

ARCH 507

Generative AI: Thinking and Designing with Machine Intelligence

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University of Michigan Taubman College

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Friday 1p - 4p, TVLab RM 2106



Luci - Sam Spratt

James Bridle, in *Ways of Being*, argues against the hierarchy of human intelligence over other forms — plant, animal, machine etc. Instead, he writes of a branching tree of intelligences, each with its own way of thinking. In recognizing this, we can begin to work alongside them, learning and growing together. This is where the course situates itself: within the entangled world of AI, asking how we negotiate agency in design, and what new workflows and processes might emerge from this shift in thinking?

We will ground ourselves in readings and discussions that establish a critical lens on technology, where students will confront the consequences of AI, its embedded bias, its plagiarism, and authorship debates. From these conversations, we will begin to sense how the machine thinks, how it processes what we offer it, and how its way of reading us in turn reshapes our own thinking. We will host lectures and conversations with leading practitioners working in AI, situating the work within wider practices and theory. Using

ComfyUI (interface working with genAI models) as a lens into the machine, we will break down its operations and attend to the many places where humans can be active within the loop. Finally, we will also train our own *small language models* in ComfyUI, learning not only how to use AI but how to make it.

In this course, we will not see AI as a plugin or an augmentor. Instead, we will attempt to approach it as: a co-orbital entity, pushing us onto paths we might not otherwise take; as an entangler, drawing us into relation with other ideas, bodies, and minds; and as a rhizomatic connector, reaching across fields we could not touch alone, enabling transdisciplinary practice.

This seminar begins with the basics and requires no prior expertise in AI, machine learning, or coding. What it does require is a willingness to learn new tools, experiment with new processes, be critical, and above all, participate in the culture of discovery.
