CSC-261, Syllabus
Fernanda M. Eliott, Ph.D.
Spring I, 2021. Computer Science, Grinnell College.

Course Mission

1. To acquire proficiency in the foundations of AI.
2. To obtain familiarity with Machine Learning concepts and paradigms (with a focus on Reinforcement Learning techniques).
3. To reflect on multidisciplinary applications, ethical dilemmas, and limitations of AI.

Learning Objectives

1. Obtain proficiency in the foundations of AI and use data graphics and images to support investigations.
2. Understand and apply important terminology, concepts, and techniques from mathematics used in AI.
3. Deepen skills in writing technical information focusing on advantages, challenges, and weaknesses of AI.

Associated Learning Objectives

- Analyze traditional references and papers that show state-of-the-art approaches. Read and summarize those identifying the research problem, methods, limitations, and findings.
- Design diagrams to explain concepts, implement algorithms, and create data graphics to analyze and discuss testbeds.
- Use personal experiences with modern technologies to discuss and reflect on the ethical implications of AI.
- Develop familiarity with pet datasets and data augmentation techniques.

Instructor Information

Fernanda M. Eliott, Ph.D. (she/her/hers), eliottfe@grinnell.edu

ELBICA research Laboratory

Textbooks

- Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach" (4th Edition). Stuart Russell, Peter Norvig.
- Reinforcement Learning: An Introduction. Richard S. Sutton and Andrew G. Barto.

Grade Setup

- 25% Reading Journal (individual).
- 30% Fun Lab (both: individual and groups of five).
- 25% Coding Assignment and Testbed (trios).
- 20% Ethics Poster (trios).

Course Instructions

- Course Webpage here.
- This is an online course. To access its content, log into Pioneer-Web, and click on the "Start here" button.
- In the first week of classes, you MUST access the "Start here" button and submit the activities described there.
- Course structure. Activities and readings are posted on a daily basis. All easily identifiable on Pioneer-web: simply click on a date-labeled content. You are expected to open each content and follow the activities in a timely fashion.
- Synchronous activities on Zoom.
- Group work: only ONE report *per* group.

Community

- **AI Journal Club.** We will read AI papers together and discuss our findings. (Optional)
- **Monday Motivators** will be sent your way every week to help you keep track of the course content and activities.
- **Course Schedule and Readings.** I will keep an updated course schedule here.

Policy - Course Culture and Interactions

- **Interaction.** Be kind. Communities bring resilience and help us grow stronger. We will be part of a small community during the whole course. I count on you to help our community engage and be supportive.
- **Team Spirit.** Collaborate, respect, be friendly, and learn from your peers. Disagreements may happen, and those play an essential role in your self-development: see those as an opportunity for developing your soft skills.
- **Communication.** In online settings, successful group projects over-communicate. You are expected to interact and stay in constant communication with your group. If you cannot make it to a group meeting, let your peers know as soon as possible and find ways to be helpful.

- **Honorable Conduct.** We appreciate privacy, honorable conduct, and team spirit (kindly read our Academic Integrity Policy). Never record your classmates or share any content that does not follow the instructions provided by your professor.

Life Events

- Circumstances may change. If you experience anything that impacts your learning and/or promptness to submit the deliverables, let me know, and let me help you. The most important message here is communication.

Accessibility and Inclusion

- I am here to help you advance and be successful in your academic journey! We all learn and get inspired differently, and accommodations help us to achieve our goals.
- If any aspect of the course prevents you from learning or excludes you, please let me know as soon as possible! I am happy to chat and looking forward to finding, together with you, strategies that fulfill both: your needs and the course requirements.
- Grinnell College has a robust and supportive network of people and services ready to support you; for example: the Accessibility and Disability Services; Writing, Reading, Speaking Center; Academic Advising; Student Affairs, including International Student Affairs (OISA); the Center for Religion, Spirituality and Social Justice (CRSSJ); or Student Health and Wellness (SHAW); finally, confidential support is available through the Office of the Ombuds.

Religious Observances

- Kindly contact me if you would like to talk about alternative options to complete academic work due to religious holy days.

Acknowledgements

- I would like to thank Dr. Weinman for the insights and inspiration. (I am very excited about the "Reading Journal" assignment!)
- I also would like to thank Vanderbilt's Center for Teaching. The *Online Course Design Institute* (Summer 2020) inspired the design of this course.