SageMaker's capabilities, the cost of training a model with it and the additional AWS domain knowledge required make me question its value compared to running a library like scikit-learn directly on an EC2 instance. Using an EC2 instance would likely offer greater control and cost efficiency, especially for smaller-scale projects.

One of the most valuable aspects of the course was the opportunity to explore various cloud-based services and learn how they can be integrated into larger applications. While I ultimately preferred AWS and stopped using Google Cloud when possible, I understand why it was part of the curriculum. Seeing how my classmates built their projects provided additional insight and inspiration. Although it was sometimes challenging to adjust my approach after deciding on a model hosting solution, I enjoyed learning from others' experiences.

Overall, this course provided a strong foundation in cloud-based web services and has given me a broader understanding of how they can be used together in application development. Looking ahead, I plan to explore deploying machine learning models on EC2 instances rather than using SageMaker, as it may offer greater flexibility and cost-effectiveness for certain use cases.