

AI Policy for Papers and Tasks in Literary and Cultural Studies

Aims of Literary and Cultural Studies

Literary and Cultural Studies are all about developing critical, analytical, and creative skills. These skills apply to thinking, reading, and writing in and beyond academic contexts. This means our core principle is competent and responsible authorship across the entire research process.

In practice, this means: **No task may be delegated completely to AI tools.** The cognitive offloading enabled by AI won't make you a critical and creative thinker/reader/writer!

Ethics Vignette: Bias, Ecology, Data Protection, and Extraction

Before using *any kind of* AI tool, consider the following pitfalls:

- Artificial intelligence is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of tools. Large language models like ChatGPT or Claude.ai and research tools like Elicit or Research Rabbit are not (yet) intelligent. Most importantly, they do not have any concept of 'correct' or 'incorrect', hence the phenomenon called 'hallucination.' Instead, they work with vast amounts of data and probabilities. They merely predict the likelihood of words occurring next to each other. Don't confuse probability-based output with well-founded research and arguments!
- Data is never neutral. Given that AI is trained with biased datasets (re: gender, race, class, ability, etc.), it reproduces hegemonic information and power relations. Using AI uncritically makes you pick up these biases yourself!
- The training and use of AI consumes large amounts of natural resources (like rare minerals, water for cooling servers, electricity, etc.). Therefore, use AI consciously and sparingly given the worsening climate crisis!
- AI, data protection, and copyright are precarious, ongoing legal issues, both in terms of its output and the input you provide. Corporations extract your data and profit from it. Make sure to rely on university-provided tools that store your data safely and do not use it for training the AI further. When using other tools make sure you enable privacy settings and disable training where possible. Uploading copyrighted material (incl. teaching materials) to *any* tool without consent is illegal.

General Disclaimer and Lecturer Discretion

Evaluate AI outputs critically: AI responses may not always be complete, accurate, or unbiased, so assess the information carefully!

Understand acceptable AI use: Adhere to your lecturer's guidance on permissible AI use, as the workflow described in this policy will be specified in individual courses to take account of different goals, tasks, and the levels of students. If you are unsure about the potential use of AI in any task of a specific class, talk to your lecturer and ask whether using AI tools in general or a specific one you have in mind is allowed.

If AI tools are used inappropriately in individual tasks, papers, and theses, the procedure for "non-assessment due to use of unauthorised aids" will apply!

Transparency and Documentation

All AI usage must be documented in the following way:

- Acknowledge the use of AI: Clearly state that you have used AI tools in your work.
- Describe the process: Briefly explain how you used each tool and for which parts of the task.
- Your exchanges with AI are a non-recoverable source. Even the same prompt will never generate the same output. Therefore, save all your prompts and outputs!
- Documentation can be implemented in diverse forms (e.g. links from your conversations with AI tools, a table of tools at the end of your papers). Make sure you follow your lecturer's specifications!

Research Process with AI

Any AI tool used should augment your research process, *not replace it*. This document sketches how AI *might* be used in the different stages of the research process. However, this is not a blueprint: Remember, your own process might differ, and generative AI is just one of many tools at your disposal.

Stages of the Research Process

Step 1: Pre-Planning

- Step 1.1: Literature Research and Review

Combine AI and traditional methods: AI tools can support your literature research, but never rely on them as a substitute for traditional methods such as library research on u:search and databases. Some sources presented to you by AI might not even exist (although they sound convincing)!

Cross-check information: Verify AI-generated content – both the results of a search as well as the content (summaries) of papers – against reliable sources and your own critical reading of a text to ensure its accuracy and credibility.

- Step 1.2: Ideation and Formulating Research Questions

Research processes take time and profit from exchange with peers. If you *do* use generative AI tools for brainstorming ideas or research questions, make sure that the tools support your thought processes and do not replace them. Document your exchanges carefully!

Use AI tools effectively: Develop your prompt-engineering skills! When using generative AI, experiment with prompts to refine your ability to elicit accurate and useful responses.

Step 2: Drafting

Ensure responsible authorship: Make sure that any writing you hand in at university is *your* substantial intellectual contribution and *not just the product* of AI output. If you augment your writing process with AI tools, make sure to evaluate critically and edit any output that you include in your drafts. **Never just copy and paste!**

Step 3: Editing

Language editing tools like Grammarly, DeepL, or the ones implemented in word processing programmes may be used. Document your usage of these tools accordingly. Ensure that you have final editorial control over the text and that it is written in your voice! Responsible editing is part of responsible authorship!

Overall, make sure that you use AI to help you in your research process. Don't let AI do it for you!

Further Resources

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