Optional Generative AI Language for University Syllabi

Introduction and Rationale

With the emergence and widespread availability of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.), there is a clear need for faculty to engage students on this topic and to specify if and how these tools may be used in their classes. To be clear, faculty members determine the permissible use or restriction of Gen AI tools based on their individual course learning objectives and their specific disciplinary perspectives.

Faculty Gen AI discussions with their students commonly address the following themes, but are not limited to:

- Defining Gen AI Related To Your Course
- Conducting a class Discussion on Ethical and Responsible Gen AI Use/Restriction
- Alignment of Gen AI Tools Use with Course Learning Objectives
- Consistency of Gen AI Use With UMBC Statement of Values for Academic Integrity https://academicconduct.umbc.edu/. Student responsibility for submitting their own work.
- Revisiting Gen AI Tool Use Throughout the Semester (Avoid set and forget)
- Articulating Faculty Member's Own Gen AI Use Related to Class
- Potential Differentiated Use of Gen AI Based on Specific Assignments/Course – Stoplight Approach

Drawing on the "Traffic Light" model of actionable language to set clear expectations for students, the following flexible framework may be used by faculty to address the varied needs of different disciplines and assignments.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Optional Generative AI Language for University Syllabi</h1>

<h2 style="text-align:center">Sample Syllabus Language</h2>

General Statement for Syllabus

This foundational language can be used in all course syllabi to establish a general policy on generative AI tools.

Statement on Generative AI Tools

In this course, permission to use generative AI tools varies by assignment. For some assignments, AI tools are permitted and must be clearly cited, including the tool, prompts, and the nature of their contribution. For other assignments, AI use may be limited or entirely prohibited to support your growth as a writer and thinker. When AI tools are not permitted, their usage will be treated as an academic integrity issue.

If an assignment does not specify whether AI use is permitted, you should assume that you are expected to complete the work independently without AI assistance. When in doubt about whether a tool or its usage is acceptable, please ask me. The intent is for AI to support your learning, not replace it.

The Traffic Light Model: Assignment-Specific Language

The following options provide specific, assignment-level language that can be customized to suit your course and pedagogical goals.

Green Light Usage: Use this option when you want to permit a wide range of AI usage, with an emphasis on transparency and responsible tool integration.

> **Responsible Use Permitted.** You may use generative AI tools at any stage of this assignment. You must always credit any AI assistance and may not claim AI-generated content as your own. Clearly delineate what you did and where you used AI. Use AI-generated content with caution, as it can be inaccurate or biased, so always check your work. You remain fully responsible for the accuracy and quality of your submission. If you are unsure whether a tool is acceptable to use, please check with me first.

Yellow Light Usage: Use this option when you want to permit limited, targeted use of AI tools for specific stages of an assignment. Two potential options are provided below:

> **Option A: Brainstorming Only**

For this assignment, you may use generative AI tools to brainstorm, explore, and refine ideas (e.g., getting suggestions for research topics, defining complex terms for your own understanding), as long as you verify the information and give proper credit. All final submitted products must be written independently. Any content that you did not create must be cited appropriately. Keep in mind that generative AI is not always accurate or reliable, so you remain responsible for verifying anything you use to inform the final product. If you are unsure whether a tool is acceptable to use, please check with me first.

Option B: Not for Brainstorming

For this assignment, generative AI tools may not be used for brainstorming or topic generation. Once you have independently developed your ideas, you may use AI tools for writing and revising your final product. If you choose to use AI in this way, you must clearly cite the tool and explain how it was used (e.g., "This paper was written/edited with assistance from ChatGPT," "This code was initially generated by Anthropic and then modified by me"). If you are unsure whether a tool is acceptable to use, please check with me first.

Red Light Usage: Use this option when you want to prohibit all use of AI tools for an assignment.

Use Not Permitted

All work must be entirely your own. The use of generative AI tools is not allowed at any stage of the assignment, including brainstorming, experiments, coding, research, writing, or revision. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me. The use of AI tools will be treated as an academic integrity issue.

Resources for Further Reference

- **AI Syllabi Policy Repository by Lance Eaton:** A comprehensive collection of syllabi policies for generative AI.
- **Florida State University:** "Traffic Light Framework"
- **University of Georgia:** "Traffic Light Framework" Policies
- **University of Maryland College Park:** Sample Syllabus Language: AI Course Policies

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Working Draft: Syllabus Language for AI Usage (9.4.25)

"Evergreen" Course Syllabi Guidelines Language Options

Statement on Generative AI Tools

In this course, permission to use AI tools varies by assignment. AI tools are allowed for certain assignments and must be clearly cited, including the tool, prompts, and contribution. For other assignments, AI use may be limited or entirely prohibited to support your growth as a writer and thinker. When AI tools are not permitted, usage will be treated as an academic integrity issue.

If an assignment doesn't specify whether AI use is permitted, complete the work independently without AI assistance. When in doubt about what AI tools or if use is acceptable, ask me. AI should support your learning, not replace it.

Course or Syllabus Language (Using the Traffic Light Model)

"Green Light" Usage Sample Language

Responsible Use Permitted

You may use AI tools on any stage of this assignment ⌄ . You must always credit any AI assistance and may not claim AI-generated content as your own. Clearly delineate what you did and where you used AI. You should also demonstrate how you created the final submission and added to or improved the initial version you got from AI. Use AI generated content with caution as it can be inaccurate or biased, so always check your work. You remain fully responsible for the accuracy and quality of your work. If you're unsure whether a tool is okay to use, check with me first.

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"Yellow Light" Sample Language

Responsible Use Permitted - Brainstorming Only

For this assignment ▾ , you may use AI tools to brainstorm, explore, and refine ideas (getting suggestions for research topics, defining complex terms for your own understanding, etc.) as long as you verify the information and give proper credit. All final submitted products must be written ▾ independently. Any content that you didn't create must be cited appropriately. Keep in mind that generative AI isn't always accurate or reliable, so you remain responsible for verifying anything you use to inform the final product. If you're unsure whether a tool is okay to use, check with me first.

Responsible Use Permitted - Not for Brainstorming
For this assignment ▾ , AI tools may not be used for brainstorming or topic generation. Once you have independently developed your ideas, you may use AI tools for writing and revising your final product. If you choose to use AI in this way, you must clearly cite the tool and explain how it was used (e.g., "This paper was written/edited with assistance from ChatGPT", "This code was initially generated by Anthropic and then modified by me"). If you're unsure whether a tool is okay to use, check with me first.

"Red Light" Sample Language

Use Not Permitted

All work must be entirely your own. The use of AI tools is not allowed at any stage of the assignment including brainstorming, experiments, coding, research, writing, or revision. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me. Use of AI tools will be treated as an academic integrity issue.

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Resources

AI Syllabi Policy Repository by Lance Eaton (180 and counting):
⊞ Syllabi Policies for Generative AI Repository

Arizona State University - "Approaches to Syllabus Statements Concerning Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)"

Florida State University - "Traffic Light Framework"

GenAI Guidelines, Recommendations and Policies (Dasgupta, N.)

Institutional AI Policies (17 and counting):
⊞ Institutional AI Policies & Governance Structures for Higher Education

Towson University - "AI Language for Syllabi and Acknowledgement"

University of Georgia - "Traffic Light Framework" Policies (Slide 19)

University of Maryland College Park - Sample Syllabus Language: AI Course Policies