AI Policy

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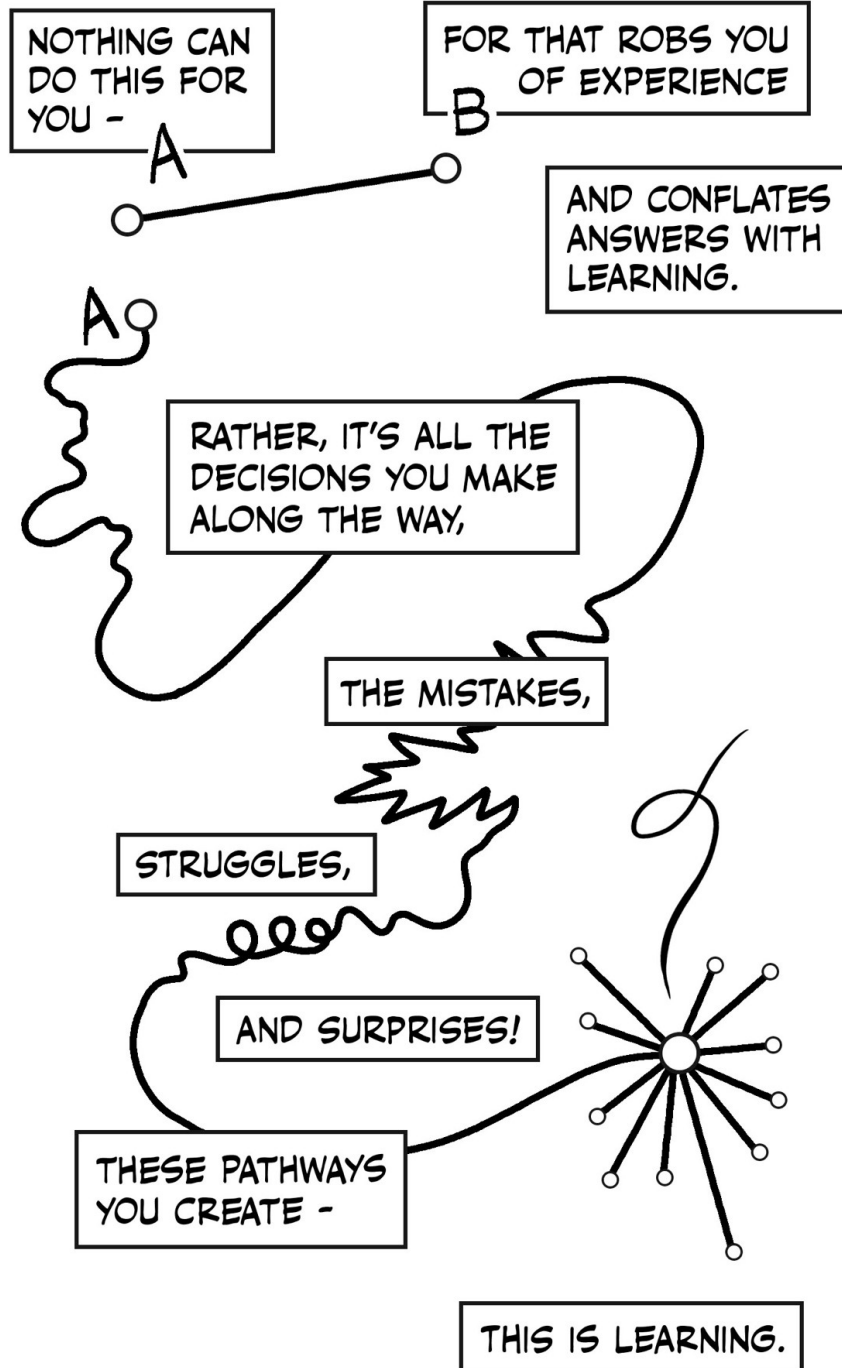
The AI policy in this class is don't use it.

First, to clarify that when I refer to AI here, I'm specifically thinking of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT – also known as large language models (LLMs). Here are a few reasons behind my thinking...

- Generative AI tools are "Bullshit Machines" in the sense that they are designed to produce output that sounds convincing – *without regard to whether their output is true or not.* If you're using an AI tool to help with mathematics, you can't be certain that the output is correct.

- Now it's true that all the material in this class has been written down in hundreds (thousands?) of textbooks, which have all been used to train these LLMs. This means that if you're asking an AI tool about a calculus problem or concept, it most likely will give you correct information. But maybe not, which means you need to still need to check it yourself.

- What about using AI tools to help explain a concept or technique that you find confusing? Here's the problem I see with this – the mental struggle of trying to make sense of a new, hard thing is **precisely the point****. If you off-load that, you aren't really engaging with the material in a way that is going to lead to authentic learning. There is reason that my classes don't have much lecturing in them – that's not a great way to learn. Many students think

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Beyond the issues pointed at in the quote above, here are some others.

- Generative AI tools are "Bullshit Machines" in the sense that they are designed to produce output that sounds convincing – *without regard to whether their output is true or not.* This means that if you're using an AI tool to do mathematics, you can't be sure that the output is correct.

- GenAI tools are not search engines – don't use them to look up information.

NOTHING CAN DO THIS FOR YOU –

FOR THAT ROBS YOU OF EXPERIENCE

AND CONFLATES ANSWERS WITH LEARNING.

RATHER, IT'S ALL THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE ALONG THE WAY,

THE MISTAKES,

STRUGGLES,

AND SURPRISES!

THESE PATHWAYS YOU CREATE –

THIS IS LEARNING.

I am not interested in policing you or participating in a surveillance structure that claims to "detect" AI-produced material

creating a hostile dynamic between you and your instructor. College is a time for you to decide who you want to be, how you want to engage the work, and take some degree of control. We will discuss this more in class.

Note that this AI policy applies only to this course. For your other courses, please follow those professors' AI policies, which may differ from mine.

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Students tell me that they use AI to do "explain" things or check answers. The problem is that LLMs like ChatGPT are **explicitly designed** to sound authoritative, to sound correct. That doesn't mean it is correct – so if you're using AI to explain something you should be asking yourself how you know whether it's correct.

Q. What about using AI to brainstorm or summarize ideas?

A. That's what your brain is for. Seriously, a significant way in which we can engage with the course content is to embrace the mental struggle of organizing and making sense of ideas. When we use words like "brainstorm" we sometimes think that this isn't the important part. In fact, it's a critical step in learning. Offloading

Q. Can I use AI to check my answers?
A. How do you know that what your AI-bot tells you is correct? Maybe it is - maybe not.

I will assume that any work that you submit for this class was generated without the use of GenAI.

> Critics have already written thoroughly about the environmental harms, the reinforcement of bias and generation of racist output, the cognitive harms and AI supported suicides, the problems with consent and copyright, the way AI tech companies further the patterns of empire, how it's a con that enables fraud and disinformation and harassment and surveillance, the exploitation of workers, as an excuse to fire workers and de-skill work, how they don't actually reason and probability and association are inadequate to the goal of intelligence, how people think it makes them faster when it makes them slower, how it is inherently mediocre and fundamentally conservative, how it is at its core a fascist technology rooted in the ideology of supremacy, defined not by its technical features but by its political ones.
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> - Anthony Moser, "I Am An AI Hater"