Teaching with Generative AI: Ethical Human-AI Co-Creation as an Innovative Legal Education Methodology*

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Abstract

This article presents an innovative legal and technical education methodology developed at Università Carlo Cattaneo – LIUC for the academic year 2025/2026, centered on the responsible and interdisciplinary use of generative artificial intelligence (AI). Embedded in the course "Artificial Intelligence and Law" the course introduces a pioneering teaching methodology called "Ethical Human-AI Co-Creation." The pedagogical framework addresses the ethical, legal, and technical implications of AI systems, promoting student engagement through applied project-based learning, peer review, and reflective practices. The course establishes a replicable model for integrating cutting-edge digital tools in legal and technical education while teaching academic integrity and social responsibility.

Keywords

LLM, AI Ethics, AI Law, AI in education

1. Introduction

Generative AI (GenAI) software and tools are increasingly employed by students, even when explicitly prohibited by the course guidelines. Therefore, teachers must adapt to face this reality by equipping students with the knowledge and ethical grounding necessary to engage with this technology responsibly and with academic integrity [1]. This article details a teaching methodology that merges legal theory, AI technology, and applied ethics to re-imagine how to prepare students for a future of AI-augmented education.

Not only students but also researchers are increasingly using GenAI to write projects, articles, assignments, to correct and improve their writing style, to translate complex texts, to create images and tables, to conduct analyses, and to find information (correct or not) more quickly [2, 3]. However, it is known that these tools, as apparently miraculous as they seem, have very strong limitations both in terms of performance and in ethical and legal terms. For this reason, it is essential and urgent to teach students and academic staff how to use these tools more responsibly.

The "Ethical Human-AI Co-Creation Methodology" shifts from traditional didactic approaches to an experiential, interdisciplinary, and collaborative model that integrates GenAI tools, AI Law, and Ethics into the curriculum. The proposed course introduces an innovative methodology to improve "collaboration" between students and GenAI. The initiative aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to use AI tools avoiding the most common mistakes, legal consequences, and ethical violations, reflecting on the consequences of their usage. The program integrates ethical, legal and technical training with practical and project-based learning, to prepare students to deal responsibly with technology in academia.

Students will first be introduced to the most important ethical and legal issues of GenAI and its technical functioning and limitations. Particular attention will be given to environmental and exploitation issues. Students will be introduced to several tools most commonly used in academia (ChatGPT,

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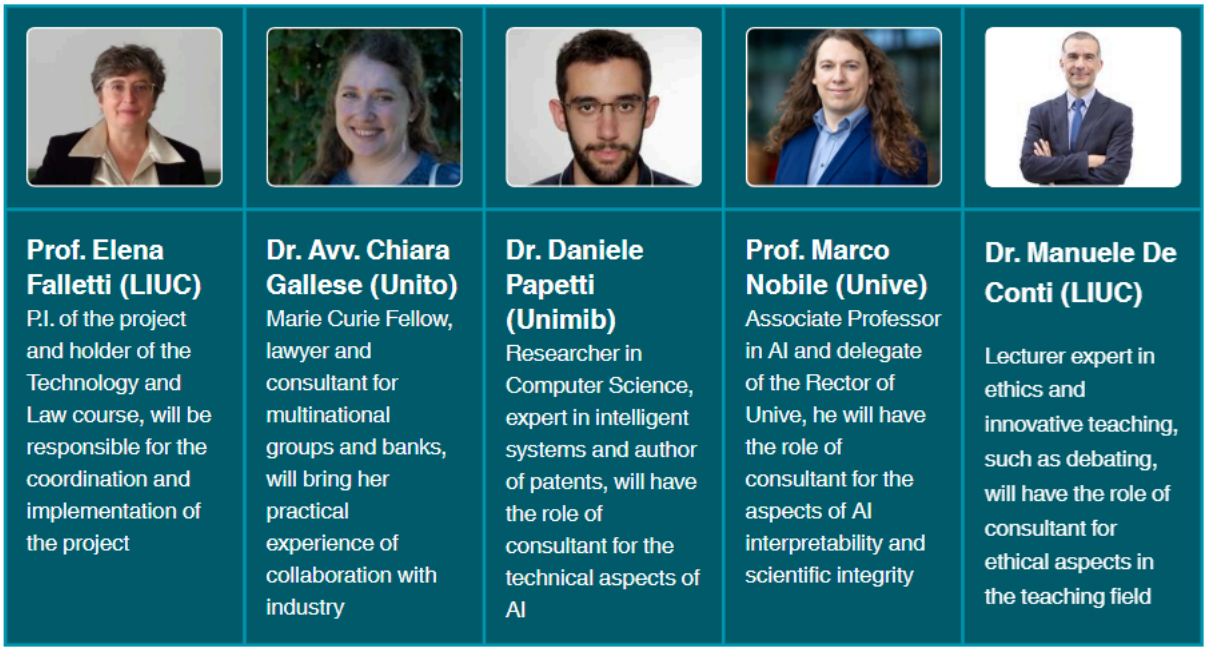

Figure 1: The teaching team

Canva, Grammarly, DeepL, SciteAI, Consensus, Elicit, Sourcely, etc.) but they will also be taught how to implement GenAI on their own computer (e.g., using tools such as Ollama). Based on the knowledge acquired, they will develop their own project on the topics of the "Artificial Intelligence and Law" course using these instruments, elaborating on the problems caused by their use and exploring the differences between commercial software and their own developed models. In this way, students will experience the course content first-hand, apply it in real life, and have the opportunity to reflect on the consequences of using these technologies.

At the end of the course, students will discuss their results using the peer review method.

The teaching team is highly interdisciplinary, as shown in Figure 1.

2. Advances to the State of the Art

The integration of GenAI into academic environments remains a contentious issue. The debate surrounding its use is deeply polarized, reflecting a broad spectrum of perspectives across disciplines and institutions [4]. While some educators and researchers view GenAI as an important tool capable of enhancing pedagogical methods and promoting creativity [5, 6], others express significant concerns regarding academic integrity [7, 8, 9], authorship, bias, and the potential erosion of critical thinking skills. However, most critiques are directed to *commercial* GenAI tools, and not to GenAI techniques as a whole. For example, most environmental issues related to water consumption are caused by big data center, and not by small models that run on a single machine.

At present, there are no universally accepted standards governing the use of GenAI within higher education [4]. This gap creates widespread uncertainty among educators, students, and academic institutions regarding the appropriate and effective implementation of GenAI technologies in teaching, course developing, and grading. In the absence of clear policies, usage practices vary significantly, and often depend on institutional risk tolerance or faculty discretion.

As a consequence, the academic community is still in the early stages of developing evidence-based strategies to employ GenAI responsibly in education. The proposed project advances the state of the art in education by proposing a new methodology for teaching GenAI that integrates ethical, technical, and practical aspects in the course content.

While many current approaches to AI education focus narrowly on technical skills or theoretical con-

tent, this project combines these elements with ethics, law, and practical interdisciplinary applications, creating a framework for AI literacy. Our method goes beyond traditional pedagogical models as it incorporates co-creation and collaboration, enabling students to engage with AI not just as consumers, but as active and informed participants in its use and development, that are also conscious of its ethical and legal challenges.

The project prepares students to use technology tools with confidence and creativity rather than using them covertly to cheat or delegate critical thinking. The emphasis on ethical and legal considerations distinguishes this methodology, ensuring that students understand not only how to use these technologies, but also their limitations and the broader societal implications of their development and deployment. This dual focus on technical proficiency and responsible use of technology represents a significant evolution in how GenAI is taught.

In addition, the project promotes innovation through interdisciplinary collaboration, which is increasingly important in today's workplace, encouraging students to tackle complex real-world problems using systems thinking. The integration of peer review and reflection helps develop critical thinking and communication skills, which are essential to advancing responsible AI practices.

In addition, when students produce tangible results, whether research papers, creative projects, or innovative solutions, they contribute to a large repository of best practices in GenAI, setting a precedent for ethical and impactful applications in academia and industry. This project equips students for the future but also serves as a scalable model for rethinking AI education.

3. Teaching Methodology

The project will last 12 months in total (July 2025 - June 2026). The first phase is course preparation and coordination between teachers, the second phase is course delivery, and the last phase is project evaluation and dissemination.

The course to which the innovative teaching will be applied, Artificial Intelligence and Law (Prof. Elena Falletti), will be structured in a 12-week semester, with weekly sessions combining lectures, workshops, demonstrations and project-based learning activities. The following implementation plan outlines the key activities and milestones to ensure the success of the course.

The program uses a co-creation framework where students work collaboratively with GenAI tools to solve problems, create content, and develop critical thinking skills. The approach includes:

1. Interactive workshops on ethical and legal issues
2. Hands-on technical demonstrations of GenAI tools
3. Practical testimonials and case studies from industry
4. Development of collaborative projects where students integrate AI tools into real-world tasks
5. Peer review evaluation sessions
6. Reflection sessions to assess the impact of AI on their work and decision-making processes

Our project will represents an opportunity for students to enhance their learning experience and making lessons more stimulating and engaging, while at the same time making them aware of the ethical and legal issues posed by GenAI and the consequences of employing such tools in everyday life.

4. Discussion

4.1. Promises and issues of LLM in education

For neurodivergent students, who may experience challenges with conventional communication methods, social cues, or orthographic norms, GenAI provides a potential support system [10], enabling them to focus on substance over syntax, and to participate more confidently in environments that have historically marginalized non-normative expression.

Similarly, non-native English speakers, often unfairly judged on fluency rather than insight, can now level the communicative playing field [11]. GenAI assists with grammar, tone, and clarity, helping their ideas express without being clouded by linguistic barriers. This helps students from the Global South and those who have less means to study foreign languages in their household. Similar remarks can be made regarding individuals with limited formal education but rich experiential knowledge. For them, GenAI offers a tool to shape thoughts into structured, polished communication, making their contributions more visible and impactful across settings where academic credentials often serve as gatekeepers.

In the same way, students with cognitive impairments or learning disabilities, including those with conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD, or brain injuries, can use generative tools to correct their writing, translate their thoughts into a more accepted narrative, or interpret nuanced and non-written meanings in text, empowering them to engage more efficiently in writing-intensive tasks that may have otherwise posed significant hurdles and cause discrimination [12]. This can represent an effective way for them to fill a gap

Moreover, GenAI helps countless others, from working parents with limited time, to multilingual thinkers whose ideas span cultural paradigms, to individuals silenced by systemic inequities, offering them a platform to be heard.

It is critical to understand that these models do not inherently dilute originality or bypass intellectual effort. Instead, they can amplify underrepresented voices, remove arbitrary linguistic gatekeeping, and can be employed to promote richer diversity of thought. Rather than viewing AI as a shortcut, it should be considered as an enabler of equity, helping reshape who gets to participate in high-level discourse and contribute to shaping the narrative.

However, there are several legal and ethical issues that must be considered before using commercial GenAI tools extensively. The first concern involves copyright violations regarding the use of copyrighted material in the training datasets without proper consent or attribution, creating unresolved legal and ethical issues about data ownership and fair use [13].

Another problem is that these systems can reproduce or amplify discriminatory, offensive, or misleading content, especially in contexts such as AI-generated media, where harmful stereotypes and biases embedded in training data [14] are replicated at scale. Adding to these issues is the lack of transparency and accountability in how AI models are trained, deployed, and tested, often leaving users and impacted communities with little remedy or compensation. There are also concerns over the impact on marginalized groups, who may be disproportionately affected by biased outputs [10], and on the manipulation ability of commercial software such as LLM-based chatbots.

In addition, the environmental impact of training and running large AI models is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, with significant freshwater usage, carbon emissions, and electronic waste contributing to pollution and climate degradation [15].

An often-overlooked yet critical issue is the exploitation of data labelers and content moderators, many of whom come from economically disadvantaged regions in the Global South [16]. They play an important role in training AI systems by manually labeling vast quantities of data, moderating harmful content, and flagging toxic or inappropriate outputs. Despite the essential nature of their work, they are frequently employed through subcontractors, underpaid, subjected to unstable job conditions, and given minimal mental health support, even when regularly exposed to disturbing or traumatic material.

This hidden labor force is essential to the perceived "intelligence" and safety of AI systems, yet their contributions remain invisible and undervalued within mainstream AI narratives. The ethical paradox lies in the fact that while AI is heralded as a driver of progress and efficiency, it often depends on precarious human labor performed under exploitative conditions.

For these reasons, commercial tools should be used only when strictly necessary (e.g., to help fill the privilege gap) and unnecessary use of such models should be avoided. Whenever possible, it is better to use smaller AI software that are trained locally, legally, and that are built without exploitation.

All these considerations are part of our course content and will be taught to students, who will reflect on the opportunity of using GenAI in their academic career.

5. Conclusion

The proposed initiative to teach the responsible and effective use of GenAI will have a great impact on the university curriculum. By embedding GenAI training in the curriculum, the university ensures that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to adequately address the highly complex task of using and building technology responsibly. This course prepares students to learn how to use cutting-edge technologies without compromising ethics and fundamental rights, making them competitive in the job market and capable of tackling complex challenges in their respective fields.

The integration of ethical and legal considerations into the curriculum promotes responsible use of technology, but above all, critical thinking. Students will graduate with a solid understanding of the social impact of AI, including its potential risks and benefits, and will be equipped to become leaders who care about integrity and ethics.

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Declaration on Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the author used GPT-4, DeepL, and Grammarly for: grammar, syntax, and spelling correction and translation from Italian. After using these tools/services, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the publication's content.

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