



CMSC 671 — Principles of Artificial Intelligence
Fall 2026 (3 credits)
Initial version — August 21, 2026

Contents

1	Course Information	1
1.1	Meetings and Instructors	1
1.2	Texts, Readings, and Discussion	2
1.3	Topics	2
1.4	Goals	2
2	Coursework and Evaluation	3
2.1	How to Submit Work	3
3	Dates and Deadlines	3
3.1	Important Dates	3
3.2	Extensions and Late Policy	4
4	Academic Honesty	4
4.1	Summary	4
4.2	Policy in this Class	4
4.3	Predictive/AI-based Tools	5
4.4	Incremental Logging of Work	5
5	Students with Accomodations	5
6	Inclusion	6

1 Course Information

1.1 Meetings and Instructors

Monday, Wednesday, 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM

Location: Sondheim 206

<https://www.csee.umbc.edu/courses/graduate/671/fall26/>

Prerequisites CMSC 471*; or instructor permission

***Recommended preparation**

- Strong programming skills, ideally with Python experience.
- Prior strong exposure to Boolean logic, basic probability theory and combinatorics, linear algebra, complexity analysis, algorithm design, and data structures.

Name		E-Contact	Office Hours
Prof. Frank Ferraro		ferraro@umbc.edu	ITE 358 Monday, 11:15 – 12:00 by appointment
TA TBD		TBD	TBD TBD

1.2 Texts, Readings, and Discussion

The readings will be primarily from the following online book:

The readings will be from publicly available sources. Most will come from the David Poole and Alan Mackworth's *Artificial Intelligence: Foundations of Computational Agents*, 3rd Edition, available at <https://artint.info/>. This text is available online (for free, legitimately/legally).

Supplemental readings and resources will be available as well, such as publicly available exercises and pseudocode from Russell and Norvig's *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach*, 4th US ed. Additional readings and resources may be from published papers, including those published at top AI/ML venues (e.g., AAI, NeurIPS, ICML, ICLR, TMLR), NLP venues (e.g., ACL, EMNLP, NAACL), computer vision venues (CVPR, ICCV), and robotics (RSS, CoRL, IROS).

This class will use the following Discord server for its discussion forum

<https://discord.com/channels/1538914922484989982>,

where general announcements and extracurricular questions and discussions can happen. For any sensitive issue, please email me (ferraro@umbc.edu).

1.3 Topics

The topics covered will include problem-solving approaches, problem spaces and search, knowledge representation and reasoning, logic and deduction, planning, expert systems, handling uncertainty, learning and natural language understanding. Other special or current topics (e.g., fairness and ethics in AI) may be covered as well.

1.4 Goals

After taking this course, you will:

1. be introduced to some of the core problems and solutions of artificial intelligence (AI);
2. learn different ways that success and progress can be measured in AI;
3. be exposed to how these problems relate to those in computer science and subfields of computer science;
4. have experience experimenting with AI approaches;
5. practice your (written) communication skills.

2 Coursework and Evaluation

This course consists of three broad evaluation components: three or four assignments, exams, and a project. The overall evaluation is as follows:

Component	471—Undergrad
Assignments	30%
Exams	45%
Project	30%

The exams portion may cover both standard midterm and final exams, as well as in-class checkpoint questions.

Intracomponent Weighting All components are component as a micro-average.

Grading Scale: The following grading scale is used on the normalized final percentages, after standard rounding:

If you get at least a/an...	you are guaranteed a/an... or higher.
90	A-
80	B-
70	C-
65	D
0	F

2.1 How to Submit Work

All assignments and project components will be submitted via the online form at

<https://www.csee.umbc.edu/courses/graduate/671/fall26/submit>.

The form allows multiple submissions of an assignment and edits to a previous submission. All submissions are subject to the late policy (§3.2).

3 Dates and Deadlines

Please talk to me if you will have an extended absence.

3.1 Important Dates

Due dates will be announced on the course website and the discussion board. Unless stated otherwise, items are due by **11:59 PM** (UMBC time) of the specified day. Submission instructions will be provided with each assigned item.

3.2 Extensions and Late Policy

Personal or one-off extensions will not be granted. Instead, everyone in this course has **ten (10) late days** to use as needed throughout the course. These are meant for personal reasons and emergencies; do not use them as an excuse to procrastinate. Late days are measured in 24 hour blocks after a deadline. They are **not** fractional: an assignment turned in between 1 minute and 23 hours, 59 minutes (1,439 minutes) after the deadline uses one late day, an assignment turned in between 24 hours and 47 hours, 59 minutes (2879) after the deadline uses two late days, etc.

The number of late days remaining has no bearing on assignments you turn in by the deadline; they only affect assignments you turn in after the deadline. If you run out of late days and do not turn an assignment in on time, please still complete and turn in the assignments. Though late assignments after late days have been exhausted will be recorded as a 0, they will still be marked and returned to you. Moreover, they could count in your favor in borderline cases. There is a **hard cutoff** of the final exam block. Late days cannot be used beyond this time. I reserve the right to issue class-wide extensions.

4 Academic Honesty

4.1 Summary

I take academic honesty seriously. Do not cheat, deceive, plagiarize, improperly share, access or use code, or otherwise engage in academically dishonest behaviors.

- *Doing so may result in lost credit, course failure, suspension, or dismissal from UMBC.*
- *Instances of suspected dishonesty will be handled through the proper administrative procedures.*
- *You are responsible for demonstrating proof that the work submitted is your own.*
- *Every member of a group is responsible for the group's submission. If one member is academically dishonest, all members may be sanctioned, regardless of individual actions.*

4.2 Policy in this Class

This course follows the academic honesty policy from the Office of Undergraduate Education, available from <https://academicconduct.umbc.edu/>. The following is a concise summary of the policies adopted:

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal.

Especially for computer science classes, there are generally questions about what is and is not allowed.

- You are encouraged to discuss the subject matter and assignments with others. The discussion board provides a great forum for this.
- However, you may not write or complete assignments for another student; allow another student to write or complete your assignments; pair program; copy someone else's work; or allow your work to be copied. (This list is not inclusive.)

- As part of discussing the assignments, you may plan with other students; be careful when dealing with pseudocode. A good general rule is that if anything is written down when discussing the assignments with others, you **must** actually implement it separately and you must **not** look at your discussion notes.
- You are free to use online references like Stack Overflow for questions that are not the primary aspect of the course. If, for example, you're having an issue with unicode in Python, or are getting a weird compilation error, then sites like Stack Overflow are a great resource. Don't get stuck fighting your tools.
- You may generally use external libraries (and even parts of standard libraries), provided what you use does not actually implement what you are directed to implement.

I reserve the right to require you to produce proof that your submitted work is your own. This may generally be done through version-tracked artifacts, though it may also be done through an oral examination.

Be sure to properly acknowledge whatever external help—be it from students, third party libraries, or other readings—you receive.

4.3 Predictive/AI-based Tools

For this class, if you use ChatGPT (or similar chatbots or AI-based text generation tools), you must describe exactly how you used it, including providing the prompt, original generation, and your edits. This applies to prose and code. Not disclosing is an academic integrity violation. If you do disclose, your answer may receive anywhere from 0 to full credit, depending on the extent of substantive edits, achievement of learning outcomes, and overall circumvention of those outcomes.

Use of AI/automatic tools for grammatical assistance (such as spell-checkers or Grammarly) or small-scale predictive text (e.g., next word prediction, tab completion) is okay. Provided the use of these tools does not change the substance of your work, use of these tools may be, but is not required to be, disclosed.

4.4 Incremental Logging of Work

In a job, you will likely be required to use some form of collaborative editing system system, like git, Google Docs, or Overleaf. These systems provide a way of incrementally adding content to a file (or files), along with commentary describing the changes. In this class, some deliverables, including code or text, must be incrementally logged / committed in a verifiable, remote history. This could be through UMBC Google Docs, private Github repositories, or Overleaf. Assessments may require you to provide this history. Assessments may additionally require a minimum of non-trivial commits or changes.

5 Students with Accommodations

The office of Student Disability Services (SDS, <https://sds.umbc.edu>) works to ensure that students can access and take advantage of UMBC's educational environment, regardless of disability. From the SDS,

UMBC is committed to eliminating discriminatory obstacles that may disadvantage students based on disability. Services for students with disabilities are provided for all students qualified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADAAA of 2009, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who request and are eligible for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) is the UMBC department designated to coordinate accommodations that would allow students to have equal access and inclusion in all courses, programs, and activities at the University.

If you have a documented disability and need to request academic accommodations, please refer to the SDS website at sds.umbc.edu for registration information and to begin the process, or alternatively you may visit the SDS office in the Math/Psychology Building, Room 212. For questions or concerns, you may contact us through email at disAbility@umbc.edu or phone (410) 455-2459.

If you require accommodations for this class, make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your SDS-approved accommodations.

6 Inclusion

Please see the Office of Equity and Inclusion's website for the most up-to-date information and policies. D College can be stressful. Don't add to that stress by engaging in harassing or hostile behaviors. They are not welcome in the classroom and are completely inappropriate.

More and more organizations are dealing with hostile behavior. One such organization in the NLP community (NAACL, the North American Association for Computational Linguistics) has a good explanation of the behaviors that are not welcome (replace "conference," "event" or "ACL" with "class"):

[Harassment and hostile behavior include]: speech or behavior that intimidates, creates discomfort, or interferes with a person's participation or opportunity for participation in a conference or an event. We aim for ACL-related activities to be an environment where harassment in any form does not happen, including but not limited to: harassment based on race, gender, religion, age, color, appearance, national origin, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Harassment includes degrading verbal comments, deliberate intimidation, stalking, harassing photography or recording, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention. The policy is not intended to inhibit challenging scientific debate, but rather to promote it through ensuring that all are welcome to participate in shared spirit of scientific inquiry.

Any student who has experienced sexual harassment or assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking is encouraged to seek support and resources. There are a number of resources available to you.

Please be aware that as instructors, I and other faculty are required per UMBC policy to report disclosures of sexual assault, domestic violence, relationship violence, stalking, and/or gender-based harassment to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The purpose of these requirements is for the University to inform you of options, supports, and resources. Please note that Maryland law requires that I report all disclosures or suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Service and/or the police.

You can utilize support and resources even if you do not want to take any further action. You will not be forced to file a police report, but please be aware, depending on the nature of the offense, the University may take action. If you need to speak with someone **in confidence** about an incident, the following are available:

- The Counseling Center: 410-455-2742 (M-F 8:30-5)
- University Health Services: 410-455-2542 (M-F 8:30—5)
- For after-hours emergency consultation, call the police at 410-455-5555

There are additional, **non-confidential** on-campus resources:

- The Women's Center (available to students of all genders): 410-455-2714 (M-Th 9:30-6, F 9:30-4)
- Title IX Coordinator: 410-455-1606 (9-5)