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

Acknowledgement of Coast Salish Peoples and Land
We respectfully acknowledge the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səlilwətaɬ (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 across every major business department. This course will teach you how AI tools can transform work in marketing, sales, operations, HR, finance, product development, and customer support. You'll analyze real organizations to understand where AI fits strategically and how to build compelling business cases for implementation. You will come out of this course with comprehensive knowledge of AI applications across business functions, practical experience with AI tools, and the confidence to lead AI adoption conversations in your organization.

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 March 23 – May 22 , 2026 with synchronous group sessions on Wednesdays from 6pm – 7:30pm.

Class	Topic
Week 1	AI Foundations & Strategic Framework Assignment: Organization deep-dive and AI readiness assessment **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, March 25**
Week 2	AI in Marketing & Customer Experience Assignment: Marketing AI strategy with tool exploration and selection **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, April 1**
Week 3	AI in Sales & Business Development Assignment: Create an AI implementation plan for your organization's sales and business development processes. **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, April 8**
Week 4	AI in Operations & Process Optimization Assignment: Design an AI optimization strategy for your organization's core operational processes **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, April 15**
Week 5	AI in Human Resources & Talent Management Assignment: Build an AI adoption framework for your organization's human resources and talent management functions. **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, April 22**
Week 6	AI Stories: AI in Finance & Risk Management Assignment: Construct an AI automation plan for your organization's finance and risk management operations **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, April 29**

Week 7	AI in Product Development & Innovation Assignment: Formulate an AI integration strategy for your organization's product development and innovation processes **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, May 6**
Week 8	AI in Customer Support & Service Assignment: Complete an AI strategy for customer support **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, May 13**
Week 9	AI-Assisted Coding Workshop Final Reflections **Synchronous Zoom: Wednesday, May 20**

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.