



The Elephant in the Agorà

Refocusing Writing
Instruction on the Liberal
Arts and AI

Tara Keenan, John Cabot University
Writing Center
Daniel Springman, John Cabot
University student

Liberal Arts

– William Cronon's "Only Connect"

- Freedom, growth, connection
- Approach, skill, perspective, mentality
- Process over product





Themes to begin

- ▶ Sourcing – first half of course
 - ▶ Cronon's opinion piece ("Only Connect")
 - ▶ Academic writing with citations (*All that She Carried* chapter)
 - ▶ Formal debate video (Baldwin vs. Buckley)
 - ▶ Film *Blade Runner*
- ▶ Large themes articulated
 - ▶ Power
 - ▶ Authority
 - ▶ Subjugation
 - ▶ Empathy

Themes into literature review, source evaluation



Library session

AI literacy, searching, evaluating, reflection on searching, sourcing and why we do research

Directed literature review

paper topic not introduced

AI exercises

comparison of generated vs. Written, Riffbot

In-class literature review

(definition of term) with brief notes

Final project

- ▶ How does your chosen theme interact with the AI changes predicted for your field?



- Finance student – Empathy - How to balance the efficiency of AI with empathy in microfinance
- Communications student – Empathy - How to use AI to enhance deaf community's experience of music
- Communications student – Power – Why the field of Journalism cannot rely on AI



Student Takeaways

Effective Research

- ▶ We learned how to appropriately research material through our university's database as well as through the broader internet. Enabling us as students to better prepare for our further academic pursuits.

Personalized Coursework

- ▶ As the class progressed, we began to apply the material learned to assignments that focused on our field of study. Allowing each student to emerge with relevant information in their academic focus to take beyond the course.

Artificial Intelligence

- ▶ We examined the usages of artificial intelligence (AI) academically. This exploration allowed us to learn the potential of AI as a tool, while also preserving the creative integrity of our writing.

Communal Environment

- ▶ The collaborative nature of the course emphasized peer feedback, which allowed each student to see topics through the lens of another and to better comprehend differing arguments.



Changes for future iterations?

- Keep:

- Freedom: Emphasis on choice in AI tools, topic, sourcing
- Growth: themes thread from beginning, building of paper, integration of revision, progression of critical writing skills
- Connect: Interdisciplinary approach, Focus on peer review **including** on final exam

- Change:

- Hobbes/Rousseau and Veneer theory
- Dedicated introductory unite on misinformation / disinformation



Thank you

Tara Keenan, JCU Writing Center,
tkeenan@johncabot.edu

Daniel Springman, JCU student,
Daniel.springman24@johncabot.edu

