AI for Creatives: Strategies for Success

PDC-3013-OL

School of Visual Arts
CE Professional Development
Fall 2025

Class Times / Description

Class Times: 09/23/25-11/25/25, Tue 06:30PM-08:30PM

Course Description

We are witnessing the rapid adoption of generative artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), open innovation, open talent and automation across all areas of society and businesses. The primary goal of this course is to help students learn about these tools, processes and technologies, and to understand their disruptive power. We will explore how these changes are affecting the human experience, how they represent an existential threat to the contributions of artists, creatives and designers, and how they will change the work that we do. By applying the direct use of generative AI tools, we will examine their current limitations and how creatives can adapt to the rapidly changing landscape. In this course students will gain an understanding of the fundamentals of AI, ML, open innovation, open talent, automation, ethics, bias, business strategy, and more. Various generative AI tools, such as large language models and diffusion models, will be used to create a portfolio of content. How to develop strategies for using AI/ML within your practice will also be addressed. Weekly assignments and a portfolio project are included.
NOTE: This course is fully online and offered through synchronous sessions during the listed course hours. Students must attend weekly, one-hour peer learning sessions. Additional meetings with the instructor to review coursework are also available.

Class Times:

Live Session:

Jun 3 - Aug 5, Tuesday 6:30-8:30 PM (EST) 10 sessions

Peer Learning:

Saturdays, 11am EST

Sundays, 5pm EST

Open Disruption Office Hours (optional):

Thursdays @ 8pm EST (see below! this schedule may change during the term!)

Course Overview:

We are witnessing the rapid adoption of Agentic AI, Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Open Innovation, Open Talent, and automation in society and businesses. The primary goal of this course is to help students learn about these tools, processes and technologies, and to understand their disruptive power. We will explore how these changes are affecting the human experience, how they represent an existential threat to the contributions of artists and designers, and how they will change the work that we do. By applying the direct use of generative AI tools, we will examine their current limitations and how creatives can adapt to the rapidly changing landscape. In this course students will gain an understanding of the fundamentals of AI, ML, Open Innovation, Open Talent, automation, ethics, bias, business strategy, and more. How to develop strategies for using AI/ML within your practice will also be addressed.

Students will choose their own preferred Generative AI tools to use for this course. Large Language Models (ie, ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, etc) and Image AI Tools (ie Stable Diffusion, Firefly, Midjourney, Dall-E, Openart, etc), can be used to create a portfolio of content. Recently, AI Video and Audio tools and platforms (Veo3, Sora, Pika, Runway, LTX Studio, Suno, Udio, etc.) are becoming popular, and we will discuss these tools as well.

Educational Objectives:

This course is a Strategy Course.

This coures is NOT a tutorial on how to use any specific AI tools. However, students will be using many different AI tools throughout the term.

This course will introduce you to the exciting, and rapidly evolving, world of Artificial Intelligence. Students will gain an understanding of the fundamentals of AI, ML, Open Innovation, Open Talent, Automation, Ethics, Bias, Business Strategy, Decision Making, Generative AI tools, Machine Learning, and Data Science, and more. Through weekly homework assignments, Students will be required to

create a portfolio of content. Through weekly Live Session discussions, students will also explore the ethical aspects of AI/ML and develop strategies for using AI/ML within their organization.

This course will help you to:

- Analyze and evaluate the impact of Generative AI on the workplace.
- Understand and apply Business Strategies for using ML and AI within an organization.
- Gain an general understanding of Generative AI tools, Machine Learning, and Data Science.
- Explore the ethical and legal implications of ML and Generative AI models.
- Understand how to gain a competitive advantage through data, analytics, and AI.
- Practice using Large Language Models.
- Practice using Generative Image AI tools.
- Explore the current state of Prompt Engineering.
- Create a personal portfolio of content generated with your Generative AI tool of choice.
- Recognize the impact of Bias in ML and AI models.
- Develop the skills to make informed and effective decisions using AI.
- Develop an Entrepreneurial Mindset, and explore ways to use AI to solve problems.

Faculty Information

Instructor: Todd Brous
Email: tbrous@sva.edu
https://www.linkedin.com/in/toddbrous/

Course Outcomes

After completing this course, students will:

- Analyze and evaluate the impact of Generative AI on the workplace.
- Understand and apply Business Strategies for using ML and AI within an organization.

- Gain an understanding of Generative AI tools, Machine Learning, and Data Science.
- Explore the ethical and legal implications of ML and Generative AI models.
- Understand how to gain a competitive advantage through data, analytics, and AI.
- Practice using Large Language Models
- Explore the current state of Prompt Design and Prompt Engineering.
- Create a personal portfolio of content generated with your Generative AI tool of choice
- Recognize the impact of Bias in ML and AI models.
- Develop the skills to make informed and effective decisions using AI.
- Develop an Entrepreneurial Mindset, and explore ways to use AI to solve problems.

Course Requirements

Course Format:

Each weekly Unit's coursework is composed of 3 components:

1. Asynchronous Learning: 4-6 hours of self-paced learning consisting of videos, readings, portfolio homeworks, and Case Studies. These assignments need to be completed **prior** to the Live Session.
2. Peer Learning: Students are asked to attend at least one of the scheduled Peer Learning sessions prior to the Live Session each week. Again, you should attend at least one Peer Learning session prior to the Live Session. By attending more than one Peer Learning session students will experience additional perspectives from other students, and gain a stronger understanding of the material.
3. Live Session: This is our class time. **It's why you're here!** You're not going to want to miss this!

Grading:

This class will be primarily graded on the following metrics:

Class Participation 90%

Peer Learning Attendance 30%

Assignments 40%

It's understood by the instructor that these grading metrics *do not* add up to 100%.

(For academic accreditation purposes, the following grading metrics can be used: Class Participation 70%, Assignments 30%)

The Instructor reserves the right to give you a better grade than the one determined by your actual score.

Workload:

This class has a relatively demanding workload, and what you get out of this class is correlated with what you put into it. You are required to attend all Live Sessions and attend at least one Peer Learning session per week.

You are not required to learn anything, but it's the primary goal of the instructor to design this course so that it will greatly benefit your education and the quality of your life. There may be additional requirements outlined throughout the term, however all additional requirements may or may not be required. Any additional requirements made throughout the term will be discussed as required, but nothing will be required unless students choose to make it required. All requirements are required unless they are not required. All requirements are subject to change as outlined in this paragraph.

Pedagogy:

This class will incorporate both traditional Informational Lectures, and the "Case Method Learning Model" as designed at the Harvard Business School. This will encourage students to engage and debate the topics presented.

The HBS Case Method involves the following process:

1. Read and Analyze the assigned Reading Material, Videos, or Case Study.
2. Discuss the assigned questions in your Peer Learning Sessions.
3. Engage in the Live Session.

Tailored for industry creatives exploring the fast-changing and uncertain world of AI, this course combines the following 3 components to form a comprehensive and rigorous learning experience.

- Asynchronous Learning (4-6 hours/week): Engage in self-paced learning through videos, readings, case studies, and portfolio assignments. Completion of these materials is essential before participating in the Live Session.
- Peer Learning (Highly desirable, and up to the students): Attend at least one Peer Learning session weekly before the Live Session. Participation in additional sessions is encouraged to gain diverse perspectives and deepen your understanding of the course content.
- Live Session: Our interactive class time combines the Harvard Business School Case Method and lectures to foster inductive reasoning and critical thinking skills.

You will be asked to use various Generative AI tools in this class.

AI Policy:

Everyone in this class is expected to use Generative AI (e.g., Large Language Models and Generative Image AI tools.) Learning to use AI is an emerging skill and we will explore how to use it. The whole purpose of the course is to explore the world of Generative AI and how it affects Creatives, Artists, and Designers.

Be aware of the limits of Large Language Models (ie ChatGPT), such as the following:

- If you provide minimum-effort prompts, you will get low-quality results. You will need to refine your prompts in order to get good outcomes. This will take work.
- **Don't trust *anything* it says.** If it gives you a number or fact, assume it is wrong unless you either know the answer or can check with another source. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions provided by the tool. It works best for topics you understand.
- AI is a tool, but one that you need to acknowledge using. Please include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that uses AI explaining what you used the AI for and what prompts you used to get the results. Failure to do so is in violation of academic honesty policies.
- Be thoughtful about when this tool is useful. Don't use it if it isn't appropriate for the case or circumstance.

Above policy was adapted from: https://hbsp.harvard.edu/inspiring-minds/why-all-our-classes-suddenly-became-ai-classes

Prerequisites:

Students must breathe oxygen. Non-oxygen breathing organisms will not enjoy, nor get much benefit, out of this class. Please note that any Artificial Intelligence entities, persons, robots, or minds are also welcome to attend this class. We are grateful to have them join!

Prior knowledge of Machine Learning, Python, R, Probability or Statistics, Deep neural Networks, coding or software development is not required. These skills, however, may offer you a competitive advantage in the workforce, and allow you access to the latest technologies.

Additional Class Fees (OPTIONAL):

Students may choose to pay for outside services like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity, and Midjourney (or the dozens of other tools and platforms). It is possible to complete this course using free services to avoid these costs. I highly recommend that all students choose at least one AI vendor and use their paid plan.

Attendance:

Attendance is REQUIRED. You will be allowed to miss 1 class for an extenuating circumstance, such as a personal emergency, family death, or severe illness. Additional absences will result in your final grade being lowered by one whole letter-grade for every Live Session requirement missed.

If you anticipate the need to miss a class, then prior written notice must be given to the instructor as soon as possible.

(Optional) Office Hours:

Students who are enrolled in this course will have access to my private Office Hours. These Office Hours are part of a private community where we meet and discuss the latest AI technologies.

We usually meet on Thursday evenings at 8pm EST. Please note that it's my goal to make myself available to you as much as possible, and offering access to Office Hours is **not** an official component of this course.

The timing and frequency of Office Hours may be subject to change throughout the term.

Please note that these Office Hours may include outside guests not enrolled in this course.

Surveys and Feedback:

Students will be asked to fill out surveys to provide feedback to the Instructor. The data collected will only be used to improve your experience as a student and to help the Instructor improve the course and the teaching material. These surveys are important, yet they are completely optional, and they will have no impact on your grade whatsoever. The data analysis may be provided to the university in order to improve the quality of the program and inform decision makers.

Community Values and Honor Code:

Students are expected to abide by the School of Visual Arts Honor Code and the following values:

- Respect for the dignity, rights, and differences of others.
- Honesty and personal integrity in dealing with all members of the community.
- Accountability for one's personal behavior.

Student Expectations:

Students are expected to contribute to, and attend, all sessions.

- Please do not be late.
- Prepare for all live classes by reviewing all asynchronous materials and completing all required assignments prior to synchronous sessions.
- Please arrive to the live class sessions promptly and remain on the zoom until the end of each session.
- Students are expected to attend the live sessions with their **cameras on**, and attend class from a location that enables your full participation. In order to facilitate an effective class experience, please keep your Zoom microphones muted unless you are called on to speak.
- We will have the ability for students to continue the conversation in "OVERTIME". These are optional, but offer students a great way to connect and learn.
- Please participate in classroom discussions constructively.
- Please meet all deadlines established in the course, and communicate promptly with the Professor if you are having any difficulties.
- Regularly check your program-specific SVA email account for any class-related communications. (I *highly* suggest forwarding this email to an email address that you regularly check!)

- During the Live Sessions we will do some brief Portfolio Reviews. Please be sure to submit URLs to your weekly assignments on time so that I can prepare for the discussion..
- If you have ANY questions about the course, please email me: tbrous@sva.edu.

Weekly Assignments:

One of the goals of this course is to learn how Generative AI tools will affect our lives. The best way to do this is to ***use*** these tools, and practice with them.

Please spend time each week using any Generative Image AI tool of your choice to create a portfolio of works. The weekly assignments will have a specific theme or goal.

Schedule (Subject to change! I'm thinking of moving the LLM unit earlier in the term.):

Unit #1: Orientation
Unit #2: Generative AI: Large Language Models (LLMs)
Unit #3: Introduction to Data Science
Unit #4: Introduction to Machine Learning
Unit #5: Diffusion Models
Unit #6: Legal, Copyright Law, Ethics and Bias
Unit #7: Business Models: The AI Factory, Learning Effects, and Network Effects, Data and Analytics
Unit #8: Open Innovation
Unit #9: Entrepreneurship: Solving Problems and Testing Ideas
Unit #10: Predict the future

Required Materials

Students will need to signup for various services such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Anthropic, Mdjourney, Adobe Firefly, etc. Free services are available.

Course Outline

Unit #1: Orientation

Unit #2: Generative AI: Large Language Models (LLMs)

Unit #3: Introduction to Data Science

Unit #4: Introduction to Machine Learning

Unit #5: Diffusion Models

Unit #6: Legal, Copyright Law, Ethics and Bias

Unit #7: Business Models: The AI Factory, Learning Effects, and Network Effects, Data and Analytics

Unit #8: Open Innovation

Unit #9: Entrepreneurship: Solving Problems and Testing Ideas

Unit #10: Predict the future

Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Students found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty will fail the assignment for which an infraction is suspected and substantiated. More serious violations will be handled through the process enumerated in the SVA Handbook. Put simply, make sure your work is your own.

Students with Disabilities

SVA is committed to ensuring access to educational materials and instruction for students with disabilities. To receive disability accommodations for this course, students must register with SVA's Disability Resources office. Once the student is approved for accommodations, the instructor will be notified. Instructors do not have to provide accommodations unless they have received notification from Disability Resources. All instructors are required to adhere to the school's policies regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. Students who have a need for academic accommodations, or suspect they may have a disability, should contact Disability Resources at disabilityservices@sva.edu.

SVA Attendance Policy

The ***SVA Handbook*** says: The School of Visual Arts is a professional art college dedicated to teaching and learning. Attendance is required in all courses, and the individual faculty member determines the number of acceptable absences, if any. However, students who are marked absent for one-third of the sessions for a given course will be administratively withdrawn from the course with a grade of W.

Pronouns and Chosen Names

Students may indicate their pronouns and preferred/chosen first name through MyServices; this information will then appear on class rosters (go to: https://myservices.sva.edu/Student/UserProfile and select "Edit Personal Identity"). Additionally, students are encouraged to record the pronunciation of their names using NameCoach, located in your account settings in Canvas.

Please let your instructor know the preferred name and pronouns by which you would like to be referred, if that information does not already appear on the roster. A student's chosen name and pronouns should be respected at all times.

Artificial Intelligence

Allowance of generative AI use in coursework is determined primarily at the departmental level. Students should follow institutional guidelines for responsible AI use. The following resources can be a helpful starting point.

Taking Responsibility for AI Use

Why AI is Allowed to Lie

Search Engine vs Reasoning Engine