

# IDH 3931, Un(Common) Writes: Prompt & Circumstance – Purpose-Built Platforms

Section UW06 / Course# 232000 / This is an honor's course: Spring 2026

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

- Instructor: Mickey S Schafer, PhD / 2215D Turlington Hall / [msscha@ufl.edu](mailto:msscha@ufl.edu) / 846-1138 / or via Canvas Inbox (which guarantees attention!)
- Office Hours: Wednesdays, 5th (11:45 am – 12:35 pm) and by appointment

## Course Description



To use large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, a user needs to learn how to prompt. Because LLMs generate novel responses, they can hallucinate, even with sophisticated prompts. To remedy this problem, purpose-built LLM-powered platforms have evolved for specific circumstances, such as academic research and writing. In this edition of

P & C, we will explore purpose-built platforms such as NotebookLM, Research Rabbit, rayyan.ai, Elicit, Obsidian, Consensus, Undermind, etc. We'll try our hand at using "delimiters" (mark down language) to achieve prompting precision. The goal is still exploratory in nature: how does it feel to work in purpose-built platforms rather than general GPTs? What is gained in their use? How does working this way compare to the more open and flexible nature of general-purpose LLMs?

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 textbook required 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!

**Technologies:** Please bring writing technology and an internet-capable device to each class.

The device should be able to access LLMs, Canvas, etc.

- This class requires that you create accounts for the free version of a variety of apps.

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

- Writing, Agency, & AI tutorial – 10%
  - Provided in Canvas
- Readings – 15%
  - 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.
  - 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.

## Course Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and resources for students, please see this link: [UF Syllabus Policy Links - Online Course Syllabi - University of Florida](#)

## 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.

### **Honors Program**

- 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519
- Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email [advisor@honors.ufl.edu](mailto: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.**

- Use NotebookLM!

Notebooks are **homework due the Monday after class.**

### Week One (Jan 14) – All the LLMs (UF's Navigator AI)

- Readings
  - 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, NavigatorChat (UF)
- Project Notebooks
  - PN 1: All the LLMs + Use Case
    - Watch WA&AI Tutorial videos then do test case exercise!

### Week Two (Jan 21) – Wicked Problems: Research starts with questions

- Reading
  - [What are Wicked Problems? | IxDF](#)
    - Just read the text; the videos are optional
- Class Discussion: Agency & Authorship, "wicked problems"
  - PN #2: Research interests + PBP 1: Prompt Cowboy ([Prompt Cowboy - #1 prompt generator](#))
    - Your RQs
    - Prompt Cowboy

### Week Three (Jan 28) – Wicked Sources

- Readings –
  - Wired Magazine: Steven Levy ([Google's NotebookLM Aims to Be the Ultimate Writing Assistant | WIRED](#))
  - Ethan Mollick ([On Working with Wizards - by Ethan Mollick](#))
- Class Discussion: Wicked Problems: Agent or Wizard? (or, behavioral economics in the age of AI)
- Project Notebooks
  - PN 3: Sources, Sources, Everywhere but Nary a Text to Read! (RQ → sources list)
    - Research Rabbit
    - LitMaps

- Consensus (UF licenses this app)

#### **Week Four (Feb 4) – Wicked Notes**

- Readings: none – and that's the point!
- Class Discussion: What does it mean to learn something?
  - PN 3: It's a Note-taking World and We just live in it
    - NotebookLM (G-Suite, available through UF)
    - Elicit
    - Rayyan
    - Undermind

#### **Week Five (Feb 11) – Wicked Outlines**

- Readings
  - Kellogg, R. “Professional Writing Expertise”, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance*, 2018
    - [Kellogg 2018](#), part of an e-book, available at UF, downloadable chapter
    - Read pages
- Class Discussion: Big D, little d – genre conventions and audience
- Project Notebooks
  - PN 4: Using Outlines to find meaning
    - Use platform selected for Week 4 (query for different POVs, different answers to RQ; choose where you want to go and generate an outline for that paper)

#### **Week Six (Feb 18) – Wicked Writing, Part 1: drafting**

- Readings
  - Kellogg, R. “Professional Writing Expertise”, in *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance*, 2018
    - [Kellogg 2018](#), part of an e-book, available at UF, downloadable chapter
    - Read pages
- Class Discussion: What is writing?
- Project Notebooks
  - PN 5: Draft essay version 1
    - The LLM does the drafting!
    - Read, but do NOT edit

### **Week Seven (Feb 25) – Wicked Writing, Part 2: whither revision?**

- Readings
  - Ezra Klein ([Opinion | This Conversation Made Me a Sharper Editor - The New York Times](#)) ([Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Adam Moss - The New York Times](#))
- Class Discussion: assessing and editing
- Project Notebooks
  - PN 6: Revise and submit
    - List improvements to be made
    - Prompt to make the changes
    - Submit the draft

### **Week Eight (Mar 4) – Now what?**

- Class Discussion: Agency, Authorship, Ownership, Wizards, and Learning
- Project Notebooks
  - PN 7: What has changed since Week 1? How do you fold platforms into your learning? Can you tell what matters?

### **Week Nine (Mar 11) – Writing and Work**

- Readings
  - Eric Larson, AI Principles
- Class Discussion: Work, Play, Both?
- The Final Project
  - FP 1: What will be your final project? (not due until Mar 23)

### **Week Ten, Spring Break!**

### **Week Eleven (Mar 25) – What is your final project?**

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

### **Week Twelve (Apr 1)**

- Readings
  - none

- Project Notebooks
  - FP 3: progress update

#### **Week Thirteen, (Apr 8)**

- Readings
  - none
- Class: Work on Final Project!
  - FP 4: progress update

#### **Week Fourteen (Apr 15)**

- Readings
  - none
- Class: Work on Final Project!
  - FP 5: Presentation Plan

#### **Week Fifteen (Apr 22)**

- Project Presentations

Option: In Version 2, Wk 1 is the same, but Wks 2-3 are a pre-planned excursion, Wks 4-9 will be a more condensed version of current Wks 2-9, and the final project remains the same. Which would you prefer?