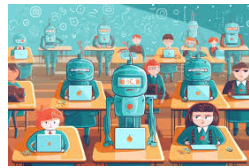


UCCS

English

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

**SPOTLIGHT ON
STUDENTS: AI IMPACT
ON STUDENT
LEARNING**

**EVENT
HIGHLIGHTS:
ALUMNI ROUNDTABLE
SUCCESS**



English
Department
Open House
Oct 29 & 30
10am-4pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

NEWSLETTER

Spotlight on Students: AI Impact on Student Learning

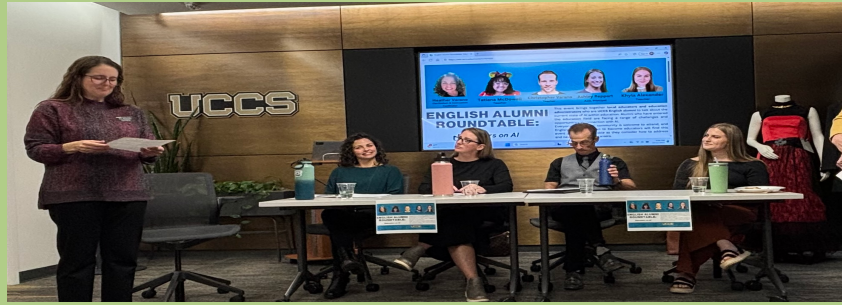
Shruti Nirukirti LAS Peak Ambassador for the English department describes what she learned when she chatted with English majors about the impact of AI on learning:



The introduction of AI has made changes in how students and teachers approach learning. Students in the English department have shared their views on the matter. Some students have argued that AI in degrees such as English can be used as an initial “brainstorming tool” for a project. However, as one student asserts, “the rest of the project should reflect the student’s own ideas”. Some professors have incorporated AI within their assignments or have developed their own AI policies. One student mentioned that some professors allow AI use if it is cited within the assignment. Others have noted that a few professors have encouraged AI use in past projects. AI is a tool that offers quick explanations to difficult topics. A student reported that they use AI during class to gain comprehension on certain topics. They have suggested that teachers should gauge student comprehension before expanding on a new concept. This student believes this would lower their AI use within the classroom considerably. The rise of AI leaves colleges debating whether they should adapt to or prohibit its use. One group of English students suggests that AI literacy should be taught to students as the advancement of the technology continues.

One student was overtly opposed to the use of AI in the classroom, however. They believe the use of AI is both an ethical issue and a misinformation issue. The student maintains that the English major is rooted in empathy and the use of AI would disrupt that. They argue that “the point of English is human expression and [understanding] how humans communicate”. As an English major themselves, they want to prioritize critical thinking by having students share their own thoughts without the assistance of AI. Additionally, this student foregrounded the issue of misinformation in AI generated summaries. They provided many examples of Google Overviews presenting misinformation. This could further complicate a student’s understanding of a certain concept. As the new technology advances, some English majors believe that students and professors should have honest conversations on how to appropriately navigate the rise of AI.

Local Educators, UCCS Alumni Speak on Artificial Intelligence in Classrooms and Academia — By Tessa Schauer



On the evening of October 22nd, UCCS English students and professors attended the “English Alumni Roundtable: Educators on AI” event. This event took place in the T. Rowe Price Career Center and was led by Dr. Ann Amicucci and Professor Rebecca Posusta. Four UCCS English Alum, Ashley Reppart from Harrison High School, Chris Varano, from Messa Ridge High School, Khyla Alexandar from Horizon Middle School, and Heather Varano, District 11's High School Literacy Content and Commentary Facilitator were presented with individualized questions regarding AI in their respected fields. Over the hour-long panel, differing perspectives of AI's place in classrooms, district planning, curriculum, and student-teacher relationships were presented and discussed.

While opinions and personal experiences with AI differed from panelist to panelist (Chris Varano is adamantly against AI and Ashley Reppart occasionally uses AI as a "soundboard"), every educator agreed on one overarching idea: AI cannot replace human connections, interactions, and experiences between students and teachers. When asked which aspects of teaching cannot be automated, each panelist highlighted the importance of student-teacher interactions and relationships. In regard to AI using student data points to adhere to and "teach" according to student needs, Chris Varano articulated, "We need to lean into the humanities side of it, the less science-y, data-y. Education is so data driven, and data is important, but it's not as important as the relationship. The relationship with the student is crucial to learning, period." Grunts of approval echoed throughout the space, accompanied by audience members bobbing their heads in agreement.

When the panel drew to a close, Ashley Reppart concluded by saying, "we, as schools, are not just about teaching content...educators are expected to be and responsible for teaching some of those parenting things: soft skills, critical thinking, how to be a good human..."

As I left the warm, academic conversations of the post-panel mingle, I was plagued by two lingering questions. When will AI know the responsibility of teaching the next generation? What happens then?

Upcoming Events

UCCS
Visiting Author
Series: Lee
Horikoshi
Roripaugh
Oct 29
7-9pm Heller
Center

Creative
Writing Open
Mic
Nov 13
6-8pm
Clyde's
Gastropub

UCCS
Visiting Author
Series: Jonathon
Case
Nov 19
7-9pm Heller
Center

Virtual
Senior
Assessment
Social
12/4 4:30-5:30pm
On Teams

UCCS
Visiting
Author Series:
Fred Arroyo
Dec 4
7-9pm Heller
Center

Spotlight on Research

Dr. Katherine Mack

Wed, Nov. 12, 2025

1:30-2:30 p.m.

In-person (room TBD)
or join on Teams

Join the English Department and host Dr. Laura Collins to learn about Dr. Katherine Mack's recent book *The Case for Single Motherhood: Contemporary Maternal Identities and Family Formations*. Dr. Mack will share where her research ideas come from and how she started on the writing path that resulted in this book. We'll learn about her successes and setbacks as a researcher, and students will have the opportunity to engage in conversation with Dr. Mack about her scholarship.

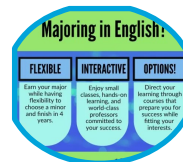
Students who enjoy the writing and research process and those who'd like to learn more about these professional practices will find this event of particular value. All are welcome.



What's New in the English Department



Come visit our new English Department Library Space in the English Department Suite, Columbine Hall, Room 1025
Borrow a book, Read a book,
Donate a Book!



The English BA Degree Plan is off to a great start! 62 English majors began the new degree plan in Fall 2025!



Michael Ferguson, Assistant Teaching Professor. Michael named the new Assistant Director of the Excel Multiliteracy Center.

"When Robert Downey Jr. came back to the MCU, he said, 'New mask, same task.' This is going to be a big change for me, but my core goal will always be to help and serve students. This new role will leverage all the experience I've gained working across UCCS and in teaching. I'm excited to develop programming and work with students in a way that utilizes everything I've learned from all the different places I've worked on campus. I'm sad to leave my colleagues in English and FYRW, but I'll still be walking around the halls asking for y'all's input in my new job." — Michael

Spotlight on Faculty: Dr. Ortega on the Use of AI in Higher Education

Dr. Kirsten Ortega, Associate Professor in the English department answers questions set for her by LAS Peak Ambassador for the English Department, Isaac Dumas about the use of AI in the college classroom:

How increasingly prevalent has AI become in the classroom? Would you describe it as linear, exponential, or other? *The English majors I work with generally express frustration with the effects of AI-writing-generators on their learning and future potential, but studies indicate that most students are using it as some part of their study or writing process.*

What are the most common ways that you're seeing AI being used in the academic setting?

I hear about it being used for everything from brainstorming topics for projects or assignments, outlining, summarizing readings, organizing information, completing research, writing full essays, and editing essays (including suggesting revisions).



How do you feel Academic Integrity as a concept is being challenged right now?

It has definitely blown open a crack in the honor code of learning to become a chasm between faculty and students. Students who are investing time and energy to learn want to know how those who are replacing that time and energy with AI-generated work will be held accountable for learning. I can attest to trying various methods of prevention and response, but feeling mostly like I'm always two steps behind and unable to keep up. In response to your secondary thoughts, Isaac: I think that AI Generators have exacerbated a general cultural questioning of the purpose and cost of education that was already well underway in the U.S. before ChatGPT became accessible to everyone in 2022.

What do your general class policies surrounding AI look like?

If I suspect that AI was used in total, I reserve grading until I've spoken with the student about their learning for the assignment. I offer alternatives and chances for correction if the student was using an AI-generator. If the student meets with me, it offers a chance for us to think about the usefulness and problems of AI tools together. In general, I've tried to create assignments that students are motivated to complete (e.g., I am thinking a lot about how to make them purposeful and meaningful beyond simply demonstrating learning to me or that simply demonstrating learning to me has purpose in the course structure that leads to other things). I've also altered my rubrics to emphasize the aspects of assignments that AI generators are weaker at reproducing. (That's chasing an ever-changing target and increasingly difficult as AI generators improve.) And I've tried to create methods of getting to know students better so that I have a sense of who they are in their assignments.

Primary and secondary schools are beginning to see bans on Smartphones in the classroom become more commonplace as a combative measure against AI. Do you agree with countermeasures like this, and to what extent do you think they should be applied to higher education? *AI generators may become like calculators: Students still need to learn to read, organize ideas, plan responses, write, research, etc. And then they need to learn when, how, and why to use the AI generators properly, just like we still need to learn math fundamentals even though calculators complete them infinitely faster.*

What AI resistance countermeasures do you think might be practical in today's extremely technologically pervasive world? *The only real countermeasure I've seen is requiring that work happen in person with the teacher present and all technology put away.*

From your perspective, what is the general attitude that you are gathering from students surrounding AI usage (both academically and outside of academia, if you would like to discuss both)? *Outside academia, I'm hearing that everyone loves AI generators: They make everything so fast and easy! But they're not talking about learning. Inside academia, students and faculty alike are trying to figure out what learning will be lost to AI generation and what of that learning is needed.*



What is the purpose of the English degree in the face of AI advancement? *I'm worried that there's no way to answer this that won't sound naive almost immediately! At the moment, I don't think the purpose of the English degree changes significantly: rhetorical & literary history are still significant areas of learning and I don't believe that AI can replace critical thinking. People will continue to want to create/write and to see what others have created/written. People will continue to want to respond to what others have created/written. That's why I'm teaching ENGL3710 Pathways with the English Degree around the theme of criticism (as a genre and lens for analyzing the work we do in English). I do think it's going to change what contemporary things we study, how students study, and how students demonstrate their learning.*