Computer Applications

2025-2026

Instructor Email Office Location & Hours

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Room B210

Office Hours: Before school, after school, or during lunch by appointment

Phone

208-578-5020 x2254

Course Description

This course introduces students to the core principles of computer science and the growing role of artificial intelligence in everyday life. Through hands-on programming, visual problem solving, and critical analysis, students explore how computing systems work, how data powers AI, and how intelligent tools make decisions. Students will be introduced to programming concepts in Python, analyze the structure of the Internet, investigate cybersecurity risks, and interpret data through visualizations and models. Throughout the course, students examine how AI systems impact individuals and communities, and build the skills to use computing and AI to solve meaningful problems in their world. Emphasis will be on increasing efficiency in Microsoft Office programs: Word, Excel, & PowerPoint.

Objectives

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

- expand on keyboarding skills and use special characters and keyboard shortcuts
- learn the basics of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- investigate how AI generates responses, using neural networks, transformers, and probabilistic models.
- critically evaluate AI-generated outputs, identifying bias, misinformation, and hallucinations.
- refine AI-generated content through prompt engineering and debugging techniques.
- explore AI's role in creativity, forecasting, and decision-making, balancing its strengths with ethical considerations.
- design and test AI-assisted solutions to real-world challenges, ensuring that AI is used responsibly and with human oversight.
- demonstrate how to respond with empathy and positivity in online interactions to avoid digital drama or cyberbullying.
- analyze online headlines to identify clickbait and explain how it can spread disinformation.
- evaluate the privacy risks and benefits of new technologies and decide whether they are worth using.
- explain how digital footprints can affect future opportunities and describe ways to maintain a positive online presence.
- explain the benefits and drawbacks of online tracking and identify strategies to protect personal privacy.
- evaluate the credibility of online videos and information by using lateral reading strategies.
- form an evidence-based opinion on copyright policies and justify their stance with supporting examples.

Resources/Software that may be used:

- code.org
- Common Sense Education
- Microsoft Office 365
- Typing.com

Course Schedule

The course schedule is in Schoology. Schedules are posted weekly and adjusted as needed for the class.

Methods of Assessment/Grading Policy:

FORMATIVE: Daily Work 10%
SUMMATIVE: Summative Assessments/Quizzes/Projects 90%

- **Summative assessments will make up the majority of the grade. 90% of grade**
    - Retakes/reassessments/revisions are not penalized by point deductions or averaging multiple attempts.
    - **Because they indicate mastery of standards, missing summative assessments will be marked zero, and parents will be contacted when zeros are put in the electronic gradebook.**
    - Students have up to one week to complete missing summative or revised assessments unless other arrangements are made with the teacher.
    - A summative assessment may be taken or completed one additional time.
        - **Test Corrections**
            - 75% of formative work must be completed to be eligible (3 of every 4 assignments)
            - Any student who scores below a 90% may be eligible to complete test corrections, except on Finals which are not eligible for revisions
            - 1st test taken or scheduled on or before initial exam date with the exception of sickness and/or emergencies
            - Student must consult with the teacher and schedule test corrections outside of class time.
            - If a student skips a class to avoid the summative assessment, they will not be eligible to complete test corrections at a later date.
- **Formative: Evidence of formative assessment needs to be present in the gradebook.10% of grade**
    - **Formative assignments that are not turned in will be marked missing and receive a 0 in the gradebook.**
    - Assignments shall be directly correlated to standards found on approved curriculum maps. (i.e. no ‘Syllabus’ for points)
    - Late formative work can not be penalized by point reduction and must be accepted up until the end of the unit.
    - Teachers shall establish reasonable time frames for the completion of formative retakes/revisions/reassessments during the unit of study. Some exceptions may apply in extenuating circumstances.