Studia Humanitatis for the Age of Artificial Intelligence

A Framework for Human Formation

I. Purpose

The Renaissance *studia humanitatis* developed the capabilities considered necessary for a person to participate fully in intellectual, professional, and civic life. Language cultivated precision of thought and expression. Rhetoric developed argument, interpretation, and persuasion. History enlarged judgment through experience across time. Literature and the arts developed imagination and insight into human character. Moral philosophy examined human purposes, responsibility, and action. Together, these disciplines pursued a larger objective: **human formation**.

Artificial intelligence gives that educational project renewed importance.

Humanity is expanding the range of what it can know, create, analyze, and accomplish with intelligent machines. Information is increasingly abundant. Sophisticated analysis is more accessible. Machines generate fluent language, participate in reasoning, assist creation, and undertake increasingly complex execution. These capabilities change what people can do. They also change which human capabilities deserve deliberate cultivation.

Studia Humanitatis for the Age of Artificial Intelligence develops the educational framework of AI Humanism. Its central question is:

> **What should an educated and capable person be able to understand and do in an age of intelligent machines?**

The framework begins with the humanist proposition that *capability is cultivable.*

Education should develop durable capacities for understanding, judgment, expression, creation, institutional participation, and responsible action. Artificial intelligence can contribute directly to that development when people use it to explore more deeply, practice more effectively, encounter wider bodies of knowledge, test ideas, and extend the range of work they can undertake.

The objective is the *formation of capable people*.

The **AI Humanist** names that educational ideal within this framework: a person able to reason independently, use intelligent machines wisely, contribute knowledge, exercise judgment, understand institutions, communicate clearly, create meaningfully, and act responsibly in the world.

II. Formation in an Age of Machine Capability

AI Humanism distinguishes among machine capability, AI-assisted performance, and durable human capability. That distinction has direct educational significance.

A person may produce a stronger essay, analysis, design, or decision with artificial intelligence while developing little lasting capability from the experience. Another person may use the same technology to deepen understanding, improve judgment, broaden expertise, and undertake progressively more sophisticated work. Education should care about both the quality of the work and *the development of the person*.

A central test of human formation is therefore:

What greater capability remains because the person undertook the work?

The answer may involve knowledge gained, judgment refined, questions improved, techniques learned, assumptions recognized, arguments strengthened, creative range expanded, or greater ability to act independently in the future.

Artificial intelligence can accelerate this process. It can serve as tutor, interlocutor, critic, simulator, research aid, creative collaborator, analytical instrument, and means of execution. Thus, its educational value depends on how these capabilities *contribute to human development.*

The modern *studia humanitatis* joins classical humanist practices with technological understanding, evidence, institutional knowledge, and practical judgment. It joins humanistic scholarship, technological understanding, and practical judgment in the formation of people who increasingly think and act with machines.

III. The Contemporary Studia Humanitatis

The framework develops seven interdependent domains of human capability. Each domain contributes to a person's capacity to understand, judge, create, communicate, and act. Their relationships matter as much as their individual content. The domains translate the four pillars of AI Humanism into educational capabilities:

Formation Domain	**Primary Pillar Connection**
Language, Rhetoric, and Interpretation	Human Agency; Knowledge Stewardship
Historical Judgment	Knowledge Stewardship; Institutional Integrity
Knowledge, Evidence, and Inquiry	Knowledge Stewardship; Human Agency
Artificial Intelligence and Technological Understanding	Human Agency; Institutional Integrity; Knowledge Stewardship; Governed Intelligence
Human Purposes, Agency, and Judgment	Human Agency; Governed Intelligence
Institutions, Economics, and Collective Action	Institutional Integrity; Governed Intelligence
Art, Literature, and Human Creation	Human Agency; Knowledge Stewardship

The domains are educational rather than organizational categories. Each develops capabilities that contribute to one or more pillars of AI Humanism.

1. Language, Rhetoric, and Interpretation

Language remains one of humanity's principal instruments for thinking and acting together. Artificial intelligence makes fluent language extraordinarily abundant. This increases the importance of understanding how language works.

The AI Humanist should develop command of rhetoric, argumentation, interpretation, narrative, and clear expression. This includes the ability to distinguish assertion from argument, argument from evidence, fluency from understanding, and persuasive confidence from justified confidence. Rhetorical competence also requires an understanding of audience, context, framing, ambiguity, metaphor, and the ways language can clarify or obscure a problem.

Machine-generated language makes *interpretation* as important as expression. A capable person should be able to interrogate a generated argument, identify its assumptions, assess the evidence supporting it, recognize alternative interpretations, and improve the reasoning rather than merely accept or reject the output.

Question formation belongs at the center of this discipline. When answers become easier to produce, the capacity to ask consequential questions becomes more valuable. Education should cultivate the ability to identify what is unknown, recognize what matters, formulate problems precisely, and revise a question when evidence changes its premises.

The objective is rhetorical independence:

> ***the ability to use language to think, understand, communicate, and deliberate without surrendering judgment to fluency.***

2. Historical Judgment

Human beings understand change more clearly when they can place it in time. Artificial intelligence is consequential, yet humanity has encountered earlier transformations in writing, printing, scientific practice, industrial production, bureaucracy, mass communication, computing, networks, and automation.

History enlarges the range of experience available to judgment. The purpose of historical study within AI Humanism is to develop the ability to distinguish continuity from novelty. Students should learn how technologies interact with institutions, how practices change unevenly, how expertise migrates, how new capabilities reorganize work, and how societies adapt to changing conditions.

Historical judgment asks questions such as:

- What changed because a new capability became available?
- What persisted?
- Which institutions adapted successfully?
- Which assumptions proved durable?
- Which forecasts failed?
- Which human capabilities became more valuable?

The study of intellectual history also helps locate AI Humanism itself. Renaissance humanism emerged in a particular historical setting, but its confidence in cultivation, scholarship, rhetoric, judgment, and participation provides an intellectual inheritance that can develop under new conditions.

History gives the AI Humanist perspective. It develops an ability to encounter rapid technological change without assuming either that everything is unprecedented or that nothing fundamentally new has occurred.

3. Knowledge, Evidence, and Inquiry

Artificial intelligence can produce information and analysis far more quickly than human institutions can validate every claim. The ability to understand how knowledge is produced therefore becomes a foundational human capability.

The AI Humanist should understand evidence, measurement, uncertainty, probability, causal reasoning, experimental design, inference, replication, and the institutional practices through which communities test and improve knowledge.

Scientific literacy matters, but the domain extends beyond science. Different fields establish knowledge through different methods. Historical evidence differs from experimental evidence. Interpretive arguments require different forms of support than causal claims. Professional judgment often combines formal analysis with contextual and tacit knowledge.

An educated person should understand these differences. AI makes this understanding particularly important because generated answers can combine facts, inference, uncertainty, and fabrication within the same fluent response.

Knowledge Stewardship therefore begins with epistemic judgment:

> ***What do we know, how do we know it, how confident should we be, and what would change our conclusion?***

The goal is deeper than detecting error.

Students should learn to use artificial intelligence to extend inquiry: to search wider bodies of knowledge, compare explanations, generate hypotheses, examine counterarguments, test interpretations, and identify areas requiring further evidence.

The humanist objective is to turn informational abundance into greater understanding.

4. Artificial Intelligence and Technological Understanding

AI Humanism requires technological understanding commensurate with the significance of the technology.

The AI Humanist should understand how contemporary artificial intelligence systems are built, what they can do, how their capabilities are evaluated, how they interact with tools and data, and where important uncertainties remain. This includes working knowledge of machine learning, probabilistic systems, generative models, training and inference, large language models, agents, tool use, data, evaluation, computational constraints, and emerging forms of machine execution. The required depth will vary by profession and purpose.

The common objective is technological intelligibility. A capable participant in the AI age should be able to distinguish demonstrated capability from analogy, engineering properties from anthropomorphic description, observed limitations from assumed ones, and current systems from projections about future systems.

Technological understanding should also be practical. Students should work directly with intelligent systems. They should learn how outputs change with context, instructions, tools, evidence, model choice, and task design. They should experience both the capabilities and limitations of contemporary systems through use.

They should also understand delegation. As AI moves from generating content toward executing work, people need to understand how purposes become instructions, how authority can be bounded, what evidence execution produces, and how human intervention can redirect action.

Technological literacy thus supports all four pillars of AI Humanism. It enlarges Human Agency, enables informed participation in institutions, strengthens Knowledge Stewardship, and makes Governed Intelligence intelligible.

5. Human Purposes, Agency, and Judgment

Capability acquires significance through purpose.

The AI Humanist should therefore examine how people form objectives, make choices, exercise judgment, delegate action, revise intentions, and assume responsibility for consequences.

This domain draws on philosophy, psychology, decision theory, professional practice, and the humanistic study of action. Its purpose is to strengthen practical judgment.

Artificial intelligence can produce options, recommendations, analyses, forecasts, and proposed actions. Human beings still confront the questions that precede and follow those outputs:

- What are we trying to accomplish?

- Why does it matter?
- Which considerations belong in the decision?
- What uncertainty can we accept?
- What should be delegated?
- When should a decision be reconsidered?
- Who assumes responsibility for the result?

These questions become more important as execution becomes easier.

The guiding principle of Human Agency therefore has an educational counterpart:

Delegate execution while preserving human authorship.

Authorship here means more than originating text or performing every task personally. It means remaining capable of establishing purposes, understanding consequential choices, directing delegated work, evaluating results, and revising course.

Students should practice judgment under ambiguity rather than encounter every problem as one with a predetermined correct answer. The goal is a person capable of using intelligence, whether human or machine, in service of purposes the person can understand, articulate, and defend.

6. Institutions, Economics, and Collective Action

Human capability is amplified through institutions. Organizations allow people to combine expertise, authority, resources, knowledge, and action across scales no individual can achieve alone. Artificial intelligence changes the capabilities available to those organizations and the distribution of work within them.

The AI Humanist should understand how institutions function. This includes organizational design, incentives, authority, delegation, accountability, professions, markets, governance, economic coordination, institutional learning, and the relationship between expertise and decision rights.

Economic understanding is especially important because AI changes the cost and distribution of intellectual and productive capabilities. Students should be able to reason about productivity, complementarity, substitution, human and organizational capital, innovation, diffusion, market structure, and the changing economics of expertise.

The central humanist question extends beyond employment. It concerns the development and distribution of capability.

- Which activities become more accessible?
- Which capabilities become more valuable?
- Which forms of expertise change?
- Which functions move from individuals to institutions, or from institutions to individuals?

- How can organizations use machine intelligence to become more capable rather than simply more automated?

Institutional understanding also supports accountability. As execution moves across people and machines, educated participants should understand how to ask who possesses authority, what has been delegated, what evidence survives, who can revise an action, and who remains responsible.

This is the educational foundation of Institutional Integrity and Governed Intelligence.

7. Art, Literature, and Human Creation

Human formation includes imagination. Literature, visual art, music, architecture, drama, design, and other creative practices explore human experience, possibility, interpretation, and meaning. They cultivate sensitivities that analytical capability alone does not supply.

Generative artificial intelligence expands the means of creation. People can experiment across media, generate alternatives rapidly, encounter unfamiliar styles, prototype ideas, and realize forms of expression that once required specialized technical capabilities. This expansion creates a new environment for human creativity.

The AI Humanist should explore authorship, originality, craft, interpretation, aesthetic judgment, cultural inheritance, and collaboration between people and machines.

The central question is developmental:

What can people create because new forms of intelligence are available to them?

Education should cultivate both creative range and discrimination.

Abundance increases the importance of choosing among possibilities, developing taste, recognizing significance, refining an idea, and understanding why one expression succeeds where another does not.

Creative practice also provides a powerful setting for understanding human authorship. A person can delegate parts of execution while remaining responsible for conception, selection, interpretation, revision, and the meaning of the finished work. The arts therefore belong at the center of AI Humanism's account of human possibility.

IV. Practice as a Method of Formation

Human capability develops through use. The modern *studia humanitatis* should therefore join study with practice throughout the framework.

Students should formulate arguments rather than only study rhetoric. They should investigate evidence rather than only learn methodological vocabulary. They should work with intelligent systems rather than only read about them. They should examine institutions, make decisions, create artifacts, test ideas, and evaluate the consequences of their choices.

Artificial intelligence makes new forms of practice possible. Learners can engage in repeated simulations, receive rapid critique, explore competing perspectives, reconstruct historical arguments, test decision scenarios, experiment with creative forms, and undertake projects at levels of complexity previously difficult to reproduce in educational settings. The educational task is to design these experiences so that assisted performance becomes durable capability.

Practice should therefore require reflection. After completing consequential work, students should be able to explain what they sought to accomplish, how they used AI, what evidence informed their decisions, which judgments remained human, what they changed during the process, what they learned, and what they could now do better independently or in future collaboration with intelligent systems.

This makes the capability-conversion problem an educational principle:

> ***The value of AI-assisted learning lies partly in what the learner becomes capable of doing because of it.***

V. The Scholar-Citizen

Humanistic education has historically connected learning with participation in shared intellectual and civic life. AI Humanism carries that ideal forward.

The scholar-citizen seeks understanding and contributes that understanding to the institutions and communities through which people act together. This role requires intellectual independence and the capacity to engage constructively with others. It requires the ability to interpret arguments, understand institutions, evaluate evidence, explain complex ideas, recognize competing purposes, and exercise judgment without reducing disagreement to incapacity or bad faith.

Artificial intelligence increases the importance of these capabilities. Machine-generated language can participate in public and institutional discourse at extraordinary scale. Expertise can become more accessible while also becoming easier to imitate. People will encounter increasingly sophisticated claims about technologies whose operation they may not directly understand. The scholar-citizen should therefore be capable of participating in these environments without surrendering judgment to either technological authority or rhetorical confidence.

Civic competence in AI Humanism means the capacity to contribute intelligently to shared institutions. A contribution may occur through scholarship, professional work, leadership, entrepreneurship, education, public service, artistic creation, or participation in community life.

Knowledge gains human significance when it improves people's capacity to understand and act together.

VI. The Formation of the AI Humanist

The *studia humanitatis* seeks an integrated form of capability.

The AI Humanist should emerge able to:

- reason independently and evaluate evidence;
- understand and use artificial intelligence wisely;
- convert informational abundance into knowledge and understanding;
- exercise judgment about purposes, delegation, and consequences;
- understand institutions, authority, and accountability;
- communicate and create with clarity and imagination;
- contribute knowledge and judgment to intellectual, professional, institutional, and civic life.

These capabilities reinforce one another. Technological understanding without judgment produces proficiency without direction. Judgment without knowledge lacks a reliable basis for action. Knowledge without communication limits contribution. Creativity without discernment produces abundance without significance. Institutional participation without understanding weakens agency. Human formation *integrates them*.

VII. Education as Capability Development

Studia Humanitatis provides a framework rather than a fixed sequence of courses. Different institutions, professions, stages of life, and educational settings may embody it differently. A university program, professional curriculum, executive seminar, secondary-school course, research fellowship, or independent program may emphasize different domains while pursuing the same developmental purpose. The framework should evolve with evidence.

The Intellectual Agenda of AI Humanism asks which capabilities increase in value as machine intelligence becomes abundant and which educational practices develop those capabilities effectively. *Studia Humanitatis* should incorporate what that research discovers. Education thereby becomes part of the larger AI Humanist research program.

Educational success is measured not only by what learners know, but by what they have become capable of understanding and doing. It is reflected in their ability to:

- formulate better questions

- distinguish evidence from fluent assertion
- use intelligent systems without surrendering judgment
- recognize when a problem requires historical, technical, institutional, scientific, or humanistic understanding
- direct delegated intelligence toward meaningful purposes
- communicate consequential ideas clearly
- create things they could not create before
- contribute knowledge and judgment to the institutions and communities in which they participate

These are questions of human development.

VIII. The Humanist Educational Commitment

The Renaissance *studia humanitatis* sought to cultivate people capable of participating fully in the intellectual and civic life of their age. The conditions have changed. The purpose endures.

Artificial intelligence gives people access to forms of knowledge, analysis, creation, and execution of extraordinary reach. Humanistic education should help people turn that expansion of machine capability into an expansion of their own.

We seek people capable of understanding deeply, questioning intelligently, creating imaginatively, communicating clearly, using technology purposefully, acting through institutions, and exercising judgment under changing conditions.

We seek people who can use abundant intelligence to become more capable themselves.

And we seek people prepared to contribute those capabilities to the world they share with others.

The central educational question remains:

> ***What should an educated and capable person be able to understand and do in an age of intelligent machines?***

Studia Humanitatis exists to keep developing the answer.

The humanist project continues through formation.