

GLOBAL AI SUMMER ACADEMY

Program Syllabus

Class Details

This course is designed for live, in-person learning sessions at the University of Washington campus in Seattle, Washington. Please review the course schedule for session times, dates, people, and additional information.

Calendar

August 3, 2026 - August 14, 2026

Main Program Instructors



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AI & Storytelling in the Age of AI

This two-week intensive introduces advanced undergraduate and graduate students to AI technologies through the lens of human storytelling and strategic communication. Students develop practical AI literacy, learning to prompt effectively, evaluate tools critically, and design responsible workflows while strengthening the creative and collaborative skills that make communications professionals valuable.

The program culminates in a **final group future-oriented project** in which small teams identify and respond to a real-world AI challenge through a design, marketing, or policy lens. Along the way, students complete individual mini-projects to build competencies and leave with a portfolio-ready artifact or policy.

Learning Objectives

By the end of two weeks, students will be able to:

- Apply prompt engineering techniques to generate effective AI outputs for storytelling projects
- Evaluate and select appropriate AI tools for specific communication tasks
- Develop workflows that integrate AI tools while preserving human creativity and strategic decision-making
- Analyze trade-offs between AI-generated and human-created content in professional contexts
- Articulate responsible AI use in storytelling and content creation
- Design campaigns or communications work that effectively combines AI tools with human creativity
- Articulate how AI is transforming communications careers and identify valuable future skills
- Practice collaborative, iterative approaches to AI-assisted work through team projects and peer feedback

Course Materials

The majority of readings and course materials are provided in our Canvas course as links or PDF files.

Books for additional reading (optional):

- Dr. Ethan Mollick's book - [Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI](#)
- Dr. Joy Buolamwini - [Unmasking AI: My Mission to Protect What is Human in a World of Machines](#)

Course Communications

We will be using our Canvas site for all course-related communications.

Tool Access & Costs

There are many generative AI tools you can use for this class. We stay as tool-agnostic as possible. Most tools have free access tiers. If you subscribe to a higher-tier plan (Pro or Plus), you'll notice more features and capabilities, which can be useful to test.

We will demo with different tools throughout the program, including ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Notebook LM, and Midjourney. If you don't already have accounts, you'll need to create them, free accounts work for most sessions. The University of Washington also encourages students to consider Microsoft Copilot, which is free to UW students:

<https://it.uw.edu/uware/microsoft-copilot-chat/>

We'll use Midjourney to demonstrate AI image generation. Unlike the other tools, Midjourney does not have a free tier, please review plan options at <https://docs.midjourney.com/docs/plans> before the program begins.

If any of this is cost-prohibitive, please reach out. We can explore shared access and lower-cost alternatives and will never ask you to purchase something without a workaround available.

Assignments

This program uses a combination of individual reflections, hands-on mini-projects, and a culminating group project. Assignments are designed to build on each other; early work feeds directly into later sessions and your final deliverable.

Daily Reflections

At the end of each day, you'll submit a **short reflection (150–250 words)**, responding to a prompt connected to that day's session. Reflections are not graded on polish; they're a space to process what surprised you, what challenged your assumptions, and what you're still working through. Strong reflections are honest and specific rather than comprehensive.

Final Group Futures Project

Working in small teams, you'll identify a real-world AI challenge and develop a response through a design, marketing, or policy lens. Your team will use a design-thinking and futures-oriented framework to move from research and ideation to a final deliverable, presented to an industry and faculty panel on **August 14**.

Teams choose one deliverable format:

- Creative campaign, positioning, brief, mood board, and sample assets
- Policy or guidelines document, responsible AI use for an organization or communications team
- Research & strategy report, AI-assisted analysis with strategic recommendations
- Futures scenario, a speculative design artifact exploring an AI-related challenge

Mentor support and structured feedback are provided throughout Week 2. You'll leave with a portfolio-ready artifact that demonstrates both AI fluency and strategic thinking.

Week 1: Foundations in AI and Storytelling – Content and Practice

August 3 - 7

Week one establishes the foundation for the entire program. Students build fluency in AI prompting techniques and apply them to real-world case studies, creative campaign development, and brand research. We explore how AI language and image models actually work, not as black boxes, but as tools that respond to how you direct them. Students move from strategic research through to visual storytelling, translating a one-page Creative Brief into storyboard form using AI image generation tools. The emphasis throughout is on creative discernment: learning to direct AI with intention, recognize the assumptions it makes, and evaluate outputs critically before anything reaches a client or production team.

Week 1 Learning Objectives

By the end of Week 1, students will be able to:

- Identify the core components of a campaign kit and understand how each artifact functions within a creative workflow
- Apply foundational prompting techniques, including zero-shot, one-shot, and few-shot approaches, to generate useful research and strategic outputs
- Use AI as a research partner to develop a Market Audit Report grounded in real brand evidence

- Begin building a personal prompt library as a reusable professional asset
- Write a Visual Brief that translates campaign research into specific, actionable direction for AI image generation
- Apply the 4R Framework, Relevance, Respect, Risk, and Responsibility, to evaluate AI-generated content for a specific brand and audience
- Evaluate creative outputs against strategic intent, emotional impact, and cultural distinctiveness rather than surface polish

Week 1 Sessions at a Glance

Day	Morning (9 am - noon)	Afternoon (2 - 5 pm)	Evening (5 - 7 pm)
Monday Aug 3	Orientation & Foundations AI literacy, media literacy, community building	Personal branding & professional identity with AI	Welcome reception & dinner
Tuesday Aug 4	Prompt Engineering & Workflows; Agentic AI	Industry showcase: Seattle AI startups panel	
Wednesday Aug 5	Creative Campaign Development		
Thursday Aug 6	Creativity, Storytelling & AI		Guest panel: AI, storytelling & communication careers
Friday Aug 7	Responsible AI & Ethical Design	AI research at UW	

Week 2: Collaborative Project Development, Iteration and Presentation

August 10 - 14

Week two shifts from individual skill-building to collaborative application. Students move into team-based project work, applying the tools, frameworks, and creative habits developed in Week 1 to a real-world AI challenge. The week is structured to mirror a compressed professional sprint: teams ideate, prototype, gather feedback, iterate, and present with mentor support throughout. Guest speakers and field experiences broaden students’ sense of where AI is heading and what it means for their careers.

The week draws on design thinking and futures-oriented methodologies to help teams move beyond what currently exists and imagine what could, and should, come next. By the end of the program, every student will have worked on a real problem, received feedback from professionals in the field, and produced something portfolio-ready.

Week 2 Learning Objectives

By the end of Week 2, students will be able to:

- Apply a design thinking or futures-oriented framework to structure a team-based response to an AI challenge
- Collaborate effectively in a small team using AI tools to accelerate ideation and production
- Give and receive structured feedback on AI-assisted work in progress

- Present a portfolio-ready project to an industry and faculty audience with clarity and confidence
- Articulate how AI is reshaping communications, storytelling, and creative careers, and identify the human skills that remain irreplaceable

Week 2 Sessions at a Glance

Day	Morning (9 am - noon)	Afternoon (2 - 5 pm)	Evening (5 - 7 pm)
Monday Aug 10	Week 1 Review; Solopreneurship & Using AI to Build Agency	Group project work begins	Guest speaker: Privacy, Trust & AI
Tuesday Aug 11	Ideation with AI; Team dynamics; Building with AI tools	Visit to KEXP	
Wednesday Aug 12	Visit to GIX at Microsoft		Evening session: Futures thinking & speculative design
Thursday Aug 13	Group project work with mentor feedback	Group project work with mentor feedback	FIUTS Family Host Dinner
Friday Aug 14	Final presentation prep	Student presentations & project showcase (industry & faculty panel)	Closing dinner & celebration

General questions? Contact commleadacademy@uw.edu



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