

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Engineering Applications

ENV 6932 - Spec Prob in Env Engr

Credit Hours: 3

Class Periods:

M | Period 7 - 8 (1:55 PM - 3:50 PM)

W | Period 7 (1:55 PM - 2:45 PM)

Location: Weimer 1076

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/4711699763>

Academic Term: Fall 2025

Instructor:

Sara Behdad

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(352) 294-7547

Office Hours: Monday, 9th Period (4:05-4:55 pm) or by appointment [[zoom link](#)]

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/4711699763>

Office Location: 412 BLK Hall

Teaching Assistant/Peer Mentor/Supervised Teaching Student: N/A

Please contact the instructor for any assistance.

Course Description

The objective is to educate graduate students with recent data science methods and available AI technologies for formulating, investigating, and analyzing real-world engineering challenges. The course educates students with a wide range of machine learning and deep learning algorithms and further discusses their applications in engineering. In addition, it discusses the mechanics of blockchain and cryptocurrencies, as well as the pros and cons of distributed ledger technologies in a sustainability context. The course allows students to leverage their AI/ML skills through writing a term-paper project. The term paper is an assignment that gives students the opportunity to work on a research project and employ their data science skills in engineering applications.

The AI course consists of three main parts (1) machine learning algorithms, (2) deep learning principles, and (3) elements of blockchain technology.

The *machine learning* part provides an introduction to supervised and unsupervised techniques. The focus will be on three groups of prediction, classification, and clustering techniques. It discusses methods such as linear regression, non-linear regression, K-nearest neighbors, decision trees, logistic regression, support vector machine, k-Means clustering, hierarchical clustering, and density-based clustering, among others.

The *deep learning* part covers principles of neural networks such as backpropagation algorithm, activation functions, dropout, gradient descent with momentum, batch normalization, and max pooling. Further, it introduces different categories of neural network models such as convolutional neural networks, recurrent neural networks, and autoencoders. It also discusses different applications of deep learning models such as image classification, object detection, object tracking, semantic segmentation, and instance segmentation.

The *blockchain* part introduces distributed ledger technologies, the technology behind cryptocurrencies, and further discusses the building blocks of cryptocurrencies, specifically bitcoin. It covers topics such as cryptography, data structures, digital signatures, mechanics of bitcoin, bitcoin

mining, how bitcoin achieves decentralization, and what are the environmental implications of blockchain technology.

Besides the above-mentioned topics, the course discusses different applications of machine learning and deep learning algorithms and why it is rewarding to learn how to leverage AI/ML skills in an engineering context, particularly in addressing sustainability problems.

Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites: Background in Linear Algebra, Calculus, and Probability. Basic knowledge of a programming language (C, C++, Java, Python) is recommended.

Course Objectives

After completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand different types of supervised and unsupervised machine learning algorithms.
- Apply the correct algorithms on different datasets, and show their understanding of ML/DP algorithms in a practical project.
- Learn the principles of deep learning and their applications in environmental engineering.
- Understand what blockchain technology is, how cryptocurrency networks operate and what are their sustainability implications.

Materials and Supply Fees

No materials and supply fees.

Required Textbooks and Software

No required textbooks.

Recommended Materials

- Bishop, Christopher M. Pattern recognition and machine learning. springer, 2006.
- Goodfellow, Ian, Yoshua Bengio, Aaron Courville, and Yoshua Bengio. Deep learning. Vol. 1, no. 2. Cambridge: MIT press, 2016.
- Narayanan, Arvind, Joseph Bonneau, Edward Felten, Andrew Miller, and Steven Goldfeder. Bitcoin and cryptocurrency technologies: a comprehensive introduction. Princeton University Press, 2016.

Required Computer

UF student computing requirement: <https://news.it.ufl.edu/education/student-computing-requirements-for-uf/>

Course Schedule

Three types of AI topics will be covered: (1) machine learning algorithms, (2) deep learning models, and (2) blockchain technology and sustainability implications.

Notes: The schedule is tentative as the pace dictates. The HW and assignment dates may change with advance notice on Canvas.

Week 1-2:	Intro to data science and machine learning;
Week 3:	Prediction methods (Linear regression); (HW1 term paper)
Week 4:	Prediction methods (Logistic and Non-linear regression); (HW2)
Week 5:	Regularization;
Week 6-7:	Distribution Estimation; (HW3 term paper)
Week 8:	Classification Methods (KNN, decision tree, SVM); (HW4)

Week 9: Clustering Algorithms (K-means, hierarchical and density-based clustering); (HW5 term paper)
 Week 10: Graphical Models (Bayesian Networks, Markov Processes);
 Week 11: Deep Learning_Part 1 (Basics of Neural networks); (HW6)
 Week 12: Deep Learning_Part 2 (Backpropagation and Optimizers); Exam Review, Exam
 Week 13: Deep Learning_Part 3 (Convolutional Neural Networks); (HW7 term paper)
 Week 14: Blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology;
 Week 14: Building Blocks of Cryptocurrency (hash functions, digital signatures, data structure);
 Week 15: Blockchain_Sustainability implications; Term paper presentations (HW8 term paper)

Important Dates

Term Paper Report The last week of classes
 Term Paper Presentation The last week of classes

Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

Attendance is not required. The lectures will be offered face-to-face as well as synchronously on zoom and will be recorded. To schedule a make-up for an excused, missed assignments, please contact the instructor through email. Requirements for make-up assignments are consistent with the university policies.

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations>) and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found here: <https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/>

Evaluation of Grades

Assignment	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Term Paper Assignments (5)	100 each	60%
Homework Assignments (3)	100 each	25%
Term Paper Presentation	100	5%
Attendance		10%
		100%

Grading Policy

Percent	Grade	Grade Points
95.0 - 100	A	4.00
90.0 - 94.9	A-	3.67
85.0 - 89.9	B+	3.33
80.0 - 84.9	B	3.00
75.0 - 79.9	B-	2.67
70.0 - 74.9	C+	2.33
65.0 - 69.9	C	2.00
60.0 - 64.9	C-	1.67
55.0 - 59.9	D+	1.33
50.0 - 54.9	D	1.00
45.0 - 49.9	D-	0.67
0 - 44.9	E	0.00

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

[UF Graduate Catalog](#)

[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

Term Paper Specifications/policies

Each term paper should have an original contribution.

The term paper should include the following sections: (1) problem definition (2) literature review (3) Method (4) Method Evaluation/Application (5) Results and Conclusion

Each paper should include a literature review of at least 20 prior studies.

Each paper should include a section describing the problem definition and a section describing the method suggested for solving that problem.

An ideal paper should be an integration of both method development and application.

Term paper page limit: 8-12 pages

Term Paper Topic

The term paper topic will be assigned by the instructor to make sure alignment with course objectives and research relevance. The detailed project description and requirements will be provided separately.

Team Policy

- Graduate students will work individually.
- Undergraduate students may work in a team of two, consisting of one undergraduate student paired with one graduate student, if they wish.
- Each student (or team) is responsible for dataset preparation, analysis, and the final report.

Note: Although the core topic is fixed, students are encouraged to explore creative variations, incorporate additional methods, and extend their analysis beyond the minimum requirements.

Term Paper Deadline (tentative)

The first draft of the papers (including the literature review and the model development) is due on Wednesday, October 22nd (tentative).

Final papers (including results and design application) are due on Wednesday, December 3rd.

Term-paper Presentations: The last week of classes.

Individual Homework Assignment Policies

- One individual homework assignment every three or four weeks, a total of 3 assignments in the semester. They are typically assigned on Wednesday and are due the following Wednesday.
- The homework assignments will be posted on CANVAS, and they are due before the next lecture starts the following week.
- Late assignments are not accepted- one letter grade per day late.
- Requests for correcting possible grading errors must be submitted to the instructor within one week after the work is returned with a written explanation of the correction request; no corrections are possible afterward.
- Acknowledge all resources used. Plagiarism is not acceptable. Identical homework submission (applied to individual homework assignments, not paper) receive zero. You should protect your own work, including individual assignments, term papers, and exam all the time.

Academic Policies and Resources

This course follows all university-wide academic policies and guidelines. A complete list of current policies and campus resources is available at: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University

of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Commitment to a Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment

The Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering values varied perspectives and lived experiences within our community and is committed to supporting the University’s core values, including the elimination of discrimination. It is expected that every person in this class will treat one another with dignity and respect regardless of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information, and veteran status.

If you feel like your performance in class is being impacted by discrimination or harassment of any kind, please contact your instructor or any of the following:

- Your academic advisor or Graduate Coordinator
- HWCoe Human Resources, 352-392-0904, student-support-hr@eng.ufl.edu
- Pam Dickrell, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, 352-392-2177, pld@ufl.edu
- Toshikazu Nishida, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, 352-392-0943, nishida@eng.ufl.edu

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: <https://registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa.html>

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, Assault, or Violence

If you or a friend has been subjected to sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or violence contact the [Office of Title IX Compliance](#), located at Yon Hall Room 427, 1908 Stadium Road, (352) 273-1094, title-ix@ufl.edu

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>.

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling; <https://career.ufl.edu>.

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.

Student Complaints Campus: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>; <https://care.dso.ufl.edu>.

On-Line Students Complaints: <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/>; <https://distance.ufl.edu/state-authorization-status/#student-complaint>.