

AI Literacy

CS-215-50 · Fall 2026

Understand how AI works. Create with it. Verify what it produces. Remain accountable.

INSTRUCTOR	Weihaio Qu, Ph.D.	CLASS TIME	Tuesday and Thursday, 6:05–7:25 PM
EMAIL	wqu@monmouth.edu	LOCATION	Howard Hall 211
OFFICE	Howard Hall 227	TERM DATES	September 8–December 22, 2026, including the adjusted final period
PHONE	732-263-5396	CREDITS	3 credits; TL course
OFFICE HOURS	Announced in the LMS and available by appointment	PREREQUISITE	None listed in the catalog

Start with the student course hub

The course hub contains each released week, classroom slides, practice activities, assignments, videos, and references. Course weeks open progressively; the LMS remains the authority for deadlines, submission links, and grades.

Open the CS-215 AI Literacy web course

<https://monmouthaiteaching.com/learnai/>



Scan to open the same URL



Course purpose

AI literacy is more than knowing how to prompt a chatbot. In this course, students learn to distinguish a language model from an agent, decide what a system may do, protect sensitive information, verify claims and transformations, create reviewable digital artifacts, and explain the human decisions that remain responsible for the result.

The course uses two 80-minute class meetings each week. Students learn through short explanations, worked examples, prediction and discussion, bounded tool practice, evidence packets, and a staged final project. Prior programming experience is not required. Tool access, installation success, or purchasing power does not by itself demonstrate learning; course-owned and instructor-approved routes are provided when an activity requires an equivalent path.

Official catalog description

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy and the emerging practice of using natural language to guide AI in building digital projects. Students will learn to leverage AI tools to enhance productivity in daily life, ranging from organizing information and professional writing to building interactive web projects. Through hands-on practice with industry-standard AI assistants and digital workspaces, students will master the art of “prompting” (giving effective instructions), rapid prototyping, and launching applications. The course also addresses critical topics in AI ethics, security risks in AI-generated content, and the responsible use of generative technologies for career development.

Source: [Monmouth University 2026–2027 Undergraduate Catalog](#).

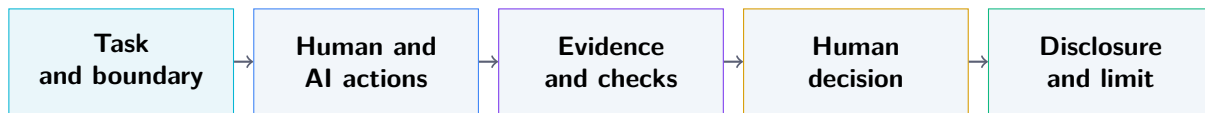
Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, a successful student will be able to:

1. Explain, in plain language, how large language models use tokens, context, and probabilistic prediction, and distinguish a model, assistant, agent, tool, skill, and MCP connection.
2. Write bounded instructions that state the task, authorized context, constraints, expected evidence, human-review point, and stopping condition.
3. Evaluate AI output for unsupported claims, fabricated citations, uncertainty, bias, privacy risk, and mismatch with the intended task.
4. Produce reviewable AI-assisted writing, spreadsheet, media, and presentation artifacts with meaningful disclosure and source or decision evidence.
5. Design, implement, test, and release a small static web application using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and appropriately bounded AI assistance.
6. Apply ethical principles to concrete university and workplace decisions involving transparency, fairness, privacy, accountability, safety, access, and power.
7. Map security and privacy boundaries, test a synthetic or class-safe case, make or propose a proportionate repair, and report what remains untested.
8. Present and defend a calibrated claim about a digital artifact by connecting the claim to visible evidence, human decisions, limitations, and a next step.

The course evidence model

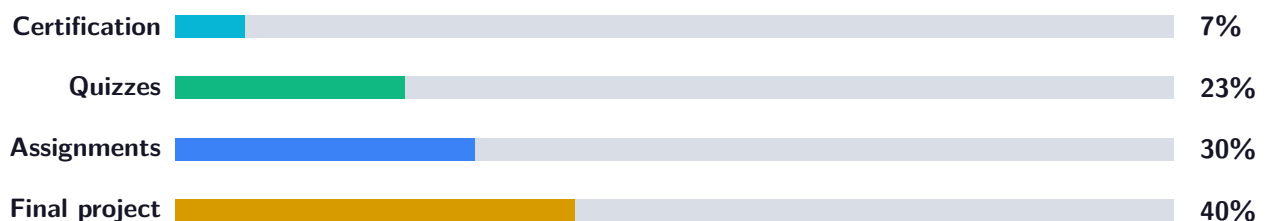
The strongest course work makes five relationships visible:



Polish alone is not evidence of understanding. Depending on the learning target, students may be asked to preserve a decision log, source check, expected-versus-observed test, bounded prompt summary, revision rationale, disclosure, oral explanation, or live demonstration. Students should submit only the evidence the assignment requests and should remove private or irrelevant information.

Assessment and grading

Category	Weight	What it evaluates
Claude certification pathway	7%	Approved preparation (2%), a scheduled official exam attempt or approved equivalent (3%), and a short evidence-based reflection (2%). The external pass/fail result does not change this course score.
Quizzes	23%	Short, individual checks of taught or clearly assigned course concepts. Dates, coverage, and individual quiz weights are announced in eCampus before each quiz.
Web-course assignments	30%	Four principal evidence packets from Weeks 3–6, normally weighted equally at 7.5% each.
Final project	40%	A staged web artifact and evidence trail developed across Weeks 8–14, ending with a final showcase and defense.
Total	100%	



Quizzes

Quizzes together account for 23% of the final grade. They assess concepts taught in class or clearly assigned in advance. Quizzes are individual and closed book, with no notes, internet, AI, or assistance from another person. eCampus will announce each quiz's coverage, date, time limit, and share of the quiz category before administration. The Day 1 diagnostic pre-test is ungraded and does not count toward this category.

Web-course assignments

The 30% assignment category consists of four principal course packets:

Week	Artifact	Core evidence
3	Responsible AI Policy Memo	Evidence-calibrated analysis, operational policy, fairness argument, sources, and AI-use disclosure.
4	Reviewable Revision Packet	Permission, source boundary, revision decisions, verification, disclosure, and defense.
5	Data Evidence Packet	Data protection, cleaning decisions, formulas, charts, audit checks, and supported claims.
6	Media and Microdeck Evidence Packet	Purpose, authorized sources, candidate critique, accessible repair, provenance, and truthful use.

Final project

The final project begins with a one-screen app design in Week 8 and develops through client-side interaction, testing, release and recovery, source verification, prompting, security review, and final defense. The project may use an instructor-approved public or local demonstration route. Public deployment, a paid AI account, or prior programming experience is not itself a grading requirement. The final-project rubric evaluates purpose and scope, working behavior, test evidence, source and assistance traceability, privacy and security boundaries, accessibility, explanation, and calibrated limitations.

Letter grades

Grade	Range	Grade	Range	Grade	Range
A	93–100	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	63–66	D–	60–62	F	0–59

Claude certification pathway

The official Claude certification pathway is 7% of the final course grade. Monmouth University participates in the Claude partner program. Students use their MU email address to register, the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering covers the required exam fee, and the department secretary assists with registration and payment logistics. The instructor and LMS will identify the assigned credential, preparation milestones, approved evidence, and deadlines.

The course score for this category is based on approved preparation milestones (2%), making the scheduled official exam attempt and submitting the limited evidence requested in the LMS (3%), and a short reflection connecting the experience to course learning (2%). The external credential provider determines whether a student passes and earns the credential. That external pass/fail result does not raise or lower the 7% course score. If a verified provider, registration, or payment failure outside the student's control prevents the scheduled attempt, an instructor-approved equivalent assessment earns the same 3%.

Students must follow the official certification provider's examination rules. Unless those rules explicitly allow it, no AI assistant, outside person, unauthorized notes, copied exam content, or other prohibited aid may be used during the exam. Earning the credential is not automatic; preparation and independent performance matter.

For course evidence, submit only what the LMS requests. Never submit government identification, payment information, account credentials, proctoring recordings, private exam content, or copied official questions. If a documented accessibility, technical, religious, scheduling, or institutional registration barrier prevents the standard external exam path, contact the instructor promptly. The instructor will coordinate with the relevant university office and arrange an equivalent assessment of the same learning outcomes when warranted.

[Open the course certification and preparation guide](https://monmouthaiteaching.com/learnai/ccarf-certification-pathway.html)

<https://monmouthaiteaching.com/learnai/ccarf-certification-pathway.html>

Course policy for AI assistance

This is an AI literacy course, so AI use is taught rather than treated as uniformly permitted or uniformly prohibited. The governing question is whether the specific assignment authorizes the use and whether the student's evidence shows the learning being assessed.

Rule	Course expectation
Allowed when authorized	Students may use AI for studying, brainstorming, explaining course concepts, planning, comparing options, debugging, and improving drafts when the assignment permits that assistance.
Disclosure required	Submitted work must identify the tool when known, the type and stage of help, important human changes or rejections, and how consequential claims, sources, calculations, or behavior were checked.
Verification required	Students remain responsible for every submitted claim, citation, calculation, transformation, file, and external action. Fluent output is not automatically accurate or supported.
Prohibited use	Students may not submit unauthorized AI-generated work as evidence of their own learning, fabricate or misrepresent sources or data, use AI during a closed assessment or certification exam unless explicitly authorized, or automate an external action beyond the assignment's permission.
Privacy boundary	Do not upload peer work, instructor-owned materials, unpublished research, grades, health or identity data, confidential records, credentials, private course content, or other protected information to an unapproved third-party AI tool.
Assignment-specific rule	Each assignment may narrow or expand permitted assistance. When the rule is silent or uncertain, ask before using AI on submitted work.

Academic integrity decisions will use the submitted work, assignment instructions, relevant evidence, and an appropriate response process. A writing-style suspicion or AI-detector score alone is not treated by this course as proof of misconduct. Students must also follow the [University Academic Honesty policy](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Collaboration and evidence

Discussion, peer feedback, and group analysis are part of the course. Unless a task is explicitly designated as group work, each student must make and submit their own decisions and explanations. Reusing another student's artifact, prompt record, analysis, or answer without authorization and acknowledgment does not demonstrate individual learning. When classmates provide feedback, preserve the useful idea rather than unnecessary identifying information.

Technological Literacy alignment

CS-215 is designated as a Technological Literacy course. The course addresses the University's TL expectations through the following assessed evidence.

TL	Capability	Where students demonstrate it
TL 1	Scholarly documents, citations, references, and graphic displays	Week 4 reviewable writing; Week 11 source trail; Week 14 final evidence and presentation materials.
TL 2	Spreadsheet entry, formulas, analysis, and graphical display	Week 5 data and Excel workflow using a synthetic dataset, checked formulas, a defensible chart, and an evidence-backed memo claim.

TL	Capability	Where students demonstrate it
TL 3	Presentation practices supporting oral communication	Week 6 accessible microdeck and Week 14 evidence defense, including visual hierarchy, source/provenance decisions, and accessible alternatives.
TL 4	Effective search, source evaluation, judicious use, and academic integrity	Weeks 3, 4, 11, and 12 through verified sources, lateral reading, citation/disclosure distinctions, source boundaries, and fixed-case prompt evaluation.
TL 5	Ethical and social issues in technology	Week 3 ethics and policy work and recurring decisions about fairness, transparency, privacy, accountability, safety, access, and power.
TL 6	Computer and Internet security plus storage and retrieval	Weeks 2, 9, 10, and 13 through bounded agent permissions, file/package checkpoints, release and recovery, secret protection, threat mapping, and security retesting.

Learning sequence and adaptive release

The numbered sequence below describes the course's learning progression. It is not a promise that every numbered module occupies exactly two ordinary meetings. The web course opens adaptively, and the LMS course calendar controls exact dates and due times. A separate policy lab follows the Week 3 ethics module.

Week	Topic	Learning focus and evidence
1	Course Map and What Is an LLM?	Tokens, context, probabilistic output, unsupported claims, verification priorities, and course orientation. No graded homework.
2	Agent Foundations and Human Review	Model versus agent; tools, skills, and MCP; agent loop, permissions, checkpoints, human approval, setup readiness, and a no-install route.
3	AI Ethics and Responsible Use	Ethics reviews, transparency, fairness, privacy, accountability, safety, power, university policy, and a Responsible AI Policy Memo.
–	Policy Lab after Week 3	An additional in-class policy challenge: individual judgment, group stress tests, defense, and evidence carried into the Week 3 memo.
4	Reviewable AI-Assisted Writing	Prompt briefs, source boundaries, revision decisions, specificity, verification, disclosure, and a Reviewable Revision Packet.
5	Data, Excel, and Evidence Workflows	Protected data, spreadsheet triage, formulas, charts as claims, auditing, MCP boundaries, and a Data Evidence Packet.
6	AI Media, Accessibility, and Evidence	Responsible image planning, reviewable slide generation, skill inspection, critique, repair, accessibility, provenance, and disclosure.

Week	Topic	Learning focus and evidence
7	Integration Studio	Integrate Weeks 1–6 through workflow analysis and an evidence packet; defend one bounded workflow and seed the final project.
8	Web Basics and App Design	One-screen scope, HTML/CSS/JavaScript responsibilities, interface states, wireframe, prompt contract, critique, and app design packet.
9	Interactivity and Simple Intelligence	One input, event, transparent rule, visible result, missing-input behavior, client-side implementation, and expected-versus-observed tests.
10	Complete, Release, and Recover	Completion criteria, checkpoint and manifest, local or public release route, smoke tests, release diagnosis, recovery, disclosure, and limitation.
11	Research, Sources, and Career Evidence	Verify one project claim, build a source trail, distinguish citation from AI disclosure, map career evidence, and tell a calibrated project story.
12	Prompt Strategy and Source Boundaries	Compare prompts and strategies, test fixed synthetic cases, audit untrusted context, revise from evidence, and state a human-review rule.
13	Security Review and Evidence	Threat mapping, safe adversarial tests, triage, minimum sufficient fix, retest, secrets boundary, and a calibrated security claim.
14	Final Showcase and Reflection	Rehearse and deliver an evidence defense, answer difficult questions, use peer feedback, revise one decision, disclose assistance, and name a limitation and next step.

Fall 2026 calendar anchors

Date	Course-calendar meaning
Tuesday, September 8	Classes begin; Week 1 orientation and baseline learning activities begin.
Tuesday, October 20	No class for the University Fall Holiday.
Wednesday–Sunday, November 25–29	Thanksgiving Holiday; no class on Thursday, November 26.
Monday, December 14	The University's thirteenth week ends.
Tuesday, December 15	Reading Day.
December 16–22	University adjusted fourteenth-week schedule; consult the Registrar and LMS for this course's final meeting time.

Current official dates are available from the [Monmouth University Fall 2026 Academic Calendar](#). If the University changes its calendar, the official calendar and LMS announcement control.

Submission, attendance, and recovery

Submission and deadlines. Submit graded work through the LMS unless an assignment names another approved route. The LMS supplies the exact due date, time, timezone, point value, late rule, resubmission rule, and accepted format. Course pages explain the learning task and evidence boundary; they do not replace the LMS gradebook or calendar.

Attendance and participation. This is an activity-centered course. Attend both weekly meetings, arrive prepared to discuss and test ideas, and take responsibility for material and announcements missed during an absence. Participation supports learning but is not a separate percentage in the grading formula.

Barriers and missed work. Contact the instructor as early as possible when illness, emergency, access, technology, religious observance, or another documented barrier affects participation or a deadline. Approved University accommodations and applicable University policies will be honored. Specific recovery, makeup, or alternative evidence arrangements are made through the instructor and LMS rather than assumed from the web course.

Technology problems. Save checkpoints and local copies before deadlines. A failed AI service, expired session, lost prompt, or broken deployment does not erase the need to communicate promptly, but students may use the course's local, paper, transcript, synthetic-data, or instructor-approved accessible routes when those routes assess the same outcome.

Required access and materials

- A laptop or regular access to a campus computer capable of using a modern web browser and the LMS.
- The [CS-215 web course](#), the [Monmouth LMS](#), and instructor-provided readings and files. There is no required commercial textbook.
- An MU email account for course communication and the department-supported Claude certification registration.
- Access to course-approved AI tools when a task calls for them. An account-free, no-install, supervised, or

instructor-provided evidence route may be used when specified.

- A way to create and export common document, spreadsheet, presentation, and HTML files. Campus resources may be used.

University policies and student support

The links below point to the current University source. Students are responsible for the complete policy, not only this brief syllabus description.

Academic honesty and conduct

Students must submit authorized work, acknowledge sources and assistance, and follow the assignment's stated AI rules. Monmouth's academic regulations identify unauthorized AI-prepared material, false citation, and deliberately misleading data as academic-integrity concerns. Review the [Academic Honesty policy](#) and [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Classroom recording

Audio or video recording in classroom settings requires explicit permission from the instructor, except as provided through an approved accommodation. Recording or distributing fellow students or course materials without permission is prohibited under the University's [Classroom Recording Policy](#).

Disability services and accessible participation

Students who may need disability-related accommodations should contact the [Department of Disability Services for Students](#). DDS is located at the Rebecca Stafford Student Center and may be reached at dds@monmouth.edu or 732-571-3460. Students are encouraged to begin the process early. The course accepts approved accessible alternatives that preserve the learning outcome.

Learning and wellness support

Students may use campus tutoring, writing, library, technology, health, counseling, and other support resources. The [Student Handbook campus-services page](#) provides current links and contact information. Asking for help early is part of responsible project and learning practice.

How to use this syllabus

Use this document for the stable course structure: purpose, outcomes, grading weights, major policies, and learning sequence. Use the web course for released lessons and materials. Use the LMS for official deadlines, submission links, scoring rubrics, announcements, and any approved individual arrangement.

Build what you can explain. Verify what you claim. Protect what should not travel.