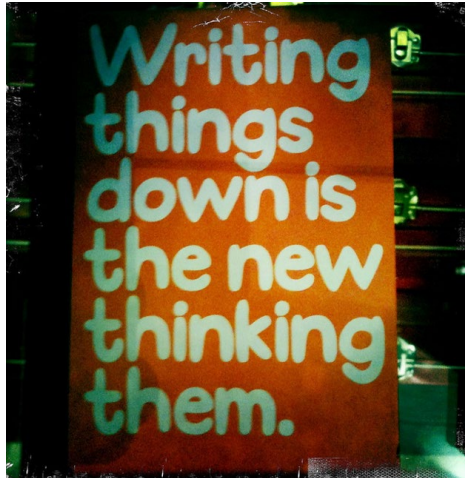


IDH 3931, Un(Common) Writes: Prompt & Circumstance

Section UW01 / Course# 23580 / This is an honor's course: Fall 2025

Wednesdays, 4th period (10:40 am - 11:30 am), LIT 119

- Instructor: Mickey S Schafer, PhD / 2215D Turlington Hall / msscha@ufl.edu / 846-1138 / or via Canvas Inbox (which guarantees attention!)
- Office Hours: Mondays, 4th (10:40 am – 11:30 am) and by appointment



Ethan Mollick of "[co-intelligence](#)" and "[One Useful Thing](#)" fame claims that to make AI/LLMs work **for** you, you must learn how to help them work **with** you. The key is prompting — using the right set of instructions so the program understands what you want it to do (a.k.a., "prompt engineering"). Mollick recommends spending time **each day** using AI (at least 10 minutes) in various ways until you become comfortable with what LLMs can and cannot seem to do for/with you. He also advises choosing **one big thing** that you'd like AI/LLMs to accomplish.

In the interests of transparency, **I am NOT an expert in AI**. Like you, I'm learning how to use this new technology tool and struggling to find the time to do so effectively. In the spirit of curiosity and experimentation, this class aims to spend a semester using UF's suite of LLMs to write prompts and accomplish writing (or writing-adjacent) tasks. We will examine the contexts of AI/LLM, the circumstances of their use. In doing so, we'll discover how to use LLMs to do work that is valuable, effective, and ethical.

Texts and Technologies

There is no required textbook for this class. There are required readings, about one article per week during the first half of the semester, which will be supplied in Canvas. Articles are meant to help you do the writing work!

Please bring an internet-capable device to each class. The device should be able to access LLMs, Canvas, and to write in class.

Per UF policy, using Canvas is required in this class. IDH 3931 adheres to the [UF Student Computing Requirements](#).

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of class, students will be able to:

- (Content) explain the difference between LLMs and human discourse.
- (Critical Thinking) analyze LLM output in terms of value, efficacy, and appropriateness.
- (Communication) write LLM prompts and explain them to others.

Assignments

- Readings – 25%
 - Be prepared to use for class discussion
- Project Notebooks – 50%
 - The majority of work for the class takes place in project notebooks which you will use to record, explain, and speculate on your LLM experiences.
 - There will be a combination of in-class and out-of-class PN entries
 - Some entries are instructor provided and some will be student choice
 - We will use the Canvas Discussion Function for these assignments – each student will have a personal notebook (you'll be in a discussion group of 1)
- Final Project: One Useful Thing – 25%
 - About halfway through the semester, each student will choose a task for the LLM to perform. I will be doing this, too! Students will explain the task itself, the motivation for this task, how they accomplished it, and how they might continue using it.

Grading

This course follows [UF grades and grading policies](#). This class will use the UF recommended grading scale.

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%

D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 60.0%
F	< 60.0 %	to 0.0%

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required. The policy of the University Writing Program is that if students accrue more than **six periods** of unexcused absences during the term, they will fail the entire course. Double periods count as two absences.

The UWP exempts from this policy **only** those absences that are considered excused by university standards. Students should discuss absences related to university-sponsored events with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed.

UWP requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

- For absences due to quarantine or illness, your instructor may require a signed doctor's note.
- For extended absences due to illness or other circumstances, students should consult with U Matter We Care: <http://umatter.ufl.edu>, umatter@ufl.edu, 352-294-2273 (CARE), Dean of Students: <https://dso.ufl.edu/>, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261

Please note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Campus classes: Students are expected to attend face-to-face classes in person. Instructors may grant permission to attend class via Zoom in certain circumstances. Attending class via Zoom is by **instructor permission only** and instructors have no obligation to grant such requests.

CLASS RECORDING POLICY

The State of Florida has passed a law regarding the recording of classes by students.

- A Student may record a **class lecture** for three specified purposes as outlined in House Bill 233/Section 1004.097, Florida Statutes:
 1. For the student's own personal educational use;
 2. In connection with a complaint to the University where the recording is made;
 3. As evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding.
- Students may audio or video record a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled. Students do not need advance permission, or to provide notice, to record.
- A class lecture is defined as an educational presentation delivered by faculty (instructor of record) or guest lecturer, as part of a University of Florida course, intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Lecture is inclusive of faculty-led discussions that are integrated into the educational presentation.
- A class lecture **does not** include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, **academic exercises involving student participation**, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.
- A recording of a class lecture may not be published without the consent of the lecturer.
 - **Publish** is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing access to a Recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.
 - A recording, or transcript of the recording, is considered to be published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper or leaflet.
- A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

CLASSROOM DEMEANOR

Students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write may engage controversial topics and opinions. Much of this class is discussion-based, so it is vital that we show respect for each other's views. Please demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own.

Students are required to mute cell phones, laptops, and tablets during class. Ringing phones and text messaging is an unprofessional disruption. Please let your instructor know about personal emergencies requiring phone contact.

Treat class time as an opportunity ***not*** to multi-task!

IN-CLASS WORK

Active participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

DUE DATES AND MAKE-UP POLICY

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline. Failure of technology is not an excuse. Late papers will not be accepted except in cases of documented absences. If illness or injury prevents a student from turning in a paper on time, the student should consult with the instructor to turn in the work as soon as is feasible given the situation.

READINGS

Reading assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the date on which they are due. Students should have completed these readings before coming to class that day.

EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluer.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

PAPER MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for maintaining copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to make this material available.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All papers will be submitted as **MS Word (.doc, .docx) documents** to Canvas. PDFs will be accepted **only** when document design or graphics is critical, such as for a resume or infographic. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. Because professional communication varies in document design, all papers will have specific formatting guidelines to follow. Please read these carefully and ask questions early to avoid losing points.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the [UF Conduct Code website](#) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. **Quoting oral or written materials** including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, **without proper attribution.**
2. **Submitting a document or assignment** which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment **not authored by the student.**

Each student’s work will be tested for originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute proof of plagiarism. Some (but not all!) examples of plagiarism are copying-and-pasting anything from the Internet without proper quotation, citation, or attributive tags, and using work you have previously submitted without permission from the instructor.

Cheating is defined as using or attempting to use “unauthorized materials or resources in any academic activity for academic advantage or benefit”. *Cheating includes use of “entities” to complete work.*

“Entity” is defined in the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (<https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/>) in Section 2, “Definitions” as:

Entity	This includes but is not limited to generative artificial intelligence, large language models, content generation bots, or other non-human intelligence or digital tools.
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Several items in “Cheating” refer to the use of Entities.

1. Using any materials or resources prepared by another person or **Entity** without the other person or Entity’s express Consent or without proper attribution to the other person or Entity.
2. Using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit to a Student.
5. Collaborating with another person or **Entity**, through any medium, on any academic activity, when Faculty has expressly prohibited collaboration.
6. Commissioning or seeking to commission another person or **Entity**, with or without compensation, to produce or complete academic work or to impersonate a student in any academic activity.

Instructors may choose if students can use an Entity for class assignments and if so, under what conditions. If you are not sure about the instructor's policy regarding the use of Entities for completing assignments, please ask *before submitting an assignment*.

If you commit academic dishonesty, the instructor will submit the incident to the Dean of Students Office as an Honor Code violation.

CAMPUS RESOURCES: NOTIFICATION LETTER FROM DEAN OF STUDENTS REQUIRED FOR PERSONAL EMERGENCY

Students who experience a family or personal emergency (death in the family, unplanned hospitalization, etc.) may contact the Dean of Students Office and request notification letters be sent to their professors. Students are required to provide faculty members with appropriate documentation to support their absence unless, due to the nature of the issue, the information is provided to and verified by the Dean of Students' Office.

CAMPUS RESOURCES: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center – [click here to get started](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

CAMPUS RESOURCES: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

For guidance during distressing situations, please contact U Matter We Care or the Dean of Students Office. They can help students navigate resources and academic procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues.

- U Matter We Care: <http://umatter.ufl.edu>, umatter@ufl.edu, 352-294-2273 (CARE) Dean of Students: <https://dso.ufl.edu/>, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261
- Field and Fork Pantry: <https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>, located near McCarty B, 352-294-2208
- Student Health Care Center: <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>, multiple locations, (352) 392-1161
- Aid-a-Gator: <https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/aidagator/>, S-107 Criser Hall, (352) 392-1275
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

CAMPUS RESOURCES: ACADEMIC LIFE

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- [CLAS Academic Resources](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).
- *On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the [Complaint Portal webpage](#) for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the [Student Complaint Procedure webpage](#) for more information.
- Honors Program, 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519
 - Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu
 - Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings: <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>

Notes/Questions:

Class Schedule

Readings are due before class on the week they are assigned.

Notebooks are homework due the Monday after class.

Week One/Two, Sept 3 – The human in the loop

- Readings
 - Aasgaard, “Generative AI vs. Large Language Models: Understanding the differences”, Transformers.ai
 - <https://transformers.ai/generative-ai-vs-large-language-models-understanding-the-differences/>
 - Ethan Mollick, “Thinking like an AI”, One Useful Thing
 - <https://www.oneusefulthing.org/p/thinking-like-an-ai>
- Class Discussion: Personal history with AI/LLMs, Testing Use Cases
- Project Notebooks
 - PN 1: All the LLMs + Use Case

Week Three, Sept 10 – All the LLMs (UF’s Navigator AI)

- Readings
 - Chapter 2, Teaching With AI (pdf provided in Canvas)
- Class Discussion: What is AI good for? “Zero shot” prompting
- Project Notebooks
 - PN 2: One Useful Thing: Life or Class

Week Four, Sept 17 – Strategy 1: Hierarchical Approach (multi-level tasks)

- Readings
 - Abbas, How to Implement Prompt Engineering for Optimizing LLM Performance?
 - <https://dev.to/hakeem/how-to-implement-prompt-engineering-for-optimizing-llm-performance-bpn>
 - Mollick and Mollick, 2023, “Assigning AI: Seven approaches for students with prompts”
 - <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4475995>
- Class Discussion: value and limits of using Roles
- Project Notebooks
 - PN 3: Fun with Hierarchy

Week Five, Sept 24 – Strategy 2: Few shot learning (domain specific tasks)

- Readings
 - “In context Learning Guide”, PromptHub
 - <https://www.prompthub.us/blog/in-context-learning-guide>
 - “The Few Shot Prompting Guide”, PromptHub
 - <https://www.prompthub.us/blog/the-few-shot-prompting-guide>
- Class Discussion: Using examples, what are delimiters?
- Project Notebooks
 - PN 4: Fun with Few Shot Learning

Week Six, Oct 1 – Strategy 3: Chain of Thought/Reasoning Prompting (complex tasks)

- Readings
 - Aasgaard, “Exploring Chain of Thought Prompting: a beginner’s guide,” Transformers.ai
 - <https://transformers.ai/exploring-chain-of-thought-prompting-a-beginners-guide/>
 - Pankaj, “Chain of Thought Prompting: Guiding LLMs Step-by-Step”
 - https://medium.com/@pankaj_pandey/chain-of-thought-prompting-guiding-llms-step-by-step-e6eac32d02d8
- Class Discussion: AI “reasoning”?
- Project Notebooks
 - PN 5: Fun with Chain of Thought Prompting

Week Seven, Oct 8 – Valuable Work

- Readings
 - Eric Hudson, “AI skills that matter, Part 1: Extending the mind,” Learning on Purpose
 - <https://erichudson.substack.com/p/ai-skills-that-matter-part-1-extending>
 - Eric Hudson, AI skills that matter, Part 2: Lateral reading
 - <https://erichudson.substack.com/p/ai-skills-that-matter-part-2-lateral>
- Class Discussion: what works matters to you?
- Project Notebooks
 - PN 6: Freestyling!

Week Eight, Oct 15 – Valuable Play

- Readings
 - Eric Larson, AI skills that matter: playfulness

- <https://erichudson.substack.com/p/ai-skills-that-matter-part-3-playfulness>
- Class Discussion: Work, Play, Both?
- Project Notebooks
 - PN 7: Play!

Week Nine, Oct 22 – Ethical Work

- Readings
 - TBD
- Class Discussion: Agency, Authorship, Ownership and AI
- Project Notebooks

Week Ten, Oct 29

- Readings
 - none
- Class Discussion: The Final Project
- The Final Project
 - FP 1: planning thoughts

Week Eleven, Nov 5

- Readings
 - none
- Class Discussion: Explaining the Project and Plan
- The Final Project
 - FP 2: the plan

Week Twelve, Nov 12

- Readings
 - none
- Project Notebooks
 - FP 3: progress update

Week Thirteen, Nov 19

- Readings
 - none
- Class: Work on Final Project!
 - FP: 4 The Presentation

Week Fourteen, Nov 26 – Holiday Week!!

Week Fifteen, Dec 3

- Project Presentations