

# Using Scholarly Sources Ethically

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# Learning Outcomes

1. Identify ethical responsibilities when using sources in different contexts.
2. Compare expectations for citing scholarly and public-facing sources, respectively.
3. Reflect on the emerging ethical issues on the use of AI/LLM tools.

# Outline for Today

1. Overview of Ethical Responsibilities
2. Group Activity: Source Use Scenarios
3. Bringing AI into the Conversation

When we draw from another's work, what are our ethical responsibilities towards these sources and their creators?

# Two Key Ethical Responsibilities

## Attribution

- Attribution is about giving credit to a source and the person(s) who created that source.
- Attribution might be *explicit* or *implicit*.

## Permission

- In some cases, attribution is not enough.
- Using a source without permission can be a violation of copyright.
- Permission has both an ethical and legal dimension.

# Scenarios: Attribution, permission, or both?

# Scenario 1

Alex comes across an insightful post on Threads that includes an embedded photo that looks like it could be from a professional photographer (not the author of the post), but there is no clear attribution. Alex wants to repost it on their own page to share the message with a broader audience.

# Scenario 1: What to Consider

- Most social media sites have license agreements that cover permission (e.g. if you post an image to Instagram, anyone can share that post *on Instagram* without permission)
- If the content being shared on a social media platform has not been granted direct permission by its creator(s), the site's license agreement does not apply.
- Attribution of any content that is not your own and a description of the permission granted can be help others to understand whether it is appropriate to use that content



# Other Considerations for Source Use on Social Media

- The platform's terms of service
  - Terms of use apply only to the platform you are using (e.g. if you share a screenshot of an instagram post you cannot share it on TikTok)
- Copyright and fair use

## Scenario 2

A journalist is covering the new expansion of a local business and interviews its owner, who is openly excited about the project. The journalist decides to cite quotes from the business owner anonymously, framing it as "a source familiar with the matter."

## Scenario 2: What to Consider

- In journalism, citing a source anonymously is sometimes appropriate when, for instance, the information is highly sensitive.
- According to the [Society for Professional Journalists Code of Ethics](#), one should:
  - "Identify sources clearly. The public is entitled to as much information as possible to judge the reliability and motivations of sources."
  - "Reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution or other harm, and have information that cannot be obtained elsewhere."

# Other Considerations for Source Use in Journalism

- Transparency inspires trust.
- Impact on others and accountability can be swift and highly public.
- Writer is responsible for verifying and fact-checking.
- It's important to establish boundaries and respect when sharing people's quotes (off-record/on-record)

## Scenario 3

- A student is writing a scholarly paper on climate change policy and struggles to clearly explain a complex argument from a key source. To help with this, they use an AI tool to paraphrase the argument, aiming to simplify it while preserving its original meaning. The student includes this paraphrased explanation in their paper but does not disclose that the paraphrasing was done by an AI tool.

## Scenario 3: What to Consider

- Generative AI raises new questions about attribution. Expectations for acknowledging AI in your work—or whether you should use AI at all—vary by context.
- It's important to be accurate and faithful to the source that is being paraphrased; how well does AI do this?

# How do attribution and permission work with AI?



# Sample AI Statements Across Disciplines

From a philosophy course:

“...AI tools are not permitted unless I explicitly indicate otherwise. Although they have many useful and exciting applications, these tools would **hinder the particular goals of our course.**”

From a biology course:

“In this course it is important that the work you submit represents your own thoughts, work, and learning. For this reason, you may not use AI tools to write text for assignments or answer exam questions for you...However, there may be ways to incorporate AI technology in a more constructive way **that does not run counter to course goals**, such as using it as a tool (not a shortcut) that does replace your own thought process with regard to the assessment. ... [E]xtremely mundane uses of AI, like asking it a general question about definitions (e.g., “What is genetic drift?”) while studying before an exam do not need to be disclosed, as you are essentially using it in a similar way to a search engine in that case. But feeding it an exam question (even during revision sessions) or assignment prompt and basing your answer/response on its answer would be considered improper use. Also, be cautious with information provided by AI, it does sometimes perpetuate inaccurate information and can give variable results for certain tasks or when asked about certain concepts.”



# Sample AI Statements Across Disciplines

From a history course:

“You are permitted to utilize **ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and other AI tools to assist you in researching, brainstorming, writing, or revising** your assignments in this class, but you must properly cite the use of AI in your work. [Specific directions for proper citation included here.] Currently available AI models confidently reassert factual errors. Assume that all dates, names, references, and claims that the AI tools provide are wrong unless you cross-check the claims with reliable sources. **You will be responsible for any errors or omissions in your assignments**, so remember to carefully fact-check all AI outputs...”

From a physics course:

“Constructive and judicious use of AI tools (such as Bard and ChatGPT), can augment learning experiences when used appropriately. For example, AI can help you debug computer code, find good references, and provide suggestions and physical explanations. These uses of AI are permitted in this course. However, **since quizzes are designed to assess individual understanding**, AI use is prohibited on these assignments.”

# Some considerations for use of AI source use

- AI policies currently vary both by discipline and professor.
- When in doubt, ask your professor about specific uses of AI.
- AI can reflect human biases; do not trust its accuracy.
- Your data is not private in ChatGPT.
- Other?

# Questions

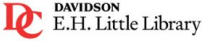
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