# **Faculty: Your Classes Must Change. Here's Your Five Step AI Action Plan for Fall**

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I know, the world is complicated right now. This isn't: Faculty, your classes must change. Not in six months or a year. ***This fall.*** If you haven't started planning yet, this is your alarm clock. Now is the time.

In the world of higher education pedagogy, we generally avoid directives and "one size fits all" approaches. Teaching is complicated, our disciplines and specialities demand unique approaches, and everything from the modality to the size of our classes varies immensely. But this is an imperative: you cannot ignore AI. Your students will be using it in your classes and in their careers. Unless you truly do not care whether they learn or not, this is an essential.

But how? Do I need to understand machine learning and how to code? No. (Though I would encourage you to adopt a [digital mindset](https://hbr.org/2022/05/developing-a-digital-mindset).) You ***do need*** to understand the basics of the technology, how your students are likely to be using it, and how you can adapt your course to reflect the evolution our world is undergoing even as we speak. Here's my five step plan to get you there:

1) **Learn the basics.** If you haven't already, spend time using some form of generative AI. Your discipline's tools may vary, but at a minimum, everyone can start with [ChatGPT](https://openai.com/) or [Bing](https://www.bing.com/new) to get familiar with the technology. If you'd like a starter course in what the technology is and an introduction to working with it to reform your classes, I have a 1 hour [webinar available online](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vJQr96izkI) (thanks to [QMQuality Matters](https://www.youtube.com/%40QMQualityMatters)!). You can also peruse about a million articles online related to ChatGPT and generative AI in the classroom. I like this [cheat sheet](https://www.techrepublic.com/article/chatgpt-cheat-sheet/), and this wonderful [overview and list of resources](https://ctl.oregonstate.edu/chatgpt-and-other-ai-tools-implications-teaching-and-learning) from the Oregon State University Center for Teaching and Learning.

2) **Identify your AI policies.** Students can use AI in a variety of ways. It can be used for light text editing (think [Grammarly](https://www.grammarly.com/) or even just MS Word), idea generation, drafting entire essays, providing 1:1 tutoring assistance, brainstorming, etc. It is essential that you communicate clearly to students what is allowed in your course and what is not. "Don't use AI" is really not an option (though some will want to go that route). Unless you are planning to require students to use a typewriter or pen and paper for all assignments, know that AI is integrated in some form into web searching, word processing, spreadsheet generation, and presentation software. You need specifics.

**To start this process, I offer a tool that I developed for use at the OSU College of Business: a list of** [**AI icons**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vSon5PaDYcJ8v7xmEYEN-uepBD61LrIKSkOg_-lPbjcr7DT7NtmUqH1NuEWXjnf0g/pub) **that faculty can pop into their syllabi and assignment descriptions. This list is intended as a simple guide for faculty to conceive of how AI is likely to be used, both at the course and assignment level.**

Next, you're going to identify assignments in your course that students are likely to use AI to complete. I would put these assignments into two buckets: first up, the "busy work" assignments:

3) **Modify or Eliminate "Busy Work" Assignments.** Students will be inclined to use AI to do work that they do not see the value of or don't have to engage with (I'm looking at you: summarize readings, respond to relatively simple discussion prompts, 2-3 page essay assignments based on theories discussed in class, etc.).

To modify and update these types of assignments, consider allowing students to use AI in the assignment, but have them turn in the prompts they used and the "chat" they had with the application when developing their assignments. Ask them to show how they refined, edited, or changed the AI-generated work. Challenge them to plug their content into an AI-detector like [zeroGPT](https://www.zerogpt.com/) to assess what value they provided in the writing of the assignment. (If their assignment is less than 50% human generated, consider having) them go back and put things into their own words.) Ask them to identify three places where an initial draft generated by AI was biased or incomplete.

Overall, find ways to integrate AI into the tasks you are assigning in a way that mirrors how they might use it in the real world. Don't ask students to memorize information that they won't need later. Instead, identify the key skills they will need later--writing good questions (prompts), identifying bias, using critical thinking to analyze potential solutions, adding their unique--human--voice into the work they do.

4) **Review the "hard stuff" assignments: make sure you're testing critical human skills.** Students will be inclined to use AI for [high stakes assessments](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/solveproblem/strat-cheating/cheating-05.html), particularly when they aren't confident in their mastery of the skills that will be tested. (*Note that busy work and high stakes testing are two areas in which students were most likely to cheat BEFORE GENERATIVE AI. Nothing is really new when it comes to AI. It's just the same old problems, but on steroids.*)

Before you devise new ways to try to force them to learn the hard stuff, make sure that you've got the *right* hard stuff in your syllabus. This is really discipline specific--in the medical field, we need students to memorize certain information so they can react quickly and confidently in a crisis or when dealing with patients. In business law, we don't need students to memorize the elements of negligence, but we do need them to understand the basic concept of the "reasonable person."

A few areas I would stress when it comes to figuring out the right hard stuff:

* **Magic words**: what are the specialized words and concepts in your field that will make or break an AI prompt? In law, a "reasonable accommodation" has a very specific meaning, and asking ChatGPT whether an employee's request is a *reasonable accommodation* is different from asking what might be a *fair* request from an employee.
* **Structural basics**: are there organizing concepts that higher order concepts are built on? Identifying underlying foundation knowledge is essential to knowing what content you can eliminate from your syllabus and what you cannot.
* **How to think**: disciplines respond to problems differently. In law, there's a very specific way of analyzing problems we might call "thinking like a lawyer." It involved identifying risks, key facts, precedent, and analogous cases. How are problems solved in your discipline?
* **Biases**: where are students likely to see bias in your discipline? Will it show up in the way data is collected? Does it appear in how algorithms are structured or how they replicate? Large language models basically crowd source responses to questions, and provide the most likely text in their responses. What will be left out of a system like this?
* **Testing and verifying**: Generative AI makes things up. It makes up citations, prior facts, and data. How can students verify the information they get? Do they have the skills to find the primary source behind a citation? Do they know where they can get reliable information to cross-reference text that came out of ChatGPT?

5) **Don't Panic. Students want to learn.**

Seriously, please keep this in mind. Students know if they are completing a class and not actually gaining any skills, they aren't being set up for success later. They are paying a lot of money for your courses, and they are intent on learning relevant skills they can take into their future. Talk to them. Ask them what type of assignments they learn from. Ask them about their interests, and find ways to engage them. Talk to them about the importance of your course and how it will apply to their lives. Assume they want to learn and find ways to support that learning journey.

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