

Denver Seminary Academic AI Usage Policy

I. Foundational Principles and Scope

Denver Seminary is committed to fostering academic excellence, integrity, and theological reflection while preparing students for effective ministry. The ultimate output of the institution is the student, not the paper.

The policy applies to all students and governs the use of AI tools in all academic work, including but not limited to coursework, research, theses, and dissertations.

Guiding Principles include:

Academic Integrity: Upholding honesty, originality, and accountability.

Consistency: Ensuring uniform guidelines across all departments.

Transparency: Providing clear instructions and removing ambiguity.

Equity: Ensuring equal access to AI tools and education.

II. Definitions and Types of AI

The documents define AI based on its function, which dictates its permissible use and citation requirements:

AI Tools (General): Software or systems using AI to generate, analyze, edit, or summarize content (text, images, or data); e.g., Grok, ChatGPT, AI-powered writing assistants, automated research platforms.

Assistive AI: AI functionality that aids the user in producing or refining their own original content without generating any substantive content itself; e.g., Grammarly, Microsoft Editor, built-in spellcheck/grammar checkers, AI re-writing tools that clarify existing writing.

Generative AI: AI functionality that creates original content from user inputs. This type poses greater risks to academic integrity and requires caution; e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, DALL-E, Microsoft Copilot.

Algorithmic Bias: Systematic errors in AI outputs that may reflect or amplify societal biases. Students are warned that Generative AI has a propensity for bias, discrimination, and falsehood.

III. Permissible Uses and Faculty Authority

The policies differentiate between types of usage, **granting faculty the final authority over Generative AI use in their specific courses.**

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A. Assistive AI Use

Any use of Assistive AI technology is generally considered permissible and does not necessarily need to be cited. For any specific assignment or course, students should check with the instructor for any specific limitations or citation expectations regarding the use of assistive AI tools. Faculty have final authority over the transparency of usage and citation of assistive AI tools in assignments.

B. Generative AI Use (Requires Authorization or Specific Intent)

Generative AI is appropriate when used to promote understanding or support one's own learning/thought process, or for tasks that are technical and not content-driven. The default position of all assignments is that students cannot use AI to generate text for any part of the assignment without explicit permission and correct citation.

Permissible Uses for Students (**if allowed by the instructor**):

- Research Assistance: Identifying relevant sources, summarizing literature, or generating research ideas.
- Writing Support: Assisting with grammar, syntax, and style improvements.
- Data Analysis: Using AI tools for statistical analysis or data visualization, provided the student can explain the methodology and results.
- Learning Support: Brainstorming, building outlines (which must be thoroughly reviewed and modified by the student), or asking for explanations of difficult concepts.

C. Uses for Faculty and Staff:

- Denver Seminary strongly supports transparency in the use of AI tools.
- Faculty should refer to the "Faculty Guidance for AI Usage" document (coming in 2nd quarter of 2026) for information about AI usage in course preparation and delivery, creating content, grading, research, and publication.
- All Denver Seminary staff should adhere to the "Employee AI Policy" document (coming 2nd Quarter of 2026) for guidance regarding approved AI uses and tools for conducting their work at Denver Seminary.

IV. Prohibited Uses and Academic Integrity

The primary concern is that AI output can be wrongfully used to substitute for a student's own mental and spiritual engagement.

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Strictly Prohibited Uses Include:

- **Plagiarism:** Submitting AI-generated content as one's own work without proper attribution. This includes the theft of substance (ideas) or verbal expression (wording) without documentation.
- **Excessive Reliance:** Relying on AI tools to complete substantial portions of academic work, such as writing entire papers, theses, or book chapters, without significant original contribution.
- **Unverified Outputs:** Using AI-generated content without verifying its accuracy, theological alignment, or relevance. Students must fact-check and verify all AI-generated content by cross-referencing it with reputable sources.
- **Non-Disclosure:** Failing to disclose the use of AI tools in academic submissions.
- **Ethically Questionable Applications:** Using AI tools to manipulate data, fabricate results, or bypass ethical standards.

V. Transparency, Disclosure, and Citation Requirements

A strong emphasis is placed on transparency. Faculty must communicate AI guidelines clearly in syllabi and discuss them during the first class session.

Disclosure and Citation Mandates:

- **General Disclosure:** Students must disclose the use of AI tools in their submitted work, including a brief description of how the tool was used. Students should default to disclosing assistance from generative AI unless the use is incidental.
- **Specific Statement:** Students must include a statement in their academic work (e.g., footnote, acknowledgment section) specifying the tool and its exact role.
- **Generative AI Citation:** Content generated by generative AI must be treated as work created by and retrieved from an outside source.
- **Citation Format:** Following citation standards (e.g., Turabian or APA), AI-generated content is cited as personal communication. See Appendices for examples.

VI. Equity, Training, and Enforcement

The Seminary is committed to ensuring equitable access by providing free or subsidized access to approved AI tools and establishing a technology support center.

- **Training:** Denver Seminary will provide mandatory training for all students and faculty on the ethical use of AI tools, beginning in Fall of 2026. This training includes instruction on identifying and mitigating algorithmic biases and ensuring theological

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alignment in AI-assisted work. Mandatory training will be in place for students starting in the Fall 2026 term.

- **Policy Review:** The AI Policy Review Committee will convene annually to assess the policy's effectiveness and recommend revisions based on technology advancements.
- **Consequences:** Violations (such as plagiarism or non-disclosure) will be addressed under Denver Seminary's academic integrity policy. Penalties may include a grade of zero, course failure, or disciplinary action, depending on the severity. (See ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY in the appendix below)

VII. Protecting Intellectual Property: Guidelines for Using AI Tools with Course Materials

As you explore AI tools to enhance your learning, it's essential to understand the intellectual property implications of uploading course materials to these platforms.

The Concern

Faculty-created content—including lecture presentations, PowerPoint slides, video recordings, transcripts, handouts, and other instructional materials—represents original intellectual work protected by copyright. When you upload these materials to publicly accessible AI platforms (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or similar open LLMs), you may be inadvertently:

- Sharing proprietary content beyond the seminary community
- Allowing AI companies to use faculty work in their training datasets
- Violating copyright protections and potentially breaching academic policies
- Compromising the exclusive nature of content created specifically for our students

Content provided by Denver Seminary and the Digital Theological Library through licensed databases may not be used with AI tools, training models, or machine learning platforms, including Gemini Notebook, or any similar application.

Our Recommendation

To respect faculty intellectual property while still benefiting from AI assistance with your studies, we recommend using **closed AI systems** that do not retain or train on your uploaded data, for example:

- **NotebookLM / Gemini Notebook** (Google): A research-focused AI tool that analyzes your uploaded sources without adding them to any training dataset

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- **RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) systems:** Local or institutional AI tools that keep your data private and contained
- **Institutional AI platforms:** Check with IT services about seminary-approved AI tools with data privacy guarantees

Best Practices

- **Never upload** faculty presentations, lecture recordings, or course-specific materials to public AI platforms
- **Do use** AI tools with your own notes, reflections, and original writing
- **When in doubt**, ask your instructor about appropriate use of AI with course materials
- **Consider** paraphrasing concepts from lectures into your own words before using AI tools for further exploration

By following these guidelines, you honor the intellectual contributions of our faculty while responsibly engaging with AI technology in your theological education.

VIII. Recommended Tools

The Seminary currently recommends students use Claude or Perplexity for most AI assistance/generative tasks. To protect the intellectual property of yourself and faculty, please refrain from uploading academic content to open LLMs such as ChatGPT. We recommend usage of RAGs (Retrieval Augmented Generators) such as Notebook LLM by Google.

IX. An Analogy:

To clarify the integrated perspective, the policy structure operates like a traffic light system for AI usage: Green light for Assistive AI (use freely without citing); Yellow light for Generative AI for brainstorming or research support (use cautiously, only with faculty permission, and disclose/cite meticulously); and Red light for using Generative AI to substantially complete assignments or generate text as your own (strictly prohibited plagiarism).

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APPENDIX A

Academic Integrity Policy (Current with 2025-2026 Student Handbook).

God is truth and has revealed truth through his Word; God's Son, Jesus, is the Truth; the Holy Spirit guides us into truth. Through Scripture we know that as God's children we are to be truthful and are to avoid all dishonesty, deception and lying.

Denver Seminary is committed to building each other up to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ. As a community of believers, we are called to truthfulness in all areas of life. Academic integrity is built on the assumption that both faculty and students will be truthful and honest – faculty in maintaining academic honesty in their own research, writing and teaching; students in carrying out their assignments with honesty and integrity; all with truthfulness and honesty in their relations with each other.

The following kinds of behaviors violate academic integrity:

Dishonesty: Dishonesty is considered using notes or other materials not expressly permitted for an exam, quiz, or other assignment; copying from the examination of another or allowing one's own examination paper to be copied; reading, without the instructor's permission, a copy of the examination prior to the date it is given; giving or receiving unpermitted aid on an examination; submitting the same work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s); or other acts normally considered cheating.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting another's work—including text generated through large language model (LLM) artificial intelligence platforms—or a student's own previous work, as though it is one's own original academic achievement and/or the use of another person's words or ideas without proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism may be unintentional or intentional. The intellectual contributions of others may be utilized, but always with full credit given to the authors whose ideas are presented.

Requirements for acknowledging sources of academic work should follow the writing manuals for the discipline (APA, Turabian, etc.). Students should pay special attention to their course syllabus and instructor's direction. Further instructions on writing styles can be found at the Writing Center website. For example:

- Direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks (" ") or formatted as a block quote. The source of all quotations must be acknowledged through a footnote or parenthetical citation, according to the writing style required by the professor for the course.

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- Paraphrases or summaries of ideas must be acknowledged in text through footnotes or parenthetical citations according to the writing style requested by your professor. It should also represent an idea in one's own words more pointedly than the source does.
- When Turabian style is used, Denver Seminary follows the "notes-bibliography" style for source citations.
- Use caution when relying on automatically generated citations from library systems like WMS, EBSCO, or ProQuest as they may contain incomplete or inaccurate information. While these generated citations can serve as helpful starting points, students are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of their citations.
- Bibliographies or reference pages should include all sources cited within a paper or report.
- Citing one's own previously submitted or published work should only be done if necessary to build on prior work and must follow the above citation requirements. Permission or consent from the professor is required.
- A student's research and writing may only utilize large language model artificial intelligence tools to proofread original work, not to generate original work as one's own.
- The use of software that predicts and provides quiz and exam answers is prohibited.

Process for Academic Integrity Violations

For any instance of an academic integrity violation, the faculty member must clearly note in the student's submitted document where the instance occurred. The instructor will then meet with the student to investigate the student's awareness and understanding of proper citing and use practices. In addition, any offense in a course will be reported through The Bridge software which will automatically report the violation to the Academic Dean and Dean of Student Success. In this communication, the faculty member will describe both the offense and the student's response and provide recommendations for further action.

Reporting allows for communication across offices and only necessitates punitive action if called for.

One Inadvertent Offense: Faculty members must report all inadvertent offenses. An offense shall be defined as an inadvertent act of plagiarism. If it is determined, based on the available evidence and student's report, that the plagiaristic act was inadvertent, the faculty member will label it as an offense and recommendations may include the following: requiring an assignment to be redone, requiring tutoring from the Writing Center, deducting points or one letter grade with or without rewrite, or assessing a failing grade for the assignment. The student may have only one offense before the following actions will be taken.

First Violation: A violation shall be defined as a non-accidental act of plagiarism. A first violation

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occurs if it is determined, based on the available evidence and the student's report, that the plagiaristic act was intentional or if the student has already been reported for one inadvertent offense. The faculty member must meet with the student and then report to The Bridge as described above. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the offense, the faculty member may require an assignment to be redone, may give an automatic failure for the assignment or may give an automatic failure for the course. The office of the Academic Dean will inform the student that a first violation has been reported and work with the Dean of Student Success to provide oversight to a first violation. It will be recommended that the student procure writing center editing for their research papers or major writing assignments in their next enrolled semester.

Second Violation: The faculty member must meet with the student and report to The Bridge as outlined above. A second violation normally will result in automatic dismissal from the seminary. The office of the Academic Dean will oversee the response to a second violation.

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Appendix B: Citation Styles

I. Turabian AI/LLM Usage Citation Example

For Turabian style (which follows Chicago Manual of Style), here's how to cite AI and LLMs:

Footnote/Endnote Format

AI-generated content should be cited in a footnote or endnote, not in the bibliography. The basic format is:

With prompt in text:

1. Text generated by ChatGPT, OpenAI, March 7, 2023, <https://chat.openai.com>.

With prompt in note:

1. ChatGPT, response to "Explain how to make pizza dough from common household ingredients," OpenAI, March 7, 2023.

General Pattern

The AI tool is treated as the author, the date is when the text was generated, and the organization that developed it is listed as the publisher.

Format:

- Name of AI tool
- Response to "your prompt" (if not in main text)
- Developer/Company name
- Date generated
- URL (optional)

Bibliography Entry

You should only include AI-generated content in the bibliography if you have a publicly accessible URL (using tools like ShareGPT or A.I. Archives). AI content is considered personal communication since the standard URLs cannot be accessed by others without login credentials.

Examples for Other AI Tools

- **Claude:** Claude, response to "prompt text here," Anthropic, February 16, 2026.
- **Gemini:** Gemini, response to "prompt text here," Google, February 16, 2026, <https://gemini.google.com>.

Always check with your instructor regarding their specific policies on AI usage and citation.

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II. APA (7th edition) AI/LLM Usage Citation Example

Reference List Format

APA treats AI-generated content using the software citation template. There are now two formats depending on whether the AI tool provides a shareable URL:

With Shareable URL (preferred when available):

If the AI tool provides a unique URL and title for your chat, use this format:

Author. (Year, Month Day). Title of chat [Generative AI chat]. AI Tool Name. URL

Example:

OpenAI. (2025, August 21). High school grammar concepts [Generative AI chat].
ChatGPT. <https://chatgpt.com/share/68a77b60-0ee4-800c-9acc-cd3fd573c311>

Without Shareable URL (traditional format):

When the publisher and author names are identical, omit the publisher name and proceed directly to the URL.

Author. (Year). AI Tool Name (Version) [Description]. URL

Example:

OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 14 version) [Large language model].
<https://chat.openai.com/chat>

In-Text Citation Format

Use a standard parenthetical citation with author and year: (OpenAI, 2023)

Full example in text:

When prompted with "Is the left brain right brain divide real or a metaphor?" the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that although the two brain hemispheres are somewhat specialized, "the notation that people can be characterized as 'left-brained' or 'right-brained' is considered to be an oversimplification and a popular myth" (OpenAI, 2023).

Required Disclosure

Describe how you used the AI tool in your Method section or in a comparable section of your paper, and provide the prompt you used. For APA scholarly publications, authors must specify in the methods section how, when, and to what extent AI was used, and upload the full AI output as supplemental material.

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Examples for Other AI Tools

- **Claude:** Anthropic. (2026). Claude (Feb 16 version) [Large language model].
<https://claude.ai>
- **Gemini:** Google. (2026). Gemini (Feb 16 version) [Large language model].
<https://gemini.google.com>

Always check with your instructor regarding their specific policies on AI usage and citation.