

AI Basics & Applications

Fall 2026 Syllabus

Instructor: Andrea Kincannon (andrea.kincannon@gmail.com)

Meeting Time: Thursdays, 10:00–11:30am

Location: OLLI Cactus Valley, 11088 Amigo St., Henderson

Start Date: September 10, 2026

Length: 11 sessions (10-week standard OLLI semester, with one built-in flex week)

Course Description

AI for Everyday Life is a hands-on class for anyone curious about AI but not sure where to start. No tech background needed — students begin with the basics (what AI actually is, how to use tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and Perplexity safely) and build from there each week: vibe coding and automation, skills, agents, even AI-generated music and art. By the end, students will have built their own small AI project and will show it off on demo day.

Instructor Bio

Andrea Kincannon runs Affinity Twine, where she builds human-centered AI systems for small businesses — everything from HVAC companies to law firms to trade schools. She's completed AI training through MIT and Google, along with a dedicated course on AI agents, and now spends her time helping people (not just companies) get comfortable using AI in ways that actually make their lives easier.

Learning Objectives

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

- Set up and use mainstream AI tools (ChatGPT, Claude, Perplexity) safely and confidently
- Apply AI to a real, self-identified problem in their own life
- Understand core AI concepts: apps, skills, and agents
- Recognize how AI is advancing science and medicine
- Try 'vibe coding' and automation tools to build without traditional coding skills
- Experiment with AI-generated music, images, and voice/video tools
- Build and present a small AI-powered project of their own

Materials Needed

- Laptop or tablet
- Free ChatGPT account
- Free Claude account
- Free Perplexity account
- No coding experience required

Weekly Schedule

Wk	Topic	Description
1	Getting Started	What AI actually is, in plain language, including an introduction to Perplexity. Walkthrough of ChatGPT, account security basics, and setting up a free Claude account.
2	Meet Claude & Perplexity	Claude and Perplexity vs. ChatGPT, and real use cases for each. Homework: bring one problem in your life you'd like AI to help solve.
3	How AI Can Be Used	Group workshop of homework problems, a brief look at how AI is advancing science and medicine, and a deeper look at staying safe and private while using AI.
4	Vibe Coding & Automation	How to develop using AI — a review of 'vibe coding' apps and automation tools, and what's possible without traditional coding skills.
5	Skills & Agents	Teaching AI your preferences, then handing it small tasks to do on its own.
6	Group Work	Small groups collaborate on a shared AI project together.
7	Music	Hands-on with AI music generation tools.
8	Art & Images	Hands-on with AI image generation tools.
9	Clones & Voice	Voice clones and video avatars — what's possible, and a candid look at the ethics.
10	Build Your Project	Work session — bring your idea and build your own small app or agent with help on hand.
11	Demo Day	Everyone presents their project to the class.

Note: Weeks 10–11 may flex earlier if the class needs more time on a given topic; the schedule includes one week of built-in buffer.