

<b>Course:</b>	Demystifying AI: A Guide For Business Professionals
<b>Course Length:</b>	9 weeks
<b>Delivery Method:</b>	Online
<b>Instructor:</b>	Sherry Zhao
<b>Email:</b>	sherry_zhao@thecdm.ca

#### *Acknowledgement of Coast Salish Peoples and Land*

*We respectfully acknowledge the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples on whose unceded traditional territories our campus resides.*

### Course Description

It seems that every day, a new AI product emerges. The rapid pace of development is staggering, and it doesn't seem to stop. But are any of these products actually helping today's professionals? And how can you keep track of the latest developments if you're busy working?

If you're facing these challenges, this course is for you. It's a great way to dive deeply into AI while cutting out the irrelevant technical details. Instead, we zero in on practical applications that can help you catch up at work and not get left behind.

This course will teach an overview how LLMs (Large Language Models) and generative media are designed to work, and how they can help you better communicate your ideas or brainstorm creative solutions. You will come out of this course with more skills and expertise, more informed knowledge around the strengths and limitations of AI tools, and the ability to advocate for their appropriate and ethical use in the workplace.

### Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify the strengths and limitations of AI technology
- Prepare for adapting to a changing workforce
- Leverage AI for communication, brainstorming, and synthesizing data
- Advocate for the ethical and responsible use of AI products in the workplace

### Format of the Course

This is a 45-hour long course and will run for 9 weeks. Each week will include a combination of asynchronous work (reviewing instructor-led videos, pre-recorded interviews with industry professionals, assigned readings, and completing assignments) and one synchronous group video session with the instructor. It is expected that students will spend around 5 hours per week on the course. Students are expected to complete course requirements on their own, but the instructor is available to address questions, monitor progress, and provide formative and/or summative feedback.

### Course Schedule

The course will run from September 22 - November 24, 2025 with synchronous group sessions on Tuesdays from 6pm – 7:30pm.



Class	Topic
Week 1	<p>An introduction to the course and the history of artificial intelligence</p> <p>Assignment: Write about examples of AI that you already use in daily life.</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, September 23</b></p>
Week 2	<p>What are the fundamentals: LLMs, machine learning and model training</p> <p>Assignment: Use AI to come up with a simple metaphor for one of these concepts that you could explain to three different age demographics.</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, September 30</b></p>
Week 3	<p>Understanding Text-based AI: brainstorming, transcription, and synthesis</p> <p>Assignment: Evaluate and compare the helpfulness of current chat-based tools for daily tasks.</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, October 7</b></p>
Week 4	<p>Generative AI: Creating media to sell your ideas to stakeholders</p> <p>Assignment: Come up with a new concept that you want your company to adopt and generate visual assets for 10 slides to pitch this idea.</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, October 14</b></p>
Week 5	<p>Data Analysis: Using AI to visualize data and gain insights</p> <p>Assignment: Discuss what kind of data your company tracks and which insights you would like to summarize with the assistance of AI.</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, October 21</b></p>
Week 6	<p>AI Stories: Practical applications in the workplace</p> <p>Assignment: Imagine you're a professional in one of these industries and discuss how you'd integrate tools AI into your practice.</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, October 28</b></p>

Week 7	<p>AI adoption in the workplace: Reliability, cost-benefit analysis and privacy concerns</p> <p>Assignment: Imagine your boss has asked you to shortlist 5 tools that would speed up your company's adoption and you have a limited budget. Which ones would you pick and why?</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, November 4</b></p>
Week 8	<p>Ethics and Responsibility: Bias in the training data, copyright issues and environmental impacts</p> <p>Assignment: Write a clear example of where AI can be used and compare that with a situation where it is not advised.</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, November 11</b></p>
Week 9	<p>Where AI is headed: Understanding the path towards AGI and the future of work</p> <p>Final Reflections</p> <p><b>Synchronous Zoom: Tuesday, November 18</b></p>

### Course Assignments

*This course is pass/fail (graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory). Students missing a deadline and/or submitting a substandard report may not receive a passing grade.*

Assignment	Details
Weekly assignment, submitted to the community forum on Canvas	Sunday of each week

### Required Readings

Each week students will be assigned the required materials (videos and readings), which will be posted on Canvas.

### Course Completion

Demonstrated skills and competencies of the topic, satisfactory achievement, submission of all assignments, and completion of all learning engagements are required in order to be granted completion of this course. It is expected that students participate in all asynchronous activities (including module discussions, group assignments, reflections etc.) and submit all learning engagements in a timely

manner. Students who foresee challenges in submitting an assignment should communicate with the instructor before the deadline.

<https://www.sfu.ca/students/enrolmentservices/policies-and-procedures/academic-concessions.html>

### **Grading Profile**

**P** Satisfactory performance or better (pass, ungraded)

**F** Unsatisfactory performance (fail)

### **Written & Spoken English**

English is the official language of the school and all communication (written and spoken) is expected to be conducted in English. SFU and the MDM Program provide a wide range of free language support for those who need it and it's up to each learner to seek that support.

### **Accommodations**

The university accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably the first week of class, if you will require any accommodations on these grounds. The Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) will make every effort to assist students with disabilities so that they achieve their educational goals. <https://www.sfu.ca/students/accessible-learning/establishing-accommodations/accommodation.html>

### **Academic Integrity: Your Work, Your Success**

SFU's Academic Integrity website <http://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity.html> is filled with information on what is meant by academic dishonesty, where you can find resources to help with your studies and the consequences of cheating.

Each student is responsible for their conduct as it affects the university community. Academic dishonesty, in whatever form, is ultimately destructive of the values of the university. Furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to the majority of students who pursue their studies honestly. Scholarly integrity is required of all members of the university. <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/student/s10-01.html>

### *Inappropriate use of technology in coursework*

If you are using any technology, including generative AI, to produce or edit content that will be part of your graded work in the course, you must be transparent about the tools that you use. Undeclared use of the tool/technology will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. Be aware that any tool used will require you to evaluate the output for accuracy and be responsible for making the appropriate corrections.