

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
Course Syllabus
AI: The Final Career Frontier (AI4042)
Fall 2026, Second Eight-Week Term

Course: AI The Final (Career) Frontier: Applied Artificial Intelligence Credential

Course Number: Special Topics / Senior credential

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Wilson.

Credential: Sul Ross AI Career Readiness, awarded on completion

Meeting Days and Times: Wednesdays, 2.5 hours (Thanksgiving on Monday)

Location: Alpine campus in person; remote broadcast

Enrollment: 20 in person; open to seniors across all majors; no prerequisites

Grading schema: Credit/No Credit

Email: j.gaines.wilson@gmail.com (SRSU email to be assigned)

Office Hours: By appointment, in person and via Zoom

Course Description

This senior credential in applied artificial intelligence is built around a single outcome: every student completes a working AI project drawn from their own field, together with a credential that demonstrates they can use current tools. The course runs in three phases. Foundations (Weeks 1 and 2) build the mental models needed to use and question AI tools. Tools (Weeks 3 to 5) put the current AI stack to work inside each student's discipline. Application and the credential (Weeks 6 to 8) is where the project is built, tested, and presented. Open to seniors across all majors, the course carries no prerequisites and no textbook, because the field revises its own reference material continuously. Tools and examples are refreshed weekly.

Relationship of Course to University Mission

Sul Ross State University has been the 'Frontier University' since 1917 and serves the vast Big Bend region as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. This credential advances that mission by preparing students in every major to enter a workforce that now assumes fluency with artificial intelligence. As data centers that train advanced AI models are built within the university's service radius, Sul Ross is positioned to educate the regional workforce that will live and work alongside that infrastructure. By equipping each student with a demonstrable AI project in their own discipline and a credential of AI readiness, the course supports the university's commitment to student success, regional workforce development, and the principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world.

Course Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **CSLO 1.** Use the most current AI tools (for example ChatGPT, Claude Co-Work and Code, Gemini, and Perplexity) effectively and ethically within their own field.
2. **CSLO 2.** Critically evaluate AI output, identifying hallucinations, “AI slop”, bias, and the limits of a model.
3. **CSLO 3.** Build a discipline-specific AI artifact that addresses a real problem, including basic preparation and analysis of data.
4. **CSLO 4.** Articulate and apply the privacy, safety, and ethical implications of AI use, and disclose their own use.
5. **CSLO 5.** Communicate technical work clearly to a non-technical audience.
6. **CSLO 6.** Demonstrate interview-ready AI competency through a live credential presentation.

Assessment Mapping: Core Objectives and Outcomes

The following table maps the Texas Core Objectives to the course learning outcomes they develop, together with the tool and method used to assess each.

Core Objective	Course SLOs	Assessment Tool	Method
Communication (written, oral, visual)	CSLO 5, 6	Final credential presentation; build memo	Instructor rubric
Critical Thinking (inquiry, analysis, evaluation, synthesis)	CSLO 2, 3	credential artifact; critical-evaluation reflection	Instructor rubric
Empirical and Quantitative Skills	CSLO 3	Data-with-AI assignment; credential artifact	Instructor rubric
Teamwork	CSLO 5	Proposal-pitch peer review; build-lab peer sessions	Participation rubric
Personal Responsibility	CSLO 4	AI use disclosure; ethics and limits reflection	Instructor rubric
Social Responsibility	CSLO 4	Ethics and limits reflection	Instructor rubric

Personal Responsibility. Students will develop principles of personal responsibility for living in a diverse world, to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Social Responsibility. Students will develop principles of social responsibility for living in a diverse world, to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Marketable Skills

This course develops the following marketable skills:

- Applied fluency with current generative AI tools.
- Prompt engineering and task design.
- Critical evaluation and verification of AI output.
- Basic data preparation and analysis with AI.
- AI ethics, privacy, and compliance judgment, including FERPA and HIPAA awareness.
- Communicating technical solutions to non-technical stakeholders.
- Building and demonstrating a working AI project as a portfolio artifact.

Required Materials

There is no required textbook. All readings and materials are posted to Blackboard and refreshed weekly. Students need a laptop and will create free accounts on the major AI platforms during Week 1. Paid tool tiers required for the course are provided through the program or sponsorships; hardware support is available for students who need it. Recommended reading consists of current, instructor-provided articles on AI literacy, ethics, and discipline-specific applications, posted weekly.

Major Assignments and Grading

Grading rewards application rather than recall. The credential project and its milestones carry the grade. Final course grades are calculated from the following weighted components.

Assignment	Weight
Weekly build assignments and in-class participation	20%
credential problem statement (Week 3)	10%
credential proposal pitch (Week 4)	15%
Working draft and build memo (Week 7)	20%
Final credential artifact and presentation (Week 8)	25%
AI use disclosure and ethics-and-limits reflection	10%

Grading scale: 60% or above credit; <59% no credit

The Week 8 final credential artifact is evaluated on six criteria: problem fit (15%), the artifact works (25%), critical evaluation of the model (20%), process and judgment shown in the build memo (15%), ethics and disclosure (10%), and communication to a non-technical listener (15%).

Course Schedule

Eight live sessions. Weeks 1 through 5 and Weeks 7 and 8 meet on Wednesdays; Week 6 meets on Monday, November 23, so that Thanksgiving break stays intact. Each session is roughly 2.5 hours: about 60 minutes of discussion and 90 minutes of hands-on lab. Between sessions, the credential is the primary assignment.

Wk	Date	Subject Matter	Due / Milestone
1	Wed, Oct 21	What Just Happened, and Baby's First AI: the state of AI in 2026; accounts set up live on every major platform; prompt engineering as a real skill.	First task from your major
2	Wed, Oct 28	How AI Actually Works, and The Ethics Minefield: tokens, context windows, training data, why models hallucinate; bias, disclosure, copyright, surveillance, job displacement.	Personal AI use statement; credential topic assigned
3	Wed, Nov 4	AI in Your Major, and Research and Writing with AI: discipline-specific applications; literature review, drafting, citation, and verification.	Topic locked: problem statement due
4	Wed, Nov 11	Data with AI, and credential Proposal Pitches: cleaning, analysis, charts, simple modeling; five-minute live pitches with peer feedback; mentorship begins.	Proposal pitch (milestone)
5	Wed, Nov 18	Visual, Audio, and Video AI, and Agents and Automation: generation and copyright in practice; building one small automated workflow.	Workflow wired into the project
6	Mon, Nov 23	Privacy and Compliance, and Build Lab: FERPA, HIPAA, Texas data practices, what never to upload; working build session before the break.	Build continues over break
7	Wed, Dec 2	Working Draft and Build Session: functional first version reviewed; peer review and one-on-ones; no new content.	Working draft and build memo (milestone)
8	Wed, Dec 9	Final Presentations: five-minute demos to faculty and invited industry voices; micro-credential awarded.	Final artifact and presentation

Course Policies

Attendance. Because the course meets only eight times and each session pairs discussion with a hands-on lab, attendance at every session is expected. More than one absence may lower the participation grade; students who must miss a session should contact the instructor in advance to arrange to keep pace with their credential. Attendance is recorded at each meeting.

Late Work. credential milestones are due on the dates listed in the schedule. Because each milestone feeds the next, late milestone work may not receive full credit; students who anticipate a conflict should reach out before the due date to arrange an alternative.

AI Use Policy. This course teaches students to use AI, so AI use is required, not merely permitted. Every assignment carries a brief note stating which tools were used and how. The goal is judgment, not prohibition: students are expected to drive the tools, evaluate their output, and disclose their use. No institutional or student data may be entered into any AI system; the

course teaches these data boundaries directly. Undisclosed AI use is treated as a violation of academic integrity.

Statement Regarding Generative Artificial Intelligence

The University does not recommend or endorse any specific AI tools or resources. Students should be aware that many generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot) store user input and may use this data to train future models. For this reason, students should never upload or share personal, confidential, or identifiable information, such as names, ID numbers, health data, or assignment submissions containing such details, into any generative AI platform. When using AI tools, students should verify whether the tool complies with student privacy standards as indicated by the University. Faculty may recommend specific tools that better align with institutional data privacy policies, but ultimate responsibility for data protection rests with users. Students are encouraged to use faculty-recommended platforms when engaging in coursework involving generative AI. The University is not liable for any adverse experience or impact when students interact with these tools.

ADA Statement

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. To help protect confidentiality, students seeking accessibility and accommodation services must submit the Accommodation Request Form located on the SRSU Counseling and Accessibility Services website. Students are welcome to call the Office of Accessibility Services at 432-837-8203 or stop by Ferguson Hall Room 112 with any questions. Mailing address: PO Box C-122, Alpine, TX 79832.

Student Responsibilities

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws and to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct as described in the Student Handbook, and to maintain appropriate equipment and software according to the requirements of the course. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the Student Handbook.

Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or in part for another course or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; or collaborating on an assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Because this course teaches applied artificial intelligence, use of AI tools is required and governed by the AI Use Policy above: permitted, but only when disclosed. Undisclosed AI use is treated exactly like undisclosed use of any other source, and is a violation of academic integrity. Violations can result in failing assignments, failing the class, and/or more serious university consequences.

Classroom Climate of Respect

This class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. All of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. We must all learn how to probe, oppose, and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing challenging issues.

Counseling

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare, where all SR students have access to free counseling sessions. Learn more about this 24/7 support by visiting [TimelyCare/SRSU](#). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office also offers in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall Room 112 (Alpine campus) and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote and RGC students.

Libraries

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer free resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more at [library.sulross.edu](#). Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123). SRSU TexShare cardholders can access additional services and resources at libraries across Texas.

Tutoring Center

The Lobo Den Tutoring Center offers free tutoring support in Writing, Math, Science, and other subjects. Drop-in and scheduled appointments are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, in BWML Room 128. Contact tutoring@sulross.edu or (432) 837-8726. Tutor.com also offers free 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, accessible through Blackboard.

Supportive Statement

I aim to create a learning environment that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that economic disparity, health concerns, or unexpected life events may affect the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to help you meet the learning objectives of this course, in keeping with the mission of Sul Ross State University to care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If your performance is being affected by experiences outside of class, please come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.