

Professionalism in Human Language Technology¹

Course Information

This course aims to prepare students for careers beyond academia in human language technology (HLT).

Course objectives

To work effectively in *Human Language Technology*, you need an understanding of the structure and properties of human language as well as aspects of computational linguistics, software development, and machine learning. This course will focus on how to **work** in this domain—not focusing on the first-order skills to create and improve HLT tools, but the meta-skills needed to navigate a career in this domain. In this course, we will ...

- develop an actionable plan leading toward a career goal
- craft a résumé aligned with a stated career goal
- tailor a job application cover letter to link your résumé with a job ad
- review networking-based approaches to securing interviews
- prepare for interview loops and hiring screens
 - the STAR method for behavioral interviews
 - technical coding interviews

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to...

1. prepare a professional profile and résumé.
2. document their career development goals.
3. develop an actionable, goal-oriented plan for finding job openings, preparing for job interviews, and growing toward their career goals.
4. apply to at least one job aligned with a stated career goal

While practicing programming skills that were developed in other courses relates to HLT learning outcomes 1-3, these four course outcomes mainly relate to HLT learning outcome 4.

¹This course was originally developed by Gus Hahn-Powell.

HLT program learning outcomes

By completion of the HLT program, students will be able to:

1. **Write, debug, and document readable and efficient code** in programming languages commonly used to develop, implement, and evaluate HLT models, as demonstrated through course projects and a professional internship.
2. **Select and apply appropriate algorithms and core concepts** in HLT to perform common tasks and solve realistic problems, as demonstrated through course projects and a professional internship.
3. **Apply common tools and libraries** used in HLT by integrating them into course projects and real-world applications or workflows, as demonstrated through course projects and a professional internship.
4. **Demonstrate professional skills** in the field of HLT, including effective teamwork, clear and concise communication, professional networking, understanding of business procedures and team-based code development, leadership, and critical thinking, as demonstrated through course presentations, projects, and a professional internship.

Prerequisites

To be well prepared for success in this course, you should be ...

- a current MS-HLT or NLP certificate student, or have completed one of these
- familiar with using `git` and GitHub at the level covered in LING 529, 539, and 582

Credit

This is a one-credit course.

Instructor

name Eric Jackson
email ejackson1@arizona.edu
hours Mondays 10:00am–12:00pm (Arizona time, UTC-7) in person (COMM 114A) and online via Zoom at <https://arizona.zoom.us/j/84420158691> (passcode 074337), and by appointment.

This is an asynchronous course, so we won't meet at a single time for class to happen. There are no sessions at which I will take attendance. My working hours are normal business hours in Arizona, and I generally do my preparation and grading for the course at that time.

The best way to contact me is to send me an email or a forum message. I try to respond within 24 hours, but *during* working hours, I may be grading coursework, meeting with someone, or recording lectures, so my response may not come immediately. If there's a chance you may need my response, don't wait to discover that when a deadline is upon you.

I know that normal business hours in Arizona are not convenient for everyone in this course. If you need to meet outside of Arizona business hours, I'm holding Thursday evenings open. Contact me in advance to set up a time and a link; I won't otherwise be online then.

Course forum

For this course, we'll use the HLT forum, outside the course D2L website though still hosted by the university. Make sure you sign up for this course's stream in the first week. Please be respectful of others in your interactions on the forum.

<https://forum.hlt.arizona.edu/#narrow/stream/63-ling-688-sp2025>

In addition to the already-planned course forum activities, you're free to start discussions there with the class, or post questions about the course. Bear in mind that responses from the forum (from me or from other students) may come quickly, but it is not guaranteed that you will receive responses faster than one working day. You should plan for deadlines as if forum responses will take 24 hours or more.

Readings

Please check D2L for required readings and due dates: <https://d2l.arizona.edu>

University Resources

The University of Arizona provides internship and career placement support for students through the Office of Student Engagement & Career Support as well as through the Graduate College.

<https://career.arizona.edu/>

<https://gradcenter.arizona.edu/career-services>

Requirements and grading

Students are expected to actively participate in the course by watching any recorded lecture videos, reading and digesting any assigned readings, completing any assigned work, and engaging with the instructor and other students in the course forum. You are all adults, and I expect you to take responsibility for your own learning.

Course schedule

The course is divided into three topical modules spread over seven weeks, with lectures, readings, and assignments for each module. All course materials are available on D2L or are linked from within D2L. Specific pages for each official reading assignment will also be found in D2L. Please check D2L for scheduling and due dates: <https://d2l.arizona.edu>

All dates and times for the course are in Mountain Standard Time (GMT-7). Arizona does not shift for Daylight Savings Time, so if you are in a location that *does* observe Daylight Savings Time, be aware that your time relative to Arizona will change during this course.

The first day of the course is March 17, 2025, and the last day of the course is May 7, 2025. Authoritative dates can be found on the UA Registrar's website at <https://registrar.arizona.edu/dates-and-deadlines>. All work must be submitted by the last day of the course.

Technology

This is a fully online course. As such, you will need a stable internet connection to access course content and submit assignments. To complete your assignments, we recommend that you use a computer with >6GB of RAM. To complete your assignments, you will also need

- `git` and a GitHub account
- A modern web browser (Firefox or Chrome recommended)
- a LinkedIn account

Required reading

Readings are assigned for each unit of the course. You may read the assigned sections before you watch the lectures, or after—it's up to you. However, you must read the assigned sections and complete any activities before their due dates as listed on the course website (D2L).

Videos and lectures

Lecture videos will be provided through Panopto on the course website (D2L). Some required videos are hosted on sites outside D2L, such as at Youtube.com; in such cases, links to external sites will be provided within D2L. You are expected to watch all videos and understand the content. If you for any reason cannot access a required video, please notify the instructor immediately.

If the content of a unit is not clear to you on the first viewing, don't panic. Make sure you've done the required readings and try re-watching the lectures. You're free to search for other presentations of the same topic online. If a concept is still unclear, you are expected to send a question to the instructor by email, meet with the instructor in regular office hours or arrange another time to meet, or post a question for clarification on the course forum.

Assignments and grading

All assignments will be due 1-2 weeks after release. Written exercises and peer review assignments will be submitted through pull requests to a shared GitHub repository and as responses to companion surveys.

type	overall weight	Description
Planning survey	10%	Gathers information about career goals, current challenges, and crucial information for later assignments
Short written exercises (3)	60%	1) Career goal-oriented planning 2) a job application draft and résumé 3) transcribed informational interview of a professional in your target career
Peer review (2)	30%	Form-based feedback of each short written exercise for at least one peer
100%		

The due date for each assignment will be posted with the assignment in D2L. All times will be given in Arizona time (Mountain Standard, GMT-7). If you have an unexpected life event that will keep you from completing an assignment on time, talk to me about accommodation as soon as you can. Accommodations for late submission will be made for reasons that are accepted by University policy. **Late work will otherwise not be accepted.**

All your quizzes and assignments are graded on a point basis, with the number of points available specified for each assignment. Grades may be curved, and a final course grade of A, B, C, D, or E will be given. The following minimum percentages will guarantee the corresponding letter grades, in accordance with university policy:

- A: 90–100%
- B: 80–89.9%
- C: 70–79.9%
- D: 60–69.9%
- E: 0–59.9%

Grades will be accessible within D2L. More details about each assignment or project are posted on D2L. Disputes about grades on a particular project will be entertained for two weeks from the day the project is due, or one day before grades are due, whichever is sooner. These will be resolved by re-grading the entire project. Note that this can result in a lower grade in the event that new mistakes are discovered.

No negotiations about individual students' letter grades will be entertained once final grades are assigned, except as permitted by the policy stated above.

Student Work Policy, Collaboration, and AI tools

The purpose of this course is to train **your** mind, and to do that, you need to **use** your own mind. You will gain the most benefit from the programming and other assignments in this course if **you** are the one who has come up with all the code, analysis, or examples, even if this requires a bit of mental struggle on your part to get it right. **Don't be afraid to struggle for a bit, because that struggle is likely helping you learn.** Beyond a reasonable amount of struggle, however, it's reasonable to seek outside help from the instructor or another source.

Students are encouraged to discuss problems and general approaches for solutions with the instructor and with others in the course, but everyone must turn in work that is the product of their own mind. You may not submit assignments that are substantially the same as any other source (your classmates, someone online, or an AI tool), including using someone else's code but simply changing the variable or object names.

If you do feel you need outside help, using portions of code you found online or created with Generative AI is acceptable, but it must constitute no more than 25% of your total code. If you obtain code other than writing it yourself, **you must evaluate it critically and cite where it came from.**

If you discuss an assignment with a peer, if you find inspiration from a web resource, or if you use AI for appropriate help (ie, not simply copying and pasting its answer as your own), you must cite that fact on your assignment:

- "I discussed this assignment with Jane Studentname and Joe Wildcat."
- "I used ChatGPT 4 for brainstorming of approaches to this coding task."
- "I wrote this code following a suggestion from StackOverflow at <URL>"

Generative AI is a useful tool, like a calculator is a useful tool for doing math, but generative AI for programming is like a calculator that is sometimes completely untrustworthy. In some contexts, being able to use a calculator is an important skill—while in other contexts, like when you're taking a math test to see whether you know basic math facts, solely using a calculator short-circuits your own learning. A bicycle is a tool that allows us to get from one place to another faster and more efficiently than running—but if you're going to be tested in your time for a 5k run, it won't help you to train for running solely by riding a bicycle. You will likely need to know how to use generative language models for tasks at some point, but having one write your homework or forum posts for this class is not appropriate. Put in the thinking yourself, so that you can reap the mental benefit for yourself. You need to know how to perform these programming tasks on your own well enough that you can see where some AI-generated code is partially or completely off the mark, or introduces logic errors even if it runs without runtime errors.

The general principle in all such cases is that the majority of the work you turn in must be new and must be your own. Do your own work, and please ask me in advance if you are unsure whether something will be acceptable or not. Assignments that seem suspiciously similar, or those that seem to have been mostly produced using generative AI, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students office in accordance with the Code of Academic Integrity (linked below). Please be a responsible adult and don't run the risk of losing credit for an assignment by copying, by allowing others to copy from you, *or* by having ChatGPT do your assignment for you.

The UA Library has a guide for students as to what is and is not appropriate use of AI and similar resources:

<https://libguides.library.arizona.edu/students-chatgpt/>

University boilerplate

All of the following items are required by the university to be included on syllabi. If you find something here that is surprising or unexpected, please bring it up with me as soon as possible.

By way of a brief summary:

Disabilities If you have a disability that affects how you will need to do the work in this class, please let me know *within the first week of class*.

Academic Code of Conduct Cheating and plagiarism are not remotely acceptable in any way. You are responsible for knowing whether your own behavior qualifies as plagiarism, and whether your use of AI is inappropriate. Disruptive behavior in class—which here includes audio, video, or text on any of our course websites or by email—is not acceptable. Please be respectful of others.

Sensitive Material This is a university and you are adults. It is possible that we may touch on topics that some students could find sensitive during the semester. Given the focus of this course, this seems unlikely, but I alert you nonetheless.

Health & Wellbeing

The university has a specific site for COVID information: <http://covid19.arizona.edu>. If you are experiencing personal or financial challenges from any health-related issue, let me know as soon as you can if we need to make accommodations, and please stay safe.

The semester ahead may come with ups and downs in both physical and mental health, but there are lots of ways to support yourself. Eat well, get regular exercise, and don't neglect things like self-care, talking with friends and family, or getting a fresh perspective from a supportive group. Stress is a normal part of life and may even motivate you sometimes, but chronic or overwhelming stress can affect your physical and mental health and wellbeing. Pay attention to your personal signs that you're overly stressed, like changes in your mood, appetite, sleep, behavior, or new physical symptoms (aches, pains, etc.) that interfere with school and daily life. If you notice these signs or have questions about helpful resources, I welcome you to talk with me. You can also visit caps.arizona.edu/mental-health for mental health tools and resources.

Mental Health & Wellness Resources

- **Health & Wellness:** Campus Health provides quality medical, mental health, and wellness services for students. Visit health.arizona.edu or call 520-621-9202 (520-570-7898 for help after hours)
- **Mental Health:** Campus Health's Counseling & Psych Services offers a range of mental health support tools and services like self-care strategies, peer support, groups and workshops, and professional mental health services. Visit caps.arizona.edu/mental-health or call CAPS 24/7 at 520-621-3334 to learn more.

- **Crisis Support:**

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call 988 Crisis Text Line: text TALK to 741-741 Visit preventsuicide.arizona.edu for more suicide prevention tips and resources

Absence and Class Participation Policy

Attendance in an all-online course is not evaluated like attendance in an in-person course. For this course, attendance will be represented by active reading, completion, and participation in online course activities, including loading/viewing materials and completing activities posted on D2L, OpenClass, our course forum, and any other related websites.

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>

The UA policy regarding absences is that any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>

Classroom Behavior Policy

To foster a positive learning environment, students and instructors have a shared responsibility. We want a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where all of us feel comfortable with each other and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. To that end, our focus is on the tasks at hand and not on extraneous activities.

Students are asked to refrain from disruptive conversations with others in the course, including on asynchronous course platforms. Students observed engaging in disruptive activity will be asked to cease this behavior. Those who continue inappropriate behavior will be removed from that venue and may be reported to the Dean of Students.

Threatening Behavior Policy

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

Accessibility and Accommodations

At the University of Arizona, we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, <https://drc.arizona.edu/>) to establish reasonable accommodations.

Code of Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. **If you use a code snippet that you came up with from discussions with a classmate, that you found online, or even that you got from a large language model, it's important to cite where it came from, whether that source was Sally Classmate, GitHub.com, stackexchange.com, or ChatGPT.**

Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

The UA Library provides a helpful learning module for students to understand and avoid plagiarism: <https://libguides.library.arizona.edu/info-strategies/plagiarism>

The UA Library also has resources to guide you to appropriate and safe use of AI and large language models: <https://libguides.library.arizona.edu/students-chatgpt/integrity>

UA Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination; see

<http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

Subject to Change Statement

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.