

Week 1: Intro to AI & Getting Started

Polson School District Adult Ed - 2/2/26

Today

- Intros/Welcome
- Course Overview
- Website
- Intro to AI & Getting Started (Group Learning)
- Independent work time

WELCOME!!

Thank you all for signing up for my Intro to AI course!

About me:

- I taught Science and Computer Science at PHS
- I like learning about AI
- I like spending time outside (biking, fishing, floating, hiking, camping)
- I help others learn about AI (consulting + community classes)
- I have really enjoyed using AI to design this course!
- I work full time at an education non-profit (aiEDU.org)

Intros

Please share:

- Name
- How have you used AI?
- What do you hope to get out of this class? What made you want to sign up?
- What is one question you have about AI?

Intro to AI Course

Details:

- **8 week class** ***need to discuss scheduling with the group - Connor has travel this fall*
- Class Structure: ~45 min group learning | ~45 min individual work time

Course Objectives:

- Learn about AI technology
- Spend time playing with AI technology and exploring AI tools

Scheduling

Connor will be out of town for a few Mondays.

Proposed Schedule adjustment

- Mon - Oct 12th - **Class**
- Mon - Oct 19th (Connor out of town)
- Mon - Oct 26th (Connor out of town)
- Mon - Nov 2nd - **Class**
- Mon - Nov 9th - **Class**
- Mon - Nov 16th - Connor out of town
- Mon - Nov 23rd - **Class**

Possible additional classes:

Sat - Oct 17th

Thurs - Oct 29

Connor's AI Learning Hub

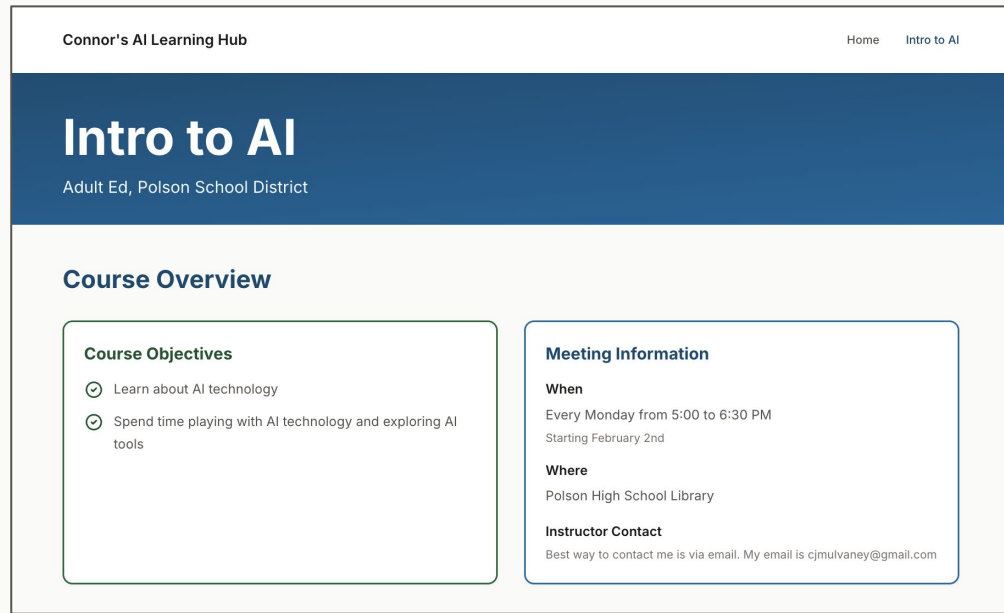
I built a website for this class!

learning.connormulvaney.com

On this website, I will post **all course material** (slides, prompts, resources, etc.)

If there is something that you would like to see on this website, let me know! It is fairly easy to update!

Ultimately, I want this to be a beneficial resource for you!



Part 1 - Intro to AI & Gettings Started

Group Learning

What is an AI Chatbot?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of computer science focused on creating programs that “learn” or “think” like humans.

- *Can we think of a “human like” thing that a computers (or phones) do for us?*

AI is a very broad field of research, we are going to focus today on **“AI Chatbots”**

- *What AI chatbots have you heard of??*

There are **many chatbots** - too many to count. When we work with AI in class, I will primarily be using [ChatGPT](#) (OpenAI), [Claude](#) (Anthropic), or [Gemini](#) (Google)

Using AI Chatbots

AI chatbots are designed to be “chatted” with - so we are going to have conversations with a **computer!**

Conversations involve back and forth if we want a good (useful, specific) answer

- *Ex. cars, recipes, advice, etc.*

They all look pretty much the same

- Chat window, history (previous chats), attach (for documents/photos), etc.

Chatbot Example - Claude

The image shows a screenshot of the Claude chat interface with several red boxes and arrows highlighting key features:

- Your chat history (previous conversations):** A red box highlights the left sidebar containing a list of previous chat topics.
- This is where you attach documents (pdf, pictures, etc.):** A red box highlights the area above the chat input where documents can be uploaded.
- This is where you chat (type):** A red box highlights the main chat input area.
- Project or folder:** A red box highlights the input field for specifying a project or folder.

The chat history list includes:

- Build quarterly newsletter for network
- Fall prep planning
- Valley Bank AI training sessions
- Context management assessment
- Northwest Montana gravel bikepacking route guide
- Building a structured code review skill
- Interactive training resource artifact
- Interactive AI champions training artifact
- Montana data centers' electricity and water impact

The chat input area shows the text "Let's noodle" and the prompt "How can I help you today?". The project input field shows "Project or folder" and "Auto Output".

If you are new to chatbots, ignore the rest for now

Demo time

Lets ask AI a question!

Learning AI

[Ethan Mollick](#), Business Professor and prolific AI explorer and writer, frequently uses **10 hours** as his rule of thumb for getting past the initial friction of AI and discovering its actual capabilities.

In class, we will cover some of the important pieces of AI technology, but there is a lot of learning that will happen while **spending time intentionally working with AI**.

I cannot tell you what you will learn during those ~10 hrs. Sometimes it may be frustrating. **This class is about sharing successes and challenges together!**

Framing

I believe we are at the **beginning of a large transformation** to how people live and work.

The best analogy is the **internet** - tho this is taking place at a rapid pace.

I think the question I often ask myself is:

“What is the value of education in a world where computers are smarter and more capable at most/all digital tasks?”

You can ask a similar question related to the field that you are working in. It may sound extreme. However, there **are distinctly human things** (communication, teamwork, etc.) but I no longer think “intelligence” is one of them.

AI History and Public Awareness

In **November of 2022**, OpenAI released the AI powered Large Language Model (LLM) called ChatGPT to the public.

As of Sept '25, ChatGPT has **~700M active weekly** users and handles **~1B queries/day**.

These numbers represent the most popular AI chatbot, **not all AI chatbot users** (other popular chatbots: Claude, Gemini, Grok)

Why does this matter?

What is AI?

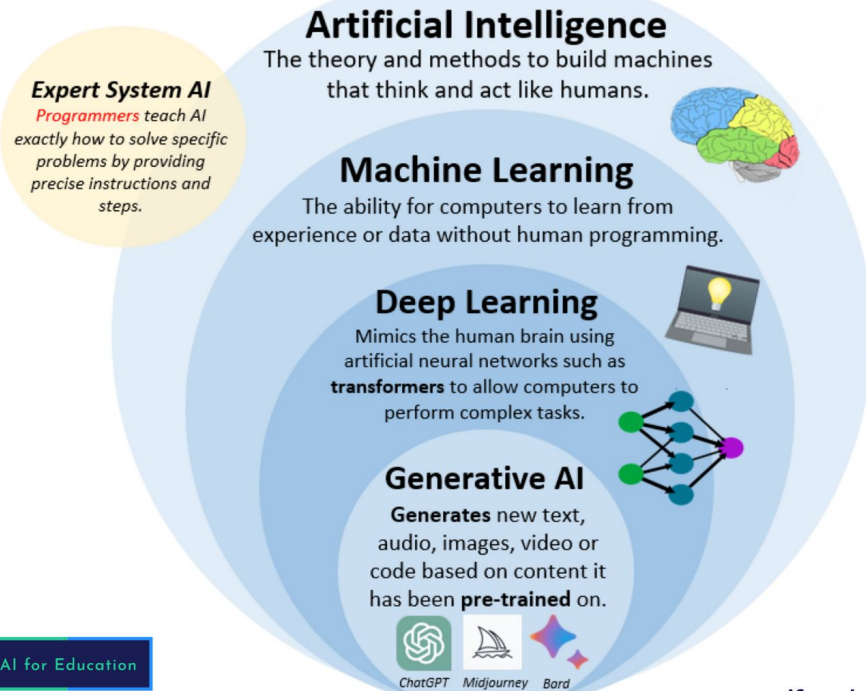
Much of the 2010s and 2020s has been defined by machine learning and deep learning (Netflix, Google maps, etc.)

ChatGPT (and other chatbots) are a powered by new AI programs called **Large Language Models (LLMs)**

“AI” is too broad of a term - **Generative AI (GenAI)** is better

Defining Generative AI

To understand generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), we first need to understand how the technology builds from each of the AI subcategories listed below.



What is GenAI?

Generative AI chatbots have **tremendous capabilities**. They perform in the top

AI chatbots will produce inaccurate and misleading information!!!

This does not mean that they are unhelpful, it just means we need to have our **“baloney detectors”** on

Think:
Most of
the
internet

Time/resource
intensive. Very
expensive.
Takes place in
Data Center.

Small, medium or
large
adjustments
made by
humans. Can
happen after
Step 4 as well

Training
Set

2
Training
the AI
Model

3
Post
Training
(RLHF)

5
User asks AI a
question (prompt)

4
New Large
Language Model
(ex. chatGPT)

5
LLM **generates** an
output to the user

Each answer that a user
receives is generated by the
AI. This is **different** than
previous forms of information
gathering like Google Search

Can you predict the next word in the sentence?

1. My favorite food to eat for lunch as a kid was macaroni and CHEESE.
2. It is raining cats and DOGS.
3. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it DRINK.
4. I like coffee with cream and SUGAR.
5. I like to eat sandwiches with jelly and SUNBUTTER.
6. The team that is going to win the Brawl of the Wild next year is _____.



Zooming Out

How does an AI chatbot function? What is it's foundation?

It predicts the next word in the sentence.

Not only is this technology new, it also functions differently than previous types of computer software.

Calculator:

1. I enter numbers
2. I enter the operation
3. The numbers get calculated to determine an output

Deterministic Software

AI Chatbot (LLM):

1. I enter a question (prompt)
2. The program predicts the output (one word at a time)
3. This is surprisingly effective

Probabilistic Software

General AI Guidelines

1. *Do not enter any Personal Identifiable Information (PII) into an AI chatbot. – Ex. Financial info, Intellectual Property (IP), confidential information, etc.*
2. **AI works best as a collaborative partner.** Your output from AI is going to be best if you work together.
3. **AI has strengths and weaknesses.** Remain in the driver's seat and make to review and check AI's output.
4. **Bring AI to work.** I don't always know how AI will help me, but when I bring it to “work” it will surprise me.

AI Prompting 101: The Interview

Task: I want a packing list for a summer trip that I am planning this summer.

Beginner Prompt:

Write me a packing list for a month long trip to Ireland during the month of July.

Improved Prompt:

I am going on a month long trip to Ireland. **I want you to ask me 10 questions, one at a time, about my trip in order to better understand my context.** Once complete, write me a personalized packing list.

Part 2 - Time to “chat”

Individual work time

Independent work time

Every class I will have time for us to work independently (or in small groups) on tasks/projects. **The goal for this time is for you to get experience using AI tools!**

Instructions on my [website](#). Pick a chatbot and get chatting!

- [ChatGPT](#)
- [Claude](#)
- [Gemini](#)

Independent Work Task/Assignment

Week 1 Independent Work Tasks ⌚ ~45 minutes

Choose ONE task that feels comfortable to you

Task Option 1 30-40 minutes >

Your First AI Conversation

Best for: People new to AI or technology in general

Have your first conversation with an AI chatbot by asking it to help with everyday tasks. This task is highly guided with specific prompts to try.

Start Task →

Task Option 2 40-45 minutes >

AI as Your Brainstorming Partner

Independent work time

Learning Tasks: Three tracks, you get to choose:

1. New to AI
2. AI as a Brainstorming Partner
3. Setting Up Instructions and context

You choose 1 or multiple!

Before we begin - Feedback

If you have feedback for me on this course, please let me know. Feedback could be on:

- Course format
- Website design
- Course content (what do you want to learn about in future classes)
- Something else?

This class is for you! I want it to be beneficial. You can always reach out via email hello@connormulvaney.com