Ethical Use of AI in Academic Work

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Purpose and Core Principle

Discussions and assignments exist to fine-tune and demonstrate learning, critical thinking, and communication skills. CSU Global supports the effective, ethical, and responsible use of AI tools—such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, Gemini, and Grammarly—to aid learning and professional development.

Key Rule: AI tools augment intellectual work; they do not replace it. Verbatim copying and pasting of AI output presented as original work is considered plagiarism and violates academic integrity policies.

Approved Uses for AI Tools

AI tools can be integrated into discussion boards, Critical Thinking assignments, Portfolio Projects, and course tasks in the following ways:

- **Research Assistance:** Aids in topic selection, finding sources, identifying key concepts, and exploring diverse perspectives.
- **Brainstorming and Outlining:** Generates ideas, creates outlines, and structures arguments for essays or presentations.
- **Thesis/Claim Generation:** Assists in formulating clear, strong, and arguable thesis statements.
- **Summarization:** Distills lengthy journal articles or papers into concise summaries. *Note: Any summaries used in assignments must cite the original source, not the AI tool.*
- **Grammar, Syntax, and Vocabulary:** Proofreads work, corrects grammatical errors, improves sentence structure, and suggests precise word choices.
- **Feedback and Revision:** Offers instant feedback on writing clarity, coherence, and structure to guide revisions.
- **Data Visualization & Multimodal Integration:** Helps create charts or graphs and assists in integrating media (images, audio, video) into written assignments.
- **Accessibility Support:** Enables text-to-speech, voice recognition, media captioning, and converting materials into multimodal forms.

Important Considerations and Limitations

Limitation	Details
Unpredictable & Non-Repeatable	AI output varies by prompt, cannot be attributed to a single author/organization, and should not be used as a primary, verifiable source. Treat AI like Wikipedia—a starting point to organize or find other sources.
Misinformation & "Hallucinations"	AI models generate text based on probability rather than checking facts. They can produce biased results, incorrect data, or fake source citations. Always verify content and sources independently.
Limited Training Data	Models are trained on limited datasets and may lack current information.
Privacy Risks	There is no guarantee of privacy when using AI tools. **Never include personal information in prompts.**
Rapid Evolution	AI tools change constantly, making their behaviors and outputs unpredictable.

Citation and Academic Integrity Requirements

1. Mandatory Disclosure

When using AI tools to complete assignments, you must include a statement in a separate section of your work acknowledging:

- The specific AI tool(s) used.

- The exact prompt(s) used to generate the responses.

2. Assignment Evaluation Standards

- **Permitted Tools:** Proofreading tools designed to identify mechanical mistakes and suggest edits (e.g., Grammarly) are allowed, provided the underlying work is original to the student.
- **Unethical Content:** Unethical AI-generated content cannot be incorporated into submissions unless expressly directed by the instructor.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Student work is evaluated based on a combination of originality scores, probability of AI-generated content, assignment requirements, and demonstrated original thought.

Quick Decision Checklist

When using AI, ask yourself:

- Am I treating AI as an assistant/coach (sounding board, structuring help) rather than a replacement?
- Am I applying my own critical thinking, or letting the AI think for me?
- Have I verified all facts and external source citations provided by the AI?
- Have I documented my prompts and tools used for citation?

When in doubt, always ask your course instructor for guidance before submitting your work.