

# CSC 483: Applied Deep Learning

## Winter 2025

### Instructor Info

- **Instructor:** Tianxiang (Adam) Gao (Assistant Professor, School of Computing, DePaul University)
- **Office:** CDM 712
- **Email:** [tgao9@depaul.edu](mailto:tgao9@depaul.edu)
- **Office Hours:** Mondays, 10:00–11:00 AM via [Zoom](#), or by appointment (contact via [email](#)).

### Course Info

- **Meeting Time:** Thur 5:45 PM – 9:00 PM
- **Classroom:** CDM 224
- **Sections:** 801 (Loop; in-person), 841 (Hybrid: Flex)
- **Course website:** [D2L](#)

### Course Description:

This course covers the foundations of deep learning, including fundamental neural network architectures (e.g., multilayer perceptrons) and training methodologies, including widely used optimization techniques (e.g., momentum, RMSprop, Adam). It also addresses generalization and regularization strategies (e.g., overparameterization, the double descent phenomenon, and weight decay). We will explore cutting-edge neural network architectures, including convolutional neural networks (CNNs), recurrent neural networks (RNNs), and transformers (e.g., GPT and BERT) with attention mechanisms. Students will gain hands-on experience by implementing these models and applying them to real-world problems in computer vision (CV), natural language processing (NLP), and computational biology. *Prerequisites:* (CSC 412 and DSC 430 and DSC 441) OR (CSC 412 and CSC 480).

### Required Materials

#### Textbooks (Recommended)

- [Dive into Deep Learning](#), by Aston Zhang, Zack C. Lipton, Mu Li, Alex J. Smola.
- [Deep Learning Book](#), by Goodfellow, Bengio, and Courville.

#### Software:

- TensorFlow/Keras or Python with PyTorch;
- Jupyter Notebooks for hands-on assignments

**Hardware:** Students are recommended to use a platform or environment where a hardware accelerator (e.g., GPU) is available that facilitates faster execution speed.

- Cloud platforms with free accounts: Google CoLab, Kaggle, Amazon Web Services
- Local Machines that has no worries about access time-outs

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the fundamentals of deep neural networks.
- Explore advanced topics such as convolutional neural networks (CNNs), recurrent neural networks (RNNs), and transformer architectures.
- Gain practical experience through assignments and projects implementing deep learning models in Python using popular frameworks (e.g., Keras and/or PyTorch).
- Learn how to apply deep learning techniques to real-world problems such as computer vision, and natural language processing.

## Course Schedule

Table 1: Class Schedule for 10-Week Quarter

Week	Lecture Topics
1	Intro to Neural Networks
2	Training Neural Networks
3	Advanced Optimizers
4	Generalization and Regularization
5	Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs)
6	Learning with CNNs
7	Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs)
8	Sequence-to-Sequence Models (Seq2Seq)
9	Attention Mechanisms and Transformers
10	Large Language Models (LLMs)

## Attendance & Participation

Students are encouraged to attend in person or join via a live link, but attendance won't count toward their grade.

## Coursework

- **Quizzes (25%):** Approximately 8 quizzes will be given to assess students' understanding of lecture concepts. Only the **best 5** scores will count toward the final grade.
- **Programming Assignments (30%):** Approximately 6 assignments focused on implementing and analyzing generative models will be given, with only the **best 4** scores counting toward the final grade.
- **Student-Designed Assignment (25%):** Students will work in teams of 2-3 to design a deep learning assignment based on topics covered in the course. The assignment must include a clearly defined learning task, an appropriate dataset, a justified model choice, evaluation criteria, clear instructions, and a grading rubric. Selected student-designed assignments will be assigned to other students in the class.
- **Peer-Reviewed Evaluation (20%):** Students will be assigned 2 student-designed assignments to review. To provide a meaningful and fair evaluation, students are required to complete the assigned tasks before submitting their peer reviews. Peer evaluations should be based on the clarity of the instructions, appropriateness of the difficulty level, alignment with course topics, quality of the evaluation criteria, and overall educational value of the assignment.
- **Bonus Points (5%, Optional):** Bonus points may be offered to encourage learning and may help boost borderline final grades (e.g., A- to A). The instructor reserves the right to withhold bonus points if submissions do not meet expectations—for example, due to lateness, low quality, or failure to follow instructions.

## Programming Assignment Policy

Students must download the provided Jupyter Notebook (.ipynb) from D2L and complete the assignment by filling in only the designated code sections. The notebook must be submitted in its original format without altering any other parts of the file. Any violation of these instructions—such as modifying other sections or submitting in a different format—will result in **zero** points for the assignments.

## Late Work

Late programming assignments are accepted up to **three days** after the deadline with a 10% penalty per day. **No** late submissions are accepted for quizzes, the student-designed assignment, peer-reviewed evaluation, or bonus-point assignments.

## Grading Scale

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	93 – 100	C+	77 – 79
A–	90 – 92	C	73 – 76
B+	87 – 89	C–	70 – 72
B	83 – 86	D	60 – 69
B–	80 – 82	F	0 – 59

## Exceptions Policy

Exceptions to the policies outlined in this syllabus (including grading, late work, coursework expectations, etc) are granted only under specific circumstances for individual students. These exceptions are made at the instructor's discretion and do not automatically apply to other students.

## University Policies & Resources

We've included these policies and resources to start, but please edit as needed for your own teaching context. There are more examples of policies on the Teaching Commons.

### Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (<http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>) for further details.

### Library Resources

The DePaul University Library (<https://library.depaul.edu>) provides access to authoritative information sources, such as scholarly articles, journals, and books, primary sources, and research databases. Research help is available daily in-person and via chat, email, phone, or text. You may also make an appointment (in-person, phone, or Zoom) with a librarian to discuss your research projects.

## Center for Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students can also email the office at [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu). Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

## University Counseling & Psychological Services

University Counseling & Psychological Services (UCAPS) helps remove barriers to learning and support academic success by providing free, goal-focused, collaborative, short-term, confidential, individual, and group counseling services for DePaul's students. UCAPS has a diverse multi-disciplinary staff that includes licensed mental health professionals in psychology, counseling, and social work.

Students can talk to a therapist or schedule a brief screening and consultation appointment in the following ways:

- To speak directly to a therapist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) and Press "1" when prompted.
- To schedule a brief screening and consultation (BSC) appointment, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) during regular business hours and Press "2" when prompted.

## The Writing Center

I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit [www.depaul.edu/writing](http://www.depaul.edu/writing) for more information.

## Name & Pronouns

I will gladly address you by the name and pronouns that you indicate. Please advise me of your name and/or your pronouns early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate notes in my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a first name that differs from their legal name, and they may also update their gender and gender pronouns. If a new name is identified, it will display as a "preferred name" in University-related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal necessity. For more information and instructions on how to make these updates, please see the LGBTQIA Resource Center's Personal Information Change resources and the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at [policies.depaul.edu](http://policies.depaul.edu).

## Dean of Students

The Dean of Students Office (DOS) promotes student learning and ethical decision-making in an inclusive and validating environment. Utilizing a comprehensive approach to student advocacy that is informed by DePaul's Catholic, Vincentian, and urban mission, the office collaborates with students, staff, faculty, parents, and community partners to support students in reaching their academic and personal success.

You can contact the Dean of Students Office by calling (773) 325-7290 or emailing [deanofstudents@depaul.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@depaul.edu). In cases of emergency, please call the Department of Public Safety at (773) 325-7777.

## Sexual & Relationship Violence

As a DePaul community, we share a commitment to take care of one another. Classroom relationships are based on trust and communication. Sometimes, material raised in class may bring up issues for students related to sexual and relationship violence. In other instances, students may reach out to faculty as a source of help and support. It is important for students to know that faculty are required to report information reported to them about experiences with sexual or relationship violence to DePaul's Title IX Coordinator. Students should also know that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence in course assignments or discussion does not constitute a formal report to the University and may not begin the process of DePaul providing a response. Students seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul should contact Public Safety (Lincoln Park: 773-325-7777; Loop: 312-362-8400) and/or the Title IX Coordinator (Lincoln Park: 312-362-8970 or [titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu)). Students seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or [hpw@depaul.edu](mailto:hpw@depaul.edu)). More information is available at <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html>.

## Basic Needs

Access to nutritious food and reliable housing are factors that influence many students' ability to succeed in the classroom and beyond. However, students facing food or housing insecurities may be hesitant to call attention to their ongoing struggles. DePaul University is committed to and cares about all students. To help you manage personal challenges and basic needs security, the university offers several resources. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office for support: by calling (773) 325-7290 or emailing [deanofstudents@depaul.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@depaul.edu). You can also contact the Elizabeth Ann Seton Food Pantry and Sandwich Kitchen and the Dax Program (Chicago - Depaul; email: [emily.edwards@depaulusa.org](mailto:emily.edwards@depaulusa.org); phone: (312) 362-7931) for support. The Center for Access and Attainment has also created a guide for Food and Housing Resources that you can review.

If you are comfortable doing so, please also let me know about these challenges, so that I can help you access resources.

## For Students Enrolled in Flex Sections

If you are enrolled in a trimodal flex section:

- For each class meeting, you may choose to attend in person, synchronously via Zoom, asynchronously.
- If your instructor requires a proctored exam, you may take the exam in class (if space permits) or arrange for a proctored exam within the instructor's specified exam period. In both cases, it is your responsibility to register for the exam in advance through the courseD2L site or MyCDM when the instructor informs you that exam registration is available.