

CMSC 398z

Effective use of AI Coding Assistants and Agents

Bill Pugh and Derek Willis

Oct 24th, 2025

Class notes

Bill Pugh is out of town today

Sent email encouraging everyone to get an account for Claude, which provides claude code

Claude Builders club provides free account

If you don't have this, you should be able to accomplish all of the projects by opening VS Code and using agent mode

Getting started

Open [Claude.ai](#) and log in to verify your account works

Do a git pull to get week8

Read week8/[README.md](#)

- [on Web page](#)
- Or open it in VSCode, or any other Markdown reader

Start with Getting setup with Claude

Greenfield development - wordSearch

You are going to ask Claude to implement the wordSearch problem Bill and Derek talked through at the beginning of the semester.

Directions in week8/wordSearch.md - [Link](#)

- cd to week8/wordSearch
- start claude
- give the /init command
- tell it to produce a design before writing code, put the design in [design.md](#)
- Review the design
- tell it to write the code
- Review the code
- Fill out week8/wordSearch-review.md

Changing the Go to Line function in IDLE

IDLE is a simple text editor and IDE distributed with python

The go to line function has a confusing interface, and limited functionality

We are use a project from UCSD CSE 190 course which has you improving it

Details

Steps:

- Download and build cpython
 - building it may not be needed
- Tell claude how to improve the go to line functionality

Project for next week - Congressional Record

This tool converts HTML files containing the text of the Congressional Record into structured text data. It is particularly useful for identifying speeches by members of Congress.

Software hasn't seen updates since 2019, has some problems, include dependencies on deprecated APIs

But still serves a useful purpose

Plan is for our class to reboot it, make it work well