

Overview

How does artificial intelligence (AI) impact human experiences? Explore the complex relationship between AI and human society. This constellation examines AI's implications across art, science, education, ethics, philosophy, sociology, writing, and writing, encouraging students to critically evaluate AI's challenges and opportunities for shaping a humane future.

Principles and Learning Objectives

Every individual course will emphasize its own more particular learning objectives. In addition, we hope that all students will achieve a preponderance of the following cross-cutting learning objectives by participating in the constellation, organized under five motivating principles.

1. **Connections.** Analyze and evaluate the relationship between AI technology and human society, considering cultural, economic, and social impacts including challenges and opportunities.
2. **Curiosity.** Ask big questions about the role of historical and emerging technologies for human flourishing and society.
3. **Humility.** Appreciate the complexity of technical systems and human societies. Recognize the limitation of any single disciplinary perspective, motivating further study integrating computer science and information technology with natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts.
4. **Creativity.** Engage imaginatively with AI while critically examining AI's role in transforming creative work and preserving human autonomy of expression.
5. **Ethical Inquiry.** Consider the moral implications of AI development and deployment, including questions of responsible use, societal impact, fairness, bias, accountability, transparency, and human agency.

Courses

Students enroll in one writing 120 course in the fall semester, plus an additional one fall course and one spring course, within the constellation. All courses are taught in English and have no prerequisites.

Fall 2025

Writing 120 Am I A Robot?	Michael Dimpfl
Writing 120 Technology of Storytelling	Julia Gordon
Writing 120 Hidden Curriculum	Sarah Ishmael
Physics 123CN Science of and with Neural Networks	Berndt Mueller
German 171CN You, Me, and the Machine	Henry Pickford
Compsci 171CN Learning how to Learn with AI	Kristin Stephens-Martinez
CMAC 130CNS AI, Creativity, and The Creation of Art	Augustus Wendell

Spring 2026

Sociology 167CN Human-AI Co-Evolution	Christopher Bail
Compsci 172CN Moral AI and Algorithmic Justice	Brandon Fain
Compsci 173CN AI in Cinema	Kate O'Hanlon

Personnel

Name	Email	Affiliation	Role
Mike Dimpfl	michael.dimpfl@duke.edu	Thompson Writing Program	Instructor
Julia Gordon	julia.gordon@duke.edu	English (Grad)	Instructor
Sarah Ishmael	sarah.ishmael@duke.edu	Thompson Writing Program	Instructor
Berndt Mueller	berndt.mueller@duke.edu	Physics	Instructor
Henry Pickford	henry.pickford@duke.edu	German Studies	Instructor
Kristin Stephens-Martinez	ksm@cs.duke.edu	Computer Science	Instructor
Augustus Wendell	augustus.wendell@duke.edu	Art, Art History & Visual Studies	Instructor
Josué Collado Fregoso	josue.colladofregoso@duke.edu	Music (Grad)	Graduate Fellow
Jane O'Reilly	jane.oreilly@duke.edu	Physics (Grad)	Graduate Fellow
Chris Bail	christopher.bail@duke.edu	Sociology	Instructor
Brandon Fain	btfain@cs.duke.edu	Computer Science	Instructor and Coordinator
Kate O'Hanlon	cohanlon@cs.duke.edu	Computer Science	Instructor

Shared Materials and Cross-Cutting Discussion

Readings, videos, podcasts, or other educational media of broad relevance to the constellation will be shared to the constellation Canvas site resources by constellation personnel.

As a student, you should view these materials and participate in the asynchronous discussion on them hosted on the constellation Canvas Discussions page. Discussions should maintain a respectful and supportive tone and encourage constellation principles of connections, curiosity, humility, creativity, and ethical inquiry. Posts in discussions must be entirely your own – you may not use any AI generated text (except when clearly quoted and giving an example discussing AI generated text in your own words), text taken from the internet, or any other person.

Participation in the cross-cutting discussion is required. See individual course syllabi for details on participation requirements.

Experiential Activities

We will have several synchronous, in-person, experiential activities during the semester – these are opportunities for the constellation to gather across courses and outside of the classroom around shared academic themes and in pursuit of deepening intellectual community. We also hope they will be fun! Dates and activities are shown on the Schedule below.

Participation in experiential activities are required, and attendance will be taken. At a minimum you must participate in at least one such designated activity per semester, and you are encouraged to participate in more as you are able. See individual course syllabi for details on the experiential activity requirement.

Constellation Assessment

We want to know how the constellation is working well and how it can be improved. For this reason, we will issue a constellation assessment survey at the end of each semester (Fall and Spring) to all students. Note that is separate from and in addition to regular course evaluations. This survey will ask for feedback regarding how the (i) courses, (ii) shared materials and cross-cutting discussion, and (iii) experiential activities have helped you achieve the constellation learning objectives.

Completing this assessment is required. To enable completion tracking, NetIDs will be collected automatically. To encourage honest feedback, (i) responses will be collected by the graduate fellows who are not instructors of individual courses and do not assign grades for those courses, and (ii) the contents of the survey responses will not be viewed or analyzed until after all grades are returned at the end of the semester, at which point all personally identifying information (e.g., NetIDs) will be deleted to anonymize the data. Faculty will only ever view or analyze anonymized responses.

Fall 2025 Constellation Schedule

At a minimum, students must participate in *at least* one designated experiential activity in the Fall semester (in addition to orientation). You are welcome and encouraged to attend more.

Orientation Event

Friday, 8/22, 12:30 – 1:45 pm

Biological Sciences 111.

Grab a boxed lunch beforehand and join us for a welcome and introduction to the constellation!

Experiential Activity: AI & Art Gallery Event

Monday, 10/6, 5:45 – 7:10 pm.

Smith Warehouse A266 Bay 10 (Collision Space)

In this experiential activity we will hear from students about their critical engagement with AI and art, including viewing time in the gallery and discussion. Space in the gallery is limited so there will be a registration link through Canvas to attend.

Note that this is the first of two such gallery events, the other taking place in December – you only need to attend one of the two dates.

Experiential Activity: Constitutional Congress of AI Principles

Thursday, 10/30, 4:30 – 6:00 pm.

Old Chemistry 116.

Suppose you got to write the principles that would guide AI deployment and responsible use at Duke, across the hospital, education, and research wings of the university. How should AI be used? How should it not be used? In this interactive learning activity, we will draft a concrete proposal for a constitution of AI at Duke.

Experiential Activity: AI & Art Gallery Event

Monday, 12/1, 5:45 – 7:10 pm.

Smith Warehouse A266 Bay 10 (Collision Space).

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Note that this is the first of two such gallery events, the other taking place in December – you only need to attend one of the two dates.

Fall Semester Constellation Assessment Survey.

Responses due by 5 pm on Friday, 12/6.

Spring 2025 Constellation Schedule

We expect to have at least two opportunities for experiential activities in the Spring semester: An AI and Film screening and discussion, and the Duke Society Centered AI Initiative's Responsible AI Symposium. Dates and more details will be determined by the beginning of the Spring semester.

At a minimum, students must participate in *at least* one designated experiential activity in the Fall semester (in addition to orientation). You are welcome and encouraged to attend more.

Experiential Activity Opportunity 1: AI Film Screening and Discussion

Date/times/location TBD in January/February.

We will view a screening of a major film depicting AI and hold a discussion afterwards.

Experiential Activity Opportunity 2: Responsible AI Symposium.

Date/times/location TBD in February/March.

There will be several ways you can choose to participate in the Symposium including a hackathon, submitting and presenting a poster, volunteering, and simply attending the research talks and panel discussions. You can see the [previous Spring 2025 symposium here](#).

Spring Semester Constellation Assessment Survey.

Responses due by 5 pm on Wednesday, 4/22.