

Comm 159 (2025 Spring): Artificial Intelligence and Society

When & Where

When : Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30 – 1:45 pm
Where : BROAD 2100A

Instructor Info

Professor : Tao Gao (Depts of Communication)
Email : taogao@ucla.edu (*include "[Comm159]" in the title of emails; use UCLA email addresses*)
Office Hours : Wednesdays 5:00 - 6:00 pm or by appointment
Office : Rolfe Hall 2310 (comm project room)

Teaching Assistant

TA : Siyi Gong (Dept. of Communication)
Email : alicegong@g.ucla.edu
Office Hours : Tuesdays 2:00 - 3:00 pm
Office : Rolfe 1336

Course Description

The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on society is growing rapidly. What if superhuman AI is achieved? Will it free humans from tedious jobs, or cause mass unemployment? How to guarantee AI safety so that it won't annihilate human civilization?

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

By taking this course, students will understand AI from three different perspectives:

- What are the scientific principles underlying the recent breakthrough of AI ?
- How does AI impact various domains of society, such as economy, politics and law ?
- How to make individual career choices in the presence of human-level AI ?

Topics & Tentative Schedule

#	Tentative Topics
1	Introduction: Artificial Intelligence and Society
2	Deep Learning
3	Deep Generative Models
3	Understanding Large Language Models
5	AI and Economy
6	AI and Employment
7	Singularity
8	AI safety: Provably Beneficial AI
9	AI and Surveillance
10	Regulating AI ?

Expected Work and Grading

1. (50%) Two Exams

50% of your course grade will be determined by two exams. The first exam (**12:30pm-1:45pm Thursday Week 4**) will count for 20% of your grade. The second exam (**12:30-1:45pm Thursday Week 10**) will count for 30% of your grade. The nature of these exams will be described more fully in class. Make-up exams will be given only in exceptional circumstances, and in all cases may involve completely new questions, possibly in other formats. (Advice: you really want to avoid having to take a make-up exam.) You'll have to attend the lectures to do well on the exams, as they will cover discussions between me and the students.

2. (50%) 5 homework Assignments

50% of your course grade will be determined by 5 homework assignments, in the formate of short essays or math problems, all related to the lectures or the assigned readings.

In Person-Exam Policy

1. Mandatory In-Person Exams

All students are required to take exams in person. Remote or online examinations are not permitted unless explicitly stated otherwise.

2. Exceptions for UCLA-Supported Events

Exceptions to the in-person exam requirement will be made for students participating in UCLA-supported events. In such cases, students must provide official documentation or verification of their participation in the event to be considered for an alternative examination arrangement.

3. UCLA Proctoring Only

Proctoring of exams by institutions or entities outside of UCLA will not be accepted. All alternative examination arrangements must be coordinated through and approved by UCLA-affiliated entities.

Grade Dispute Policy

1. Initial Review with Teaching Assistant (TA)

Students who wish to dispute their exam grades must first schedule a review session with the TA for the course. During this session, the TA will go through the exam with the student to address any concerns or clarifications.

2. Escalation to Instructor

If the grade dispute cannot be resolved between the student and the TA, the student may escalate the matter by requesting the instructor to review their exam.

3. Scope of Instructor Review

While addressing the specific concern raised by the student, the instructor reserves the right to review other parts of the exam as well. This means that the entire exam, not just the disputed section, is subject to re-evaluation.

4. Potential Outcomes of Instructor Review

The instructor will approach the review without considering the TA's previous grading, ensuring an unbiased evaluation. It is important for students to understand that the instructor's re-evaluation can result in any of the following outcomes:

- An increase in the grade.
- No change in the grade.
- A decrease in the grade.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Raw Score
A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	67-69
D-	60-66
F	Below 60

Late Policy

All assignments must be turned in on time. We will allow a total of five late days **cumulatively for the entire quarter** – no explanation required. We will not make any additional allowances for late submissions: the late days are intended to provide for exceptional circumstances, and students should avoid using them unless absolutely necessary. Any assignments that are submitted late (with insufficient late days remaining) will not be graded.

Remote Lecture Policy

1. All lectures are in person, though I am allowed to conduct up to two remotely in case of a personal emergency.
2. Lectures will not be recorded except in the event of a campus-wide emergency that closes the UCLA campus.

Lecture Attendance

Attendance during lectures is highly encouraged for the benefit of the student's learning experience. Roll calls will not be conducted, and students will not be penalized for missing lectures. It is important to note that exams will cover content discussed during live lectures. As such, consistent attendance is crucial for optimal exam preparation.

Office Hours Policy

If a student misses a lecture, they are not permitted to approach the instructor during office hours to request a recap of the missed content unless the following conditions are met:

- The student must notify the instructor in advance of their anticipated absence.
- The reason for the absence must be communicated, and the instructor's approval must be obtained.

Only with prior approval will the instructor consider requests to review missed lecture content during office hours. The student must arrive at the start of office hours for the review.

Student Resources for Student Well-Being, Social Belonging & Academic Success

UCLA has a multitude of resources and services available to all undergraduates, many of which are listed below. Please explore these resources and services so you know what's available to you.

[General Student Resources](#)

[Academic Success & Counseling Resources](#)

[Health & Wellness Resources](#)

[Career & Professional Resources](#)

[Accessibility & Inclusion Resources](#)

[Advocacy & Social Belonging Resources](#)

[Extracurricular Activity Resources](#)

[Financial Resources](#)

[Undergraduate Resources to Support Learning in STEM](#)

Academic Integrity

UCLA is a community of scholars. In this community, all members including faculty, staff and students alike are responsible for maintaining standards of academic honesty. As a student and member of the University community, you are here to get an education and are, therefore, expected to demonstrate integrity in your academic endeavors. You are evaluated on your own merits. Cheating, plagiarism, collaborative work, multiple submissions without the permission of the professor, or other kinds of academic dishonesty are considered unacceptable behavior and will result in formal disciplinary proceedings usually resulting in *suspension* or *dismissal*.

Forms of Academic Dishonesty

As specified in the [UCLA Student Conduct Code](#), violations or attempted violations of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions or facilitating academic dishonesty (see below for detailed definitions).

While you are here at UCLA, you may find yourself in a situation where cheating seems like a viable choice. You may rationalize to yourself that "Everyone else does it"...Well, they don't. And will that matter when YOU get caught? NO! If you are unsure whether what you are considering doing is cheating, just ask yourself ...how would you feel if your actions were public, for anyone to see? Would you feel embarrassed or ashamed? If the answer is yes, that's a good indicator that you are taking a risk and rationalizing it to yourself.

If after reviewing the information below, you are still unclear about any of the items – don't take chances, don't just take your well-intentioned friend's advice – ASK your TA or your Professor. Know the rules - Ignorance is NO defense. In addition, avoid placing yourself in situations which might lead your TA or Professor to suspect

you of cheating. For example, during an exam don't sit next to someone with whom you studied in case your answers end up looking "too similar."

Alternatives to Academic Dishonesty

Seek out help – meet with your TA or Professor, ask if there is special tutoring available.

Drop the course – can you take it next quarter when you might feel more prepared and less pressured?

Ask for an extension – if you explain your situation to your TA or Professor, they might grant you an extended deadline.

See a counselor at Student Psychological Services, and/or your school, college or department – UCLA has many resources for students who are feeling the stresses of academic and personal pressures (see list below)

Remember, getting caught cheating *affects more than just your GPA*. How will you explain to your parents, family and friends that you have been suspended or dismissed? How will it affect your financial aid award and/or scholarship money? Will you be required to, and be able to pay back that money if you are no longer a student? If you live in the residence halls, where will you go if you are told you can no longer live there? You have worked very hard to get here, so don't cheat! If you would like more information, please come see us at the Dean of Students' Office in 1206 Murphy Hall, call us at (310) 825-3871 or visit our Web site at www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu.

Cheating

Unauthorized acquisition of knowledge of an examination or part of an examination

- Allowing another person to take a quiz, exam, or similar evaluation for you
- Using unauthorized material, information, or study aids in any academic exercise or examination – textbook, notes, formula list, calculator, etc.
- Unauthorized collaboration in providing or requesting assistance, such as sharing information
- Unauthorized use of someone else's data in completing a computer exercise
- Altering a graded exam or assignment and requesting that it be regraded

Plagiarism

Presenting another's words or ideas as if they were one's own

- Submitting as your own through purchase or otherwise, part of or an entire work produced verbatim by someone else
- Paraphrasing ideas, data or writing without properly acknowledging the source
- Unauthorized transfer and use of someone else's computer file as your own
- Unauthorized use of someone else's data in completing a computer exercise

Multiple Submissions

Submitting the same work (with exact or similar content) in more than one class without permission from the instructor to do so. This includes courses you are currently taking, as well as courses you might take in another quarter

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Participating in any action that compromises the integrity of the academic standards of the University; assisting another to commit an act of academic dishonesty

- Taking a quiz, exam, or similar evaluation in place of another person
- Allowing another student to copy from you
- Providing material or other information to another student with knowledge that such assistance could be used in any of the violations stated above (e.g., giving test information to students in other discussion sections of the same course)

Fabrication

Falsification or invention of any information in an academic exercise

- Altering data to support research
- Presenting results from research that was not performed
- Crediting source material that was not used for research

Places to go for help when you are feeling overwhelmed and need personal and/or academic assistance

In addition to the resources listed below, you can get assistance from your academic advisor. The [Academic Counseling](#) page has more information on finding your advisor.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Wooden Center West: (310) 825-0768

www.caps.ucla.edu

Center for Academic Advising In College

A316 Murphy Hall: (310) 825-1965

<https://caac.ucla.edu/>

Letters & Science Counseling Service

A316 Murphy Hall: (310) 825-1965

<https://caac.ucla.edu/contact-us/>

Academic Support on the Hill – UCLA Residential Life

Study spaces, computer labs, and free workshops on a wide variety of issues relating to academic & personal success

(310) 825-9315_

<https://reslife.ucla.edu/academics/>

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center

Student Activities Center, B36: (310) 206-3628

www.lgbt.ucla.edu

Center for Accessible Education

A255 Murphy Hall: (310) 825-1501, TDD (310) 206-6083

<https://cae.ucla.edu/>

Dashew Center for International Students and Scholars

106 Bradley Hall: (310) 825-1681

www.internationalcenter.ucla.edu

Student Legal Services

A239 Murphy Hall: (310) 825-9894

www.studentlegal.ucla.edu

Dean of Students Office

1206 Murphy Hall: (310) 825-3871

www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu

Title IX

Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the CARE Advocacy Office for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, 330 De Neve Dr., CAREadvocate@careprogram.ucla.edu, (310) 206-2465. In addition, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides confidential counseling to all students and can be reached 24/7 at (310) 825-0768. You can also report sexual violence or sexual harassment directly to the University's Title IX Coordinator, 2241 Murphy Hall, titleix@equity.ucla.edu, (310) 206-3417. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD at (310) 825-1491.