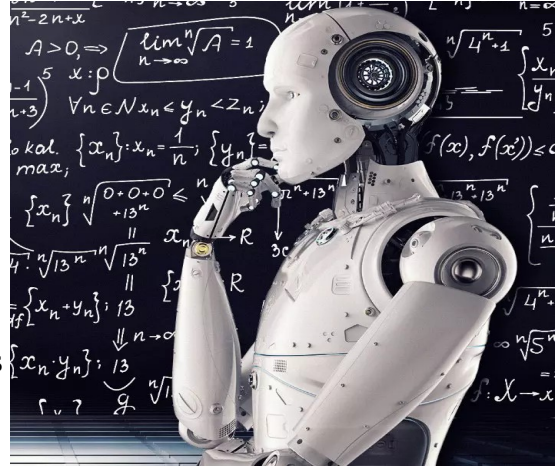# RECOMMENDATION REPORT PROJECT:

THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In this project, you will work in small groups to explore issues or problems related to the use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I), and you'll identify potential solutions to these problems through primary and secondary research. You'll then synthesize the information you learned, and present that information in an objective fashion. Although this project involves some individual elements, the majority of the project is the result of group work. As you recall from Week 1, one of the six elements of successful technical writing is that it is collaboratively produced, so it's important to get some practice researching and writing as part of a team.

There are many kinds of reports, so it's difficult to make generalizations, but typically they provide an informative and definitive overview of a well-focused topic. A white paper, for example, is a report format that was originally developed to report on governmental issues. Reports can be used as marketing tools (prepared for potential customers or clients) or they can be intended for use within the company (reports to different departments or executives). Case studies are often used in the workplace, either to illustrate to customers how a company's products or services solve problems or to examine internal problems. In our case, we are writing a report that recommends one or more possible solutions to the problem.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Scenario: you, a team of interns at a humanistic think tank, have been charged with researching and then compiling a recommendation report on a topic related to AI.

In this project, you will form groups of *no more than four members*. Group membership will be determined by your interest in specific topics related to A.I., such as:

- **A. I. and the Arts** — What are the implications of A.I. being trained with writing and artwork produced by humans? How will A.I.'s increasing use in the arts affect human artists? (A.I.-generated actors, voices, images, etc.)
- **A.I. and Accessibility** — What groups of people have reduced access to A.I., and how are they disadvantaged by this reduced access? Whose lives stand to be improved by A.I? How and why?
- **A.I. and Economics** — What jobs will most be impacted by A.I. in the next five to ten years? What jobs will be replaced by A.I.? Will this effect people near retirement age, or younger people? What jobs will be available for people whose jobs are displaced by A.I., if any?
- **A.I. and Engineering**- To what extent can A.I. improve engineering? Can we trust A.I. to make the right decisions for humans in the engineering process? (For example: autonomous vehicles.)

- **A.I. and the Environment** — what are the environmental impacts of A.I.? Is the need for environmental resources a reason to the reduce our use of A.I., or can the resource use be offset somehow?
- **A.I. and Politics —** how has A.I. been used to spread disinformation recently, and how might it be used to do so in the future? What solutions exist to the problems created by deepfakes?
- **A.I. and Teaching** — How will A.I. impact teaching in K-12 education? Which school districts will benefit, and which will be disadvantaged? How can A.I. be used to improve education for all?

Note: The above not an exhaustive list of questions and topics, nor are you limited to the above areas. You may form a group that will research A.I. in your major or eventual career goals, such as A.I. and the law, A.I. and medicine, A.I. and accounting. More than one group may tackle the same topic, if there are more than four people interested in the same topic.

Groups will investigate the problem by conducting primary and secondary research; you are strongly encouraged to reach out to those knowledgeable in A.I. here at NIU and elsewhere. Each group will collaboratively write an informative report that identifies the problem, and proposes researched, viable solution(s). The finished report will be a well-designed document. After producing the final draft of the report, groups will present their findings to the class in a brief and engaging presentation.

Report length: The length will depend somewhat on your focused inquiry, but expect the report to reach *at least* 1700-2000 words.
Report format: We will look at various examples of workplace reports to give you an idea of how to organize your report. Formatting will vary, but every report should be visually sophisticated and in keeping with the assigned readings on design. In other words, these should not look like a typical college paper in MLA/APA format. **All reports should include: Title page; list of group members with pertinent biographical information; table of contents; executive summary; introduction / background information; conclusion; a list of sources consulted.**

Presentation: Each group will give a brief (10 minutes maximum) presentation with appropriate visual aids and, if desired, one page handouts. There will be a brief Q and A after your presentation, so be prepared to answer questions.

DELIVERABLES, DUE DATES, POINTS
Discussion board — group formation. Post to find your people. Due Wednesday, October 2. 42.8 points.
Group contract — Groups determine participation parameters for successful work. Due Sunday, October 6. 40 points.
Group proposal — Groups determine key individual roles, technology, internal due dates. Due Sunday, October 6. 40 points
Group first draft of report — the more complete this is, the better feedback you will receive. Due before the start of class on Wednesday, October 23. 20 points.
Group presentation — Ten minutes maximum, polished and rehearsed presentation with relevant visuals; teams must be prepared to answer questions. Due October 28, 30 during class. 40 points.
Group polished draft of report — Due no later than Friday, November 1. 60 points.
Individual group evaluation memo — in which you reflect on the team's overall performance. Due Friday, November 1. 42.8 points.

CLASS CALENDAR, RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Week 6   September 30 – October 4
- M 9/30: Quick overview of what A.I. is. Start of Recommendation Report Project; discussion – why do group projects tend to suck? How can we avoid that? In-class small group chats to begin forming groups based on topic.

Homework: Review Rec Report assignment description; begin forming groups via discussion board. Read Team Work and Collaborative Writing.
- W 10/2: Finalize group formation; primary and secondary research refresher; project management.

Homework: Groups complete group contracts and begin work on proposals

Week 7   October 7 – 11
- M 10/7: Contents and organization of a report; some examples; instructor meets with groups to review contracts and discuss proposals

Homework: Revise contracts if needed; finish proposals
- W 10/9: Document Design; possibly time in class for group work; proposals due soon!

Homework: Complete and submit proposals and respond to instructor concerns if needed.

Week 8   October 14 – 18
- M 10/14: Presentations, or, why Power Point sucks

Homework: Continue gathering data for your reports.
- W 10/16: TBA

Homework: continue gathering data for your reports.

Week 9   October 21 – 25
- M 10/21: Another look at report drafting and organization

Homework: First draft of reports are due before the start of class Wednesday
- W 10/23: Groups meet with instructor to review report drafts and discuss presentations.

Homework: Revise report drafts and complete presentation materials.

Week 10   October 28 – November 1
- M 10/28: Group presentations
- W 10/30: Group presentations

Homework: Finished draft of report due, along with individual group evaluation.

RECOMMENDATION REPORT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This project addresses the following NIU Department of English course learning outcomes:

Writing: Students will compose documents representing a variety of workplace genres (such as memos, email, reports, resumes).

Professional competence: As students study and compose a variety of technical documents, they will be working towards attaining a level of competency sufficient for productive employment and advanced study.