



University of Idaho
Library

CRIMINOLOGY 2040

Ethical Ways to Use AI for Research

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How I used AI to develop this session

For a Sociology 101 class last spring, I prompted ChatGPT with “Imagine you are a college professor. What suggestions would you give freshmen students on how to use AI, like chat GPT, as an assistive tool within their assignments?”, ChatGPT 4.0 mini generated a list of 10 suggestions ([full transcript](#)).¹

For this presentation, I expanded upon those suggestions that were most relevant.

1. Text generated by ChatGPT, OpenAI, January 13, 2025, <https://chatgpt.com/>.

How to get the best results when working with AI²

- Write clear instructions
 - Include details
 - Ask the model to adopt a persona
 - Specify the desired length of the output
- Split complex tasks into simpler subtasks
 - First do this, then this...

2. “Prompt Engineering,” OpenAI, accessed January 14, 2025, <https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/prompt-engineering>

How to get the best results when working with AI³

Remember: “...generative chatbots, exemplified by ChatGPT, represent a fundamentally different tool for inquiry and learning, resembling a loom for weaving thoughts, rather than a hammer for nailing down facts.”⁴

3. Baumgaertner, Bert, and Zeth duBois. “Search Is a Hammer, Generative Chat Is a Loom; Beware the Technological Attribution Error.” In *Social Computing and Social Media*, edited by Adela Coman and Simona Vasilache, 14703:313–27. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-61281-7_22.

Suggestions on using AI tools (1)

- Generating ideas
 - Brainstorming
 - For example: “Imagine you’re a college professor who is speaking with me, an undergraduate student in their criminology course. I have questions about selecting topic ideas for a research paper. Please use a question-and-answer format to help me brainstorm a list of 5 potential research topics in criminology. The questions you ask should be open-ended rather than leading. Don’t ask more than one question at a time and wait for me to answer before responding”

Suggestions on using AI tools (2)

- Generating ideas
 - Brainstorming
 - Summarizing sources
 - For example: “Imagine you’re a journalist tasked with highlighting a recent research article for the general public. Please summarize the following text in one paragraph. Then include a bullet point list of the 5 main takeaways:...”

Suggestions on using AI tools (3)

- Generating ideas
 - Brainstorming
 - Summarizing sources
 - Exploring new concepts
 - For example: I'm a criminology student and am having trouble understanding the differences between two main theories: Labeling Theory and Strain Theory. Can you please share a bullet point list summary of their similarities and differences, as well as sources I can follow up on?

Suggestions on using AI tools (4)

- Refining writing
 - Outlining papers and presentations
 - Checking grammar and style

Suggestions on using AI tools (5)

- Clarifying understanding
 - Engaging in a discussion
 - For example: I'm writing a paper on restorative justice. I think it is effective and have found sources to back this up. But I want to make sure I'm thinking critically about the sources I've found. Can you please help me review my findings and offer challenges to my arguments? Please use a question-and-answer format and ask open-ended rather than leading questions. Ask only one question at a time and wait for me to answer before responding.

Suggestions on using AI tools (6)

- Lastly, consider using pre-made prompts as a starting point
 - [Wharton AI & Analytics Initiative: Student Exercises](#)

Citing AI

- Any content generated by AI needs to be cited; various styles provide guidance on how to do so
 - [APA](#)
 - [MLA](#)
 - [Chicago](#)

Strategies for evaluating AI-generated content

- Cross-check the AI output
- Check the credibility of the source
- Identify potential gaps





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THANK YOU!

Please email me (jylisadoney@uidaho.edu) if you have questions or need help with library research in this class or others