



RESPONSIBLE AI
COM 229 | SPRING 2026
DR. BRIAN CARROLL

MW 2-3;15PM
LAU 113

"If you don't have an AI strategy, you are going to die in the world that's coming."
Devin Wenig, former CEO of eBay

Catalog Course Description

This course examines the legal, ethical, and practical considerations of artificial intelligence in research, writing, content creation, and many other human activities. Students will develop critical frameworks for evaluating AI tools, learn best practices for responsible AI integration, and create content that maintains human agency while leveraging AI capabilities. The course emphasizes transparency, accountability, and ethical or responsible decision-making in AI-assisted communication practices.

Introduction and Purpose

GenAI creates knowledge sausage on an industrial scale. In this course we are going to learn how this sausage is made, how to collaborate with its tools to do better things faster, and, most importantly, what it means to collaborate with AI responsibly, ethically, and transparently, without surrendering authorship or ownership of our work. AI literacy is, therefore, at the core of our mission to help students to become AI-ready. We will also investigate the mind-numbing demands that widespread AI use will make on our planet, including its precious metals and water. In short, this course interrogates the promises and perils of AI. In short, this course is an intervention. We need new literacies, new practices, new skill sets, and all of the critical thinking we can muster.

Learning outcomes

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

- Analyze ethical implications of AI use in content creation and research
- Evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, and authenticity
- Create original content that appropriately integrates AI tools without surrendering authorial voice or responsibility
- Apply ethical frameworks to AI-assisted work, making defensible decisions about when and how to use AI tools
- Practice transparency in AI collaboration by appropriately documenting, attributing, and disclosing AI assistance
- Assess the environmental costs of AI systems
- Navigate intellectual property, authorship, and ownership issues in AI-assisted content creation

What you will need (required):

- *Writing & Editing for Digital Media*, 6th edition, Brian Carroll
- *Atlas of AI*, Kate Crawford

- *Enshittification*, Cory Doctorow
- *The Age of Extraction*, Tim Wu
- Other selected readings
- Laptop

What you may want (not required):

- A sense of humor
- An appreciation for jazz
- Hope in the face of unprecedented natural resource extraction and depletion

Stuff you need to know:

Instructor: Dr. Brian Carroll

Office location: Laughlin 100

Office phone: 706.368.6944 (anytime)

Email: bc@berry.edu

Home page: <http://cubanxgiants.berry.edu>

Blog: <http://wanderingrocks.wordpress.com>

Office hours: MWF 10am-noon, but feel free to just drop by

Course website, including the course calendar: <http://cubanxgiants.berry.edu/AI>.

Any changes to our schedule, including deadlines, will be indicated on this webpage, so frequently, regularly refer to it.

Methods of Instruction

Some lecture, but not much. Lots of doing, including a fair bit of trial and error and sharing results. A great deal of exploration. In a very deliberate community of learning, we will rely on each other to figure this stuff out such that when the course finishes, we will have become Jedi genAI experts capable of leading, teaching, and warning others. This is a highly experimental course on the cusp of a tidal wave that is hitting the planet with unprecedented velocity and effect. That makes us each and all pioneers, space explorers, and deep sea divers.

Policies

- **Attendance:** Be on time, just as you would for a job, surgery, or even a haircut. Everyone gets one unexcused absence or late arrival, maybe two, with no questions asked. Stuff happens. After that, however, unexcused and/or unexplained absences and/or lateness will result in point deductions from the "professionalism and participation" portion of your grade -- **one point for each unexcused absence and/or late arrival**. And late is late, one minute or 10 minutes. What is excused is at the instructor's discretion, so you are best served discussing situations and extraordinary circumstances prior to class whenever possible. Medical attention typically is excused. Weddings, family reunions, vacations, job interviews, grad school visits, Winshape retreats, your roommate's birthday? These are NOT typically excused, so save your free passes for these non-curricular excursions.
- **Late submissions (deadlines):** Submit assigned work on time in the format proscribed. Do NOT email the professor your work; he does not offer a printing service. Similarly, posting your assignment somewhere in Canvas will

not “count” as making deadline. Late work, including any work submitted any other way than that which is specified and, therefore, authorized, will be penalized one letter grade per class session. Work submitted a week or more after deadline will not be eligible for points. In-class quizzes cannot be made up, regardless of the reason it was missed. The instructor is very reasonable when consulted PRIOR TO deadlines. Finally, please appreciate that deadlines are also for instructors, so that we can move on with our lives, as well.

- **Email etiquette:** Related to the above, when emailing your instructor, please appreciate that he is a person, not a vending machine for information, grades, etc. Begin each email with an address and a greeting, something like, “Dear Dr. Carroll. I hope this finds you well.” This is courteous, and it doesn’t take much time to write. It is also polite to thank someone for whatever was provided in response to a request. Email is the authorized communication channel for faculty and students at Berry, so you are responsible for checking your email and promptly responding to your instructors as needed or requested.
- **Distractions:** The instructor needs your attention and your respect, as do your peers seated near or around you. Your instructor is easily distracted, so he needs your help. Practically, this means ZERO unauthorized device use of any kind, including laptops, iPads, smartphones, and Apple watches. As an AI course, we will be using devices, but only for course-related activities. If laptop use is authorized, social media monitoring will not be, for example. Be respectful of the very limited time we have together in the room.
- **Decorum:** Related to the distractions described above, please remember that the classroom is the professor’s and your fellow students’ workspace and our shared learning space. It’s not your living room or den, in other words, and Covid is over, so be respectful, avoid going to the bathroom during class sessions unless nature is SCREAMING, and change out of those PJs into something appropriate.
- **Academic integrity:** Because academic integrity is the foundation of college life at Berry, academic dishonesty will have consequences. You are invited to consult the College Catalog for an articulation of the College’s policies with respect to academic integrity. Specific to this course, academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, submitting the same work in multiple courses, hiring a ghostwriter, asking an AI generator to write something for you that you later submit, failing to cite sources for your research (and, therefore, submitting others’ work as your own), consulting non-authorized sources or texts during an exam period, and aiding and abetting academic dishonesty by another student. Violations will be reported. Students who are sanctioned for violating the academic integrity policy forfeit the right to withdraw from the class with a grade of “W.” Attached to this syllabus is the pledge of academic integrity and AI hygiene that you will be asked to sign for most major assignments.
- **Class recording (Zoom):** Per Berry policy, students are required to attend class in-person. Classes will not be available for remote learning, at least not regularly or without advance warning and authorization. Any recordings will only be available to students registered for this class and cannot be re-transmitted, distributed, or otherwise shared without the expressed, written consent of the instructor, who asserts the copyright to the intellectual property contained in or by the recording.

- **Use of genAI:** We will responsibly collaborate with generative AI, including LLMs, and you will receive instruction on what that looks like. We will be transparent about how we use AI tools. The general rule is to treat AI as a research assistant, to collaborate, but to avoid cognitive offloading. We must retain ownership of our work, preventing any AI tool from becoming a co-author of our submitted, copyright-protected work. AI tools are powerful, wonderful collaborators when we know what we are doing and of what we are writing; AI tools are garbage as substitutes for that knowledge.

How you will be graded (assessment measures):

Reading quizzes	15 points
SWAT Team activities	20 points
Startup roles and responsibilities	25 points
Final projects	25 points
Final project presentation	5 points
Professionalism & participation	10 points
Total	100 points

Course assignments

You will note in the chart of assessment measures above that there are no exams. You will be assigned readings, including a few books, and quizzed to ensure that you did, in fact, do those readings.

As a member of a SWAT Team-like squad of explorers, you will forage the web to find treasure, which I realize mixes my metaphors. An example here could be, say, exploring the options for incorporating AI into videography, or giving an AI tool such as Symbolic.ai a thorough workout to see what it can do, then reporting back to the class about what you found.

As a cohort we will start a business, one that uses AI in every aspect of startup. This will entail developing a business plan, branding and marketing, doing videography and content development, doing a great deal of writing, and powering a web site. A startup gives us a context in which to think about what we're learning and doing.

Finally, each student will complete a capstone project by the end of the course, one that centers an AI skill set the student values and that is complementary to his or her career goals. For example, an artist might collaborate with genAI to develop a graphic novel or manga. A journalist might collaborate with genAI to create original journalism on a topic important to him or her, using genAI from story development to source identification, to fact-check and write, create information graphics, and publish it all to the web. A computer programmer might develop an app.

How to figure out your grade

To compute your final grade, add up your point totals, apply the appropriate percentages, then refer to the Communication department suggested grading system, summarized here:

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92	B+ = 88-89	B = 83-87
B- = 80-82	C+ = 78-79	C = 73-77	C- = 70-72
D+ = 60-69	F = 59 and below		

Definitions of the grades can be found in the Berry College Catalog. “A” students will demonstrate an outstanding mastery of course material and will perform **far above** that required for credit in the course and **far above** that usually seen in the course. The “A” grade should be awarded sparingly and should identify student performance that is relatively unusual in the course.

Accommodation Statement & Academic Resources

The Academic Success Center in Berry’s Memorial Library provides accessibility resources, including academic accommodations, to students with diagnosed differences and/or disabilities. If you need accommodations for this or other classes, please visit berry.edu/asc for information and resources. You may also reach out at 706-233-40480. The ASC also provides free peer tutoring and individual academic consultations to all Berry College students. The ASC Session schedule is available on ASC website. The goal of these meetings is to help students study smarter, not harder.

Consultants at the Berry College Writing Center, also in Memorial Library, are available to assist students with all stages of the writing process. To schedule an appointment, visit berry.mywconline.com.

Finally, I believe we are here for a good time, not a long time, so let’s have some fun.

