ECON 3735 - Artificial Intelligence in Business

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 01, CRN 43167,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Joseph Palardy

Email: jpalardy@ysu.edu

Public Instructor Information

- **Instructor Title:** Professor, Lariccia School of Accounting & Finance
- **Instructor Professional Qualifications:** Ph.D., Economics, West Virginia University, 2002
- **Instructor Office Location:** Williamson Hall 3369
- **Instructor Office Phone:** 330-941-3430

Course Description

3735. Artificial Intelligence in Business. In this course students will embark on an immersive, project-based exploration of the transformative impact of generative AI across various business sectors and the economy. From automating customer service to innovating marketing strategies, simulating design processes, and analyzing case studies, students will work hands-on with cutting-edge AI tools to solve real-world challenges. Through a series of tailored projects, the course aims to equip students with the foundational AI skills and ethical considerations essential for leveraging artificial intelligence as a strategic asset in today's fast-paced digital economy. Crosslisted with: BUS 3735. Prereq.: Junior Standing AND 2.5 GPA. 3.s.h.
A note on the format. This is a seven-week course carrying the same credit as a full-term course. Expect roughly 12–14 hours of work per module, with lessons, discussions, projects, and peer reviews due as listed in the weekly schedule.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Has AI Impacted the Labor Market? (Substack, Sep. 29, 2026)	Alex Imas and Jacob Schaal	
Required	Human Baselines for Benchmarks: AI Now Outperforms Junior Accountants (Mercor)	Mercor	

There is no required textbook for this course, and the YSU Bookstore lists this section as requiring no purchased materials. All readings are free and linked in each Blackboard module; course materials and assignments are also provided there. Generative AI changes rapidly, and materials are updated during the term as the tools change.

Note that the AI subscription described under Additional Course Materials is a separate personal expense and is not sold through the bookstore.

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
10/19	Mercor, Human Baselines for Benchmarks	Module 1: How LLMs work, ending at agents. Lessons: How LLMs Work (next word, scratchpad, tools); From Chatbots to Agents; What AI Can Do Now; AI Policy, Trust, and Chat Histories	Improv initial post Wed 10/21, 11:59 p.m.; Stand-Up, AI Policy Comments, Agent Setup Check, Improv replies, and lessons Sun 10/25, 11:59 p.m. (last day to add: Thu 10/22)

10/26	Prompting science report (linked in Blackboard)	Module 2: Directing agents. Lessons: Writing Specs for Agents; Verification; Metaprompting	Stand-Up class vote closes Wed 10/28, 11:59 p.m.; novella draft posted Wed 10/28, 11:59 p.m.; read-around notes and replies Fri 10/30, 11:59 p.m.; AI Dystopia Novella, Prompting Science Report, Term Project Baseline, and lessons Sun 11/1, 11:59 p.m.
11/2	Linked in Blackboard	Module 3: Connectors, skills, and plugins; AI in Excel and where data work is headed. Codespaces setup.	Connector and Image Lab, First Skill, Data Brief in Excel, and lessons Sun 11/8, 11:59 p.m.
11/9	Linked in Blackboard	Module 4: Plugin build by track; prompt injection and permissions; testing (heaviest week)	Plugin Build initial submission Wed 11/11, 11:59 p.m.; Plugin Build final, Plugin Peer Test, AI Risk Review, and lessons Sun 11/15, 11:59 p.m.
11/16	Imas and Schaal, Has AI Impacted the Labor Market?	Module 5: AI and the labor market; early-career hiring; durable skills	Labor Market Discussion initial post Wed 11/18, 11:59 p.m.; Your First Job Audited, Term Project Deep Research, discussion replies, and lessons Sun 11/22, 11:59 p.m. (last day to withdraw with a W: Mon 11/16)
11/23	Linked in Blackboard	Module 6: How organizations restructure around agents; hiring and training (Thanksgiving week)	Reorganizing Cosmic Crunch, Term Project Final Project, and lessons Sun 11/29, 11:59 p.m.
11/30	Linked in Blackboard	Module 7: Capstone launch and pitch	Product Launch Challenge Wed 12/2, 11:59 p.m.; Product Showcase reviews, Plugin Walkthrough Recording, and lessons Fri 12/4, 11:59 p.m. (no grace period)

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.