



FOR TEACHERS & STUDENTS • BLUEPRINT30 COURSE SERIES

AI Literacy

Understanding Artificial Intelligence, Together

AI is already part of your life, from the apps on your phone to the tools your teachers use. This course looks honestly at what AI can do, where it helps, where people worry, and how to think about it clearly.

What Is AI, Really?

Artificial intelligence is technology that performs tasks normally requiring human thinking, like recognizing patterns, understanding language, or making predictions.

- AI is not one single thing, it's a broad category of tools and techniques
- Most AI today is narrow, built to do specific tasks well, not to think like a human in general
- AI does not understand the way people do, it finds patterns in data

AI vs. Science Fiction

Movies show AI as robots with their own goals and feelings. Real AI today looks a lot less dramatic:

Movies:	A robot that thinks and feels like a person
Reality:	Software that predicts the next word in a sentence
Movies:	AI that wants to take over the world
Reality:	AI that sorts your email or suggests a song

A Quick History of AI

AI isn't new. It's been building for over 70 years.

- **1950** Alan Turing proposes the "Turing Test" for machine intelligence
- **1956** The term "artificial intelligence" is coined at a Dartmouth conference
- **1997** IBM's Deep Blue beats world chess champion Garry Kasparov
- **2011** Voice assistants like Siri bring AI into everyday phones
- **2012** Deep learning breakthroughs dramatically improve image recognition
- **2022** ChatGPT brings generative AI to hundreds of millions of people

How AI Actually Works (Simplified)



1. Data

AI systems learn from huge amounts of examples, text, images, or numbers



2. Training

The system adjusts itself to get better at recognizing patterns in that data



3. Prediction

Once trained, it applies those patterns to new information it hasn't seen before

Think of it like this:

An extremely well-read autocomplete. It predicts what comes next based on patterns it has seen before. That's it. No thinking, no feelings, just math and statistics at a massive scale.

Where You Already Use AI Every Day

You've been using AI for years, probably without thinking about it.



Autocorrect & predictive text

Suggests words as you type on your phone



Recommendations

Spotify, YouTube, and TikTok predicting what you'll like



Face recognition

Unlocking your phone or tagging photos



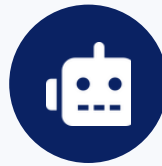
Maps & navigation

Predicting traffic and the fastest route



Spam filters

Sorting junk mail out of your inbox



Voice assistants

Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant answering questions

Types of AI You'll Hear About

NARROW

Narrow AI

Built for one specific task. This is nearly all AI in use today, spam filters, recommendation engines, image recognition.

GENERATIVE

Generative AI

Creates new text, images, audio, or video. Tools like ChatGPT, DALL-E, and Midjourney fall into this category.

GENERAL

General AI (AGI)

A hypothetical AI with human-level intelligence across all tasks. This does not exist yet, and experts disagree on if or when it might.



AN HONEST LOOK

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Like most powerful technology, AI brings real benefits and real concerns. Neither side tells the whole story on its own. Let's look at both honestly.



Real Advantages of AI

Used well, AI has already changed what's possible in science, school, and work.



Faster Discovery

helps researchers analyze huge datasets in science and medicine



Wider Access

translation and accessibility tools
open up content that used to be out of reach



New Tools

students and workers use AI to brainstorm, edit, and learn faster



New Careers

AI is creating entirely new jobs and industries that didn't exist a decade ago

Education & Accessibility

AI is changing how, and who, gets to learn.



Personalized tutoring

Practice tools that adapt to each student's pace and skill level



Real-time translation

Breaks down language barriers in the classroom



Text-to-speech & speech-to-text

Helps students with visual, hearing, or learning disabilities



Instant feedback

On writing, math, and problem-solving, without waiting for a grade

Health & Science

AI is helping researchers and doctors work faster, though it doesn't replace their judgment.



Faster medical imaging analysis

AI can help spot patterns in scans faster, supporting radiologists and doctors



Drug discovery

Speeding up early-stage research into new treatments



Outbreak prediction

Using large-scale data to help predict how diseases might spread

Important: AI supports doctors and scientists, it does not replace their training or judgment. A doctor still makes the final call.

Work & Everyday Life

Beyond school and science, AI shows up in daily tasks and creative work too.



Automating repetitive tasks

Frees people up to focus on creative or complex work



Helping small businesses

Lets small teams compete with limited staff and budgets



Assisting people with disabilities

Helps people who are blind, deaf, or have other disabilities navigate daily life



Creative tools

New ways to make music, art, and writing, used as a starting point by many creators

WHY SOME PEOPLE WORRY

Real Concerns About AI

These worries are shared by researchers, workers, and policymakers, not just critics.



Jobs & the Economy

some jobs may be automated, and the transition can be hard on workers



Misinformation

realistic fake images, video, and audio make it harder to know what's real



Privacy

AI often relies on large amounts of personal data to work



Bias & Fairness

AI can inherit unfair patterns from the data it learns from

Jobs & the Economy

This is one of the most actively debated questions about AI, and it's genuinely unsettled.

What worries people

- Some jobs involving repetitive tasks may be automated
- Certain industries could see faster change than workers can adapt to
- Entry-level jobs, often a first step into a career, may shift the most

What history and research show

- New technology has also created new kinds of jobs throughout history
- Economists genuinely disagree on whether AI will destroy more jobs than it creates, or the reverse
- Both outcomes are supported by different studies and different assumptions

CONCERN

Misinformation & Deepfakes



AI can generate realistic fake images, video, and audio, known as deepfakes



This makes it harder to know what's real online, even for adults



Fake content has been used to spread misinformation and impersonate real people



Fact-checking and source-verification skills matter more than ever before

CONCERN

Privacy & Data



AI systems often rely on large amounts of personal data to work



Questions remain about who owns that data and how it's used



Facial recognition and tracking tools raise real surveillance concerns



Laws and company policies are still catching up to the technology

Bias & Fairness



AI learns from data created by humans, and that data can reflect existing biases



This has led to real-world cases of unfair outcomes in hiring, lending, and policing tools



Researchers are actively working on ways to detect and reduce bias



No AI system is perfectly neutral, understanding this helps you use it critically

When AI Images of People Cross the Line

Creating or using someone's likeness with AI isn't just controversial. It can be illegal, and courts are already ruling on it.

Young v. NeoCortex, Inc.

U.S. District Court, C.D. Cal. → 9th Circuit

THE COMPANY	NeoCortex made "Reface," an AI app that lets users swap their face into photos and videos of celebrities and other real people.
THE LAWSUIT	In 2023, reality TV personality Kyland Young sued, arguing Reface used his photo and likeness without permission to sell paid subscriptions, violating California's Right of Publicity law.
THE DEFENSE	NeoCortex argued the AI-generated images were "transformative" enough to be protected as free speech, and that copyright law overruled the claim.
THE RULING	Courts rejected both defenses. The district court let the case proceed in 2023, and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed in December 2024.
WHY IT MATTERS	This was one of the first major rulings holding an AI company liable for using someone's face without consent, even when the images are "AI-generated." The case, a class action for thousands of people, is still ongoing.

The bigger picture: The federal TAKE IT DOWN Act, signed into law in 2025, makes it a crime to publish non-consensual intimate images, including AI-generated ones, punishable by up to 3 years in prison. More than 30 states now have their own laws targeting harmful AI-generated images of real people.

OPEN QUESTIONS

What Even the Experts Disagree About

These are genuinely unsettled questions. Reasonable, informed people land in different places.



Will AI create more jobs than it destroys, or the opposite? Economists are divided.



How close are we to general AI (AGI)? Estimates range from a few years to many decades, or never.



Should AI development slow down for safety, or would that cost us its benefits? Researchers and companies disagree.



Who should be responsible when AI makes a mistake? This is still being worked out in courts and legislatures.

How to Be a Critical AI User

None of this means avoiding AI. It means using it with your eyes open.

1

Ask where the information came from, and whether you can verify it elsewhere

2

Remember AI can be confidently wrong, always double-check important facts

3

Think about what personal data you're sharing with an AI tool

4

Use AI to support your thinking, not replace it

5

Recognize that AI reflects the data and choices of the people who built it

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Course Activities

Reflection prompts, a trivia challenge, key terms, and discussion questions to work through on your own or as a class.



Reflection

Grab a notebook or ask the group. There are no wrong answers, just start thinking critically.

1

Where have you personally used or encountered AI this week, even if you didn't realize it at the time?

2

What excites you most about AI, and what worries you most? Why do you think that is?

3

If you could ask an AI expert one question, what would it be?

4

How do you currently decide whether to trust information you find online?

Key Terms to Know

Ten words you'll hear in almost any conversation about AI.

Algorithm

A set of step-by-step instructions a computer follows to complete a task.

Machine Learning

A type of AI where systems improve at a task by learning from data.

Generative AI

AI that creates new content, like text, images, or audio.

Large Language Model

An AI trained on huge amounts of text to understand and generate language.

Training Data

The examples an AI system learns from.

Deepfake

A realistic but fake image, video, or audio created by AI.

Bias (in AI)

When an AI system produces unfair results because of patterns in its training data.

Hallucination

When an AI confidently generates false or made-up information.

AGI

Artificial General Intelligence, a hypothetical AI with human-level ability across all tasks.

Prompt

The instruction or question you give an AI system.

Discussion Questions

For a class, small group, or a conversation at home.

- 1 What's one way AI could make your education better? What's one way it could make it worse?
- 2 Should schools allow AI tools for homework? Where should the line be?
- 3 Who should be responsible if an AI system causes harm: the company that built it, the person who used it, or someone else?
- 4 How can you tell the difference between a real photo or video and an AI-generated one?
- 5 What rules do you think would make AI safer without losing its benefits?
- 6 If you were in charge of a company building AI, what's one rule you'd want your team to follow?



AI is a tool, powerful, imperfect, and still being defined. How you think about it is up to you.



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