

Exploring the New AI and Writing Certificate

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A new 9-credit certificate is being added to the English Department offerings. Any student, studying English or any other major, can now earn the AI and Writing Certificate by taking just three courses: ENGL 2170: AI and Writing: Cultural and Historical Perspectives, ENGL 3160: AI and Writing Across Disciplines, and one of four offered elective options.

The idea for the certificate began in spring of 2024, when Generative AI had been widely available for over a year. “The English Department recognized that it was influencing students’ everyday interactions with writing, from how they brainstormed, drafted, and revised written projects to the ways they interacted with informational texts and sources,” explains English Department Associate Professor Beth Buyserie, who helped design the certificate. “Additionally, new advances in AI were happening almost daily, and employers were indicating that graduates entering the workforce would need to have strong AI literacies and skills.”

As AI has become more popular, the changes it promotes have also brought ethical concerns and questions, which range from the impact on the environment to privacy measures to the effect on student learning. The certificate aims to help students address all these challenges.

Earning the certificate can allow students to build their resumes and show future employers that they are able to think critically about AI and understand how to use it to help companies, nonprofits, and community organizations grow. In addition, the certificate highlights the student’s

ability to write and use AI effectively and ethically in this process.

“It’s crucial that students be able to critically analyze and engage with generative AI in their courses, professions, communities, and everyday digital platforms,” Beth comments. “Many employers will also be expecting students to have critical AI literacies in addition to durable skills of strong written and oral communication, critical thinking, professionalism, and teamwork—all learning outcomes of the certificate.”

The coursework is designed to help students retain skills in analyzing AI outputs, applying AI tools effectively, investigating AI perspectives and its history, evaluating the impacts of AI, and developing important soft skills in writing and communication. Because of the changing landscape of AI and its technologies, faculty who teach the courses will update curriculum regularly so students can learn about current theories and perspectives regarding AI. Additionally, the courses will rotate between in-person and online formats each year to offer flexibility and accessibility to statewide students