Online Experiments for Language Scientists, 2024-2025
Policy on the use of generative AI

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The formal policy for this course is as follows: Academic integrity is an underlying principle of research and academic practice. All submitted work is expected to be your own. AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, the Edinburgh Language Model) should **not** be used to generate written text or code on your assessments for this course. However, you are allowed to use these tools to identify ideas, key themes, and plan your assessment, or to help you generate potential solutions to coding problems. You may also use it to improve the clarity of your writing. If you use AI software, you must acknowledge its use in your submission, using the cover sheet provided (this is linked from the course github page alongside the assignment brief).

Some additional remarks. Having played around with ChatGPT a bit myself, I'd add the following observations: 1) the text it produces is obviously incredibly impressive for a machine, but for an undergrad or Masters essay is quite superficial and lacks the critical engagement we are looking for; 2) its answers sometimes contains interesting or unexpected links that could be worth pursuing, particularly if you are at the brainstorming stage, but it's often prone to fantasizing evidence that does not exist; 3) it does particularly badly with references, and frequently produces references to papers which either do not exist or which do not contain content relevant to the claim they are being cited to support. This will be extremely obvious to anyone who knows the literature who reads your essay. 4) I almost never use it for coding, because the javascript code it generate tends not to work without tweaking/correction, and unless you understand how a piece of code works it's actually quite hard to fix it when it's not working. The code it produces will also not be in the style we teach on the course, so it'll be obvious to us when reviewing your assignment.

If you do use generative AI, you are encouraged to use the Edinburgh Language Model (https://elm.edina.ac.uk/), see explanation in the Appendix.

APPENDIX: THE EDINBURGH LANGUAGE MODEL (ELM)

What is ELM?
The Edinburgh Language Model (ELM) is our internal institutional AI tool. ELM is powered by ChatGPT 4.0 Turbo, a powerful and widely used Generative AI. All University staff have access to ELM (https://elm.edina.ac.uk/), students should have access by 9th September 2024.

Why would I use ELM?
Compared with ChatGPT or other Generative AIs available, ELM has two key advantages:
1. It is free. The University has already paid for the product meaning access to this powerful AI is not restricted by your ability to pay. All you need is an EASE login.
2. It helps protect your privacy and intellectual property. Under the agreement between the University and ChatGPT, the information you input into ELM is not retained by the company or used for training their AI. This is not typically the case for online AIs.

What are the risks and ethical considerations?
There are risks in using ELM as it is powered directly by ChatGPT. The company that owns ChatGPT is US-based and not GDPR compliant, however these risks are mitigated by ELM. Due to the nature of their training, AIs can pick up (or even more worryingly, amplify) biases from their datasets. It is important to critically assess their output for bias, much as we would critically assess other information from the internet. These are a few key examples, and for a more fulsome discussion see risks and ethics.

How can I use ELM?
Generative AIs can be used for a very wide range of tasks. It is sometimes helpful to think of a Generative AI as a very bright but very new coworker – they have a lot of processing power but need quite specific guidance and fact-checking.

ELM could be used for generating ideas, refining text, writing code, summarizing text, providing feedback, and a range of other tasks. It is often easiest to try and see. For some guidance and simple training on how to start using ELM, see here.

For more details about ELM see here, and for general information about AIs see here.