

LIN 207 Language, Society, and the Individuals
 Fall 2026
 Juan Zhong

To help locate literature for your project proposal, you are permitted to use generative AI tools responsibly. Generative AI tools here refer to those based on large language models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini.

These tools raise ethical questions that go beyond what we can address in class. I don't encourage or recommend you use them, but if you decide to use them because you think they support your learning, please read the following carefully so you understand what I mean by responsible use. Let me know if you have any questions.

Responsibly using Generative AI Tools for Literature Searches

Table of Content

Responsibly using Generative AI Tools for Literature Searches	1
1. What You May Use LLMs For	2
2. What You Should Not Ask an LLM to Do	2
3. Using AI for literature search vs. using AI for writing and analysis.	2
4. Standing Rules for Prompting LLMs About Literature	2
(1) Ask for bibliographic information, not analysis	2
(2) Verify every citation independently	2
5. Important Limitations of Generative AI	3
(1) Citations can be fabricated	3
(2) Coverage is uneven	3
(3) They may not have access to current literature	3
(4) They do not know what your library provides	3
(5) They can misrepresent sources	3
6. Workflow	3
7. Prompt templates	4
Bottom Line	5

One way to think about an LLM is as a tool for orienting yourself to a research area and developing a search strategy. It can suggest keywords, authors, topics, or possible sources, but it is not a scholarly database and should not be treated as an authoritative source of bibliographic information. These tools should supplement, not replace, academic databases and your own research.

1. What You May Use LLMs For

You may use an LLM to help you:

- identify useful keywords and alternative terminology for your topic;
- identify researchers, theories, or research areas that may be relevant;
- suggest possible articles, books, dissertations, or other publications to investigate;

The goal is to use the LLM to generate leads for your own literature search, not to outsource the literature review.

2. What You Should Not Ask an LLM to Do

Do not rely on an LLM to:

- write your literature review for you;
- summarize sources that you have not personally read;
- determine what an author argues without checking the original source;
- decide which sources are authoritative or appropriate for your project;
- generate a bibliography that you use without verification;
- provide quotations or page numbers that you have not checked against the original source.

If an LLM gives you a citation, treat it as a search lead, not as a verified source.

3. Using AI for literature search vs. using AI for writing and analysis.

This guideline applies specifically to using AI tools to help you *locate* literature. It does not extend permission to use AI to summarize sources you have not read, draft your proposal, or produce any written work you submit as your own. Those boundaries are governed by the course policy on academic integrity.

4. Standing Rules for Prompting LLMs About Literature

(1) Ask for bibliographic information, not analysis

A useful prompt is: Find literature on [TOPIC] in [FIELD]. Return title, author(s), year, journal or publisher, and DOI or URL for each item. Do not summarize or analyze the sources.

You can also ask for additional search information, such as relevant keywords or related terminology.

(2) Verify every citation independently

Before citing anything in your writing:

1. Find the actual paper through UB Libraries or Google scholar.
2. Confirm that the publication actually exists.
3. Check the title, author(s), year, journal/book, volume, issue, and page numbers.

4. Check the DOI or URL.
 5. Read the original source yourself.
 6. Make sure that the source actually supports the claim for which you are citing it.
- Do not cite a source simply because an AI tool provided a plausible-looking citation.

5. Important Limitations of Generative AI

(1) Citations can be fabricated

LLMs can generate citations that look completely legitimate but do not exist. They may also combine information from several real publications into a citation that never existed.

For this reason, every AI-generated citation must be independently verified.

Even a real DOI does not guarantee that the citation is correct.

(2) Coverage is uneven

LLMs do not represent the scholarly literature evenly. They may disproportionately surface:

- highly cited publications;
- English-language publications;
- publications from well-known journals and institutions;
- older or widely circulated research.

They may miss:

- recent publications;
- non-English literature;
- dissertations and theses;
- conference proceedings;
- working papers and field reports;
- publications from small or regional journals;
- scholarship by early-career or less widely cited researchers.

This means that an AI-generated list should never be treated as a comprehensive literature review.

(3) They may not have access to current literature

Unless a tool has an explicitly enabled and functioning web-search or database-search capability, an LLM may not have access to newly published research. Do not assume that an LLM knows about everything published recently. For current literature, use academic databases and library resources directly.

(4) They do not know what your library provides

An LLM cannot reliably determine which resources you have access to through UB. Use the UB Libraries search and library resolver to determine whether you can access a particular article, book, database, or archive.

(5) They can misrepresent sources

Even when a cited publication is real, an LLM may incorrectly describe the author's argument, research question, methodology, findings, publication date, theoretical framework, or what evidence the source provides.

Never rely on an AI-generated summary of a source instead of reading the source itself.

6. Workflow

- (1) Prompt LLMs and get generated results
- (2) Use academic databases and library resources to find and verify the literature.
- (3) Read the original sources.
- (4) Use your own judgment to evaluate and synthesize the literature.

7. Prompt templates

Here are some prompt templates for your reference. You can revise and/or combine them.

Template 1

I'm a linguistics undergraduate researcher looking for literature on [TOPIC].

Give me:

- Key authors and their institutional affiliations
- Core journals that publish on this topic
- Best search terms and Boolean strings for Google Scholar
- Relevant archives or repositories to browse directly

Return names, titles, years, and DOIs/URLs only. No summaries or analysis.

Template 2

Find published works by [AUTHOR NAME] on [TOPIC]. For each item return: title, year, journal or publisher, DOI or direct URL. No descriptions. No analysis.

Template 3

I have this paper as an anchor: [TITLE, AUTHOR, YEAR].

Find:

- Works that cite this paper
- Works this paper is likely in dialogue with
- Key authors working in the same area

Return title, author, year, DOI/URL for each. No summaries.

Template 4

Find dissertations, working papers, and conference proceedings on [TOPIC] in [FIELD].

For each: title, author, institution or venue, year, and a direct link if available.

Suggest which repositories to search directly (e.g., ProQuest, LSA proceedings).

No summaries.

Template 5

I'm trying to identify understudied areas in the literature on [TOPIC].

Point me to:

- The most recent publications you know of (with links)
- Subfields or angles with sparse coverage
- Researchers who have flagged gaps in their own work

Return names, titles, years, and DOIs/URLs. I will assess the gaps myself.

Template 6

My research sits at the intersection of [FIELD 1] and [FIELD 2].
Give me search terms, key journals, and prominent authors for each
field separately,
then flag any scholars or venues that bridge both.
Include direct links to journal homepages and author pages where
possible.
No summaries.

Bottom Line

An AI-generated citation is not a source. The original publication is the source.

If you use an LLM to help you find literature, you remain responsible for verifying every citation
and for accurately representing every source you cite.