Understanding AI

For millennia, we have used information technologies to augment our intelligence. From writing and arithmetic, to the printing press and movable type, from the telegraph and telephone, to computers and the Internet - we've extended our ability to learn and think beyond our biological brain and limited by a lifetime, to a social process that compounds across continents and generations. Artificial Intelligence is the next horizon in the human journey to understand and shape our world. It may be the most consequential invention in the history of our species.

Through demonstration, lecture and discussion, this course will give you a practical understanding of Artificial Intelligence so that you can benefit from the near-magical power of AI and participate in the societal conversation. In four course sessions you will see mind-bending demonstrations of AI in action and learn about the people, inventions, and institutions that are building the only other intelligence we've ever talked to that talks back.

Class One
What AI is and isn't
- What do we mean by intelligence?
- How smart is it? Measuring machine intelligence.
- What is Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and what happens when/if we build it?

Class Two
How AI is made
- How intelligence is built (grown, really)
- The critical and controversial role of data in making intelligent machines
- The people, companies and investments driving the AI arms race

Class Three
What AI can and cannot do (today)
- Where AI has been long at work
- The many weird and wonderful applications of generative AI
- Hallucinations and confabulations, why AI makes mistakes

Class Four
The Social Implications of AI
- Profit vs. safety
- Privacy vs. convenience
- The end of jobs?
- The critical importance of knowing what we want.