

AI in Communication (Which is NOT Social Media)

Lecturer: Dipl. Wi. - Ing. Heinrich Homola (MSc.)

Course Description:

In an age shaped by artificial intelligence, deep-fakes, and the rapid spread of misinformation, the ability to communicate clearly and critically is more important than ever. This course explores how AI tools influence the way we write, speak, and interact professionally and socially. Students will examine the benefits and risks of AI-generated content, from subtle linguistic shifts to the loss of voice and ownership in personal communication. Rather than focusing on social media, this course emphasizes professional, academic, and organizational settings.

The course invites students to actively use and critically reflect on AI-generated communication: When does it help? When does it hinder? What is lost when we no longer write ourselves?

Through hands-on workshops, students will experience both the support and limitations of AI tools and refine their ability to maintain clarity, authenticity, and responsibility in communication.

Teaching Methodology

The course is delivered through participative lectures and class discussions. Students are expected to study primary and secondary texts if announced in class, and to be exposed to up-to-date materials.

The course will consist partly of lectures, which are based on readings, case studies, and other reading materials. In-class engagement is expected of all students. This means reading assignments in advance and doing all required preparation for class. The main teaching/learning emphasis of this course is of a “hands-on” workshop approach.

Depending on the designated topics for each class session, students will be presenting, discussing and critiquing in class sessions each other's work with the goal of improving day-to-day, “real life” communication.

Specifically:

- Small-group collaboration, peer feedback, live analysis, and critical debates.
- All sessions are workshop-based and highly interactive.
- Students will frequently test, edit, and reflect on AI-generated communication.
- Flipped-classroom approach: Students prepare in advance and "teach" in class to maximize their own learning effect and to foster in-class engagement
- Live comparison and rewriting of AI outputs to match intended tone, audience, and clarity.
- Group discussions on ethical and creative challenges in AI-assisted writing.
- Final group presentation comparing human-written and AI-enhanced communication.
- Optional: Inviting a guest speaker on a given topic

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

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

- Evaluate and critique AI-generated communication in various formats.
- Use AI tools as communication support without losing authorship or responsibility.
- Develop awareness of tone, accuracy, and credibility when interacting with automated language tools.
- Recognize subtle bias, vagueness, and overconfidence in generated language.
- Recognize and deconstruct propaganda and manipulative rhetorical techniques.
- Apply personal voice and critical editing to texts originally drafted by machines.
- Engage in rhetorical self-reflection and analyze how AI influences their choices in phrasing, structure, and tone.
- Employ critical thinking when interacting with AI-generated texts and identify misinformation or bias.

Classroom Expectations

- Respectful dialogue, even in disagreement
- Active engagement with peers and texts
- Preparedness for all sessions
- An open mind toward experimentation and feedback

Grading Policy:

Engagement (20%)

Active engagement in discussion: Positive, constructive contribution to discussions and presentations, and the application of relevant course concepts. Active participation in group work, and collaborative exercises.

Journals (Individual, 4 entries, 10% each) (40%)

Short written reflections and analyses applying course concepts to current events, class activities, or AI-generated texts. Submitted as homework from week to week.

Classroom Discussion Lead – Flipped Class (20%)

Each team (5 teams @ 3 students) prepares and delivers one 15–20 minute presentation on an assigned topic, including leading the class discussion. Hence, 5 topics for 5 classes.

Final Group Presentation (20%)

Group themes will be assigned by the professor. Final deliverables include:

- A prepared script (1/3 of grade)
- Slides or supporting materials (1/3 of grade)
- In-class delivery and facilitation (1/3 of grade)

Mandatory Completion Policy

Note that all mandatory assignments and exams must be completed to the best of your ability in order for your final grade to be issued. Failure to complete a mandatory assignment or exam may result in a failing grade.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	97-100	Excellent Work
A	93-97	Outstanding Work
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good work
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

AEP Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the development of knowledge and learning is encouraged at many stages of the learning process. While we value technology for educational purposes, we also value originality and the retainment of knowledge, and thus using AI for assignments and examinations, even if rephrased, is strictly prohibited and considered an academic integrity violation, unless the instructor explicitly allows for it in the context of evaluated work

AEP Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

The AEP program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristics, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

AEP Diversity Policy

AEP is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community that values diversity in all its forms. We believe that one of the most meaningful lessons of studying abroad is learning to navigate and appreciate differences with curiosity and an open mind. While engaging across differences can sometimes be challenging or uncomfortable, these moments are essential for growth and learning. We recognize that every member of our community, even with the best intentions, may occasionally make missteps. Our commitment is to provide a supportive environment where respectful and honest dialogue helps us learn from these experiences, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive and broaden their perspective.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1	<p>CEE Introductory Lecture Series</p> <p>AEP Introductory Lecture Series</p>
Week 2	<p>Introduction – What Is AI in Communication?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of course themes, tools, and expectations. - Discussion on fears and fascinations surrounding AI in writing and speaking.
Week 3	<p>AI Writing vs. Human Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students generate a short AI draft and rewrite it in their own tone. - Group reflection on loss of voice. - Journal Entry #1 assigned: “What’s My Voice?” – Reflect on a piece of writing or speaking you’re proud of. What made it feel like you? How do you recognize your own voice in communication?
Week 4	<p>Prompting and Responsibility, Trust and Reliability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What we ask is what we get. - Students experiment with prompts and evaluate how they shape AI tone and accuracy. - Can you trust what AI says? - How do we verify information, tone, and intent in generated text?
Week 5	<p>Critiquing AI Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on what makes AI output vague, unconvincing, or misleading. - Journal Entry #2 assigned: “AI Wrote This for Me (But Would I Send It?)”

Week 6	<p>Flipped Class Presentation 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team 1 presents - Group discussion and feedback
Week 7	<p>AI and Manipulation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How automated language can be subtly persuasive or problematic. - Students test prompts to explore effects. - Journal Entry #3 assigned: "Spot the Fluff" – Critique a sample AI-generated paragraph.
Week 8	<p>Flipped Class Presentation 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team 2 presents - Group discussion and feedback
Week 9	<p>Ethics in AI Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can I claim authorship of what I didn't write? - Who is responsible for miscommunication? - Journal Entry #4 assigned: "Losing and Reclaiming Ownership"
Week 10	<p>Flipped Class Presentation 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team 3 presents - Group discussion and feedback
Week 11	<p>Flipped Class Presentation 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team 4 presents - Group discussion and feedback
Week 12	<p>Flipped Class Presentation 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team 5 presents - Group discussion and feedback
Week 13	<p>Final Group Presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All teams deliver final presentations - Scripts and slides due

Reading Materials

This course is not following a particular textbook by chapters. However, students are required to read assigned materials before class and to be fully prepared. An assigned reading (and viewing) list will be provided in-time before class sessions.

A variety of articles, case studies, excerpts from various books, videos etc., will replace a "traditional" text. The materials will be stored on the course web site and available for download. Students are required to download materials as the course progresses and to stay current with the readings. Case studies, articles and other handouts will also be used and posted on course web site. Presentation slides will be used during lectures and will be posted on the course website after class.

Some Reading and Viewing Material Sources (list is not exhaustive):

This list includes recent books and free-access articles aligned with each week of the course.

Core Books (For Excerpts or Optional Deeper Reading)

- Julian Baggini – How to Think Like a Philosopher: Essential Principles for Clearer Thinking (2023) Granta Books.
 - A practical yet accessible guide to sharpening critical thinking — ideal for supporting Weeks 5 and 9 when critiquing AI and discussing ethics in communication.
- Janelle Shane – You Look Like a Thing and I Love You: How AI Works and Why It's Making the World a Weirder Place (Updated 2023 Edition) Voracious / Hachette.
 - A humorous and sharp exploration of how AI misunderstands context, humor, and tone, perfect for Week 3 and Week 7 when students explore manipulation and loss of voice.
- Ed Newton-Rex – Who Wrote This? How AI is Rewriting the Rules of Creativity (2024). Penguin Random House.
 - A timely, engaging deep dive into authorship, creativity, and the blurred line between machine and human contribution — ideal for Week 9 and final presentations.

- Hannah Walters et al. – AI in Marketing: Applications, Insights, and Analysis (2022), Routledge.
 - Highly relevant for understanding real-world applications of AI language in professional contexts. Fits well with Weeks 4 and 5 on prompt shaping and vagueness in communication.
- Albert Wenger – The World After Capital (2022 edition) Self-published; available free online at worldaftercapital.org.
 - Offers a philosophical lens on how AI shifts human priorities, work, and communication. Useful for Week 2 and final reflection discussions.
- Toby Walsh – Machines Behaving Badly: The Morality of AI (2022) La Trobe University Press.
 - Excellent for Weeks 4, 7, 9 on trust, manipulation, and authorship.
- Eric Schmidt, Henry Kissinger, Daniel Huttenlocher – The Age of AI: And Our Human Future (2022) Back Bay Books.
 - Conceptual foundation for Week 2 and 9.
- Kate Crawford – Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence (2021) Yale University Press.
 - Recommended for critical reflection and ethics (Week 9).
- Tom Mustill – How to Speak Whale (2022)
 - Unexpected insight into non-human language. Fits Week 3 and authorship discussions.

Course Weekly-Linked Articles and Essays

Week 2

Introduction – What Is AI in Communication?

- **AI and the Future of Trust in Communication:**
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ai-and-the-future-of-trust-in-communication>
- **What AI Still Doesn't Know How to Do – Harvard Business Review:**
<https://hbr.org/2023/05/what-ai-still-doesnt-know-how-to-do>

Week 3

AI Writing vs. Human Voice

- **ChatGPT and the Rise of AI Ghostwriting – The Atlantic:**
<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2023/01/chatgpt-ai-ghostwriting-college-education/672728>
- **The Incoherence of AI Writing – MIT Technology Review:**
<https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/06/12/1074215/why-ai-writing-sucks>

Week 4

Prompting, Trust, and Responsibility

- **The Prompt Whisperers – New York Times:**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/09/technology/ai-prompt-engineering.html>
- **Can You Trust Generative AI? – Nature:** <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-00195-y>

Week 5

Critiquing AI Communication

- **Beyond the Hype: What Generative AI Can Actually Do – McKinsey:**
<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-generative-ai>
- **AI is Incredibly Persuasive – and Often Wrong – Wired:**
<https://www.wired.com/story/chatgpt-ai-lies-confidence>

Week 7

AI and Manipulation

- **The Subtle Power of AI in Shaping Opinions – Scientific American:**
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-subtle-power-of-ai-in-shaping-opinions>
- **The Hidden Role of Human Editors in Generative AI – MIT Technology Review:**
<https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/04/05/hidden-human-editors-in-generative-ai>

Week 9

Ethics in AI Writing

- **AI and the Question of Authorship – Nature:**
<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-00384-9>
- **Academic Integrity in the Age of AI – Times Higher Education:**
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/academic-integrity-age-ai>

Week 10 - 13

Final Project Support

- **AI as Writing Partner: When to Use, When to Stop – Harvard Business Review:**
<https://hbr.org/2023/06/ai-as-writing-partner-when-to-use-when-to-stop>
- **How to Communicate Ethically with AI Tools – Fast Company:**
<https://www.fastcompany.com/90900348/how-to-communicate-ethically-with-generative-ai>

All materials will be provided via the course platform.