



Summer School 2025

Social Bytes and Artificial Minds:
Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence –
Opportunities, Challenges and Implications
for Social Work

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Welcome to International Summer School 2025

Dear students, dear colleagues,
we are delighted to welcome you to this year's Summer School on "Social Bytes and Artificial Minds", which will take place at the FHNW School of Social Work at the FHNW Campus MuttENZ from 2nd to 6th June 2025. Since the planning of this summer school, the technological possibilities of AI have already developed further, which underlines the current relevance of the topic.

In our program, we deliberately offer different formats to address the topic at different levels. In addition to traditional lectures, for example, there will also be the opportunity to develop and reflect on your own chatbots for social work. Visiting lecturers and students from different countries also invite you to explore the topic from an international viewpoint.

We look forward to welcoming you in person and hope for many inspiring moments

Joshua Weber and Judith Sibold
School of Social Work
FHNW University of Applied Sciences and
Arts Northwestern Switzerland

Social Bytes and Artificial Minds: Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence – Opportunities, Challenges and Implications for Social Work

The digitalization of social life is rapidly advancing. At the latest since the introduction of ChatGPT in autumn 2022, it has become clear how urgently questions about the opportunities and challenges of technical development and its effects on humans need to be discussed and reflected on anew.

The swift, even unbridled developments of digital technologies are increasingly following each other in quick succession. At the time of writing, this can be seen directly in the development of ChatGPT. Artificial intelligence in particular, on which ChatGPT is also based, is attributed great potential to change all areas of life and work. At the same time, these rapid developments are evoking significant uncertainties, which need to be dealt with productively. One uncertainty arising from the perspective of social work is the relationship between the «artificial» and the «human».

As part of the 2025 Summer School, this module will explore the current state of technological developments and their social impact. It will address – from multiple perspectives and across disciplines – the potential for positive change and its possible negative consequences. In line with the current sustainability debate, hitherto neglected social, economic and ecological problems will also be discussed and critically analyzed.

Key questions

- How social are artificial intelligences?
- What are the social consequences of the use of artificial intelligence?
- Which social work activities can be delegated to artificial intelligence, and which not?
- How can and should the use of artificial intelligence in social work be organized?

Programme Overview

	Monday, June 2nd	Tuesday, June 3rd
8:30 – 9:00	Check in Room 01W03	Check in Room 01W03
9:00 – 10:30	Introduction and Welcoming Agnès Fritze, Judith Sibold, Joshua Weber (FHNW) AI unplugged Judith Sibold, Joshua Weber (FHNW)	Lecture Social Work & AI: Into the Matrix Lauri Goldkind (Fordham University)
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Lecture Human and artificial intelligence – a critical comparison Thomas Fuchs (Heidelberg University)	Workshops Exemplary use of AI in Social Work I WS1: Social Influencers: The Power of Interdisciplinary Action Against Online Hate Katja Girschik, Plus von Däniken (ZHAW) WS2: Starting from Scratch: A Collaborative Journey to AI-Driven Reports Jonathan Heimlicher (Quellen- hof-Stiftung), Jana Fischer (Soziale Dienste Stadt Zürich) WS3: Affective Computing in Narration Valentina Franzoni (University of Perugia)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Student Working Sessions	Workshops Exemplary use of AI in Social Work II WS4: From Problem to Impact: Crafting Social Business Plans with AI Peter Zängli (FHNW) WS5: Feasibility study AI chatbot for youth work Olivier Steiner (FHNW), Endrit Sadiku (Jugendarbeit Basel), Pascal Heid (FHNW), Khodor Kandouli (FHNW) WS6: Predictive Prognostics and Decision Making in Social Work Practice Christina Plafky (BFH)
15:00 – 15:30	Transfer to Basel	Coffee
15:30 – 17:00	Audiowalk Bytes & Bridges Dezentrum	Student Working Sessions

Wednesday, June 4th	Thursday, June 5th	Friday, June 6th
Check in Room 01W03	Check in Room 01W03	Check in Room 01W03
Lecture The making of technology such as AI from a sociological point of view Joshua Weber (FHNW)	Round table AI for Good: Ensuring Responsible Use in Social Work Lauri Goldkind, Gloria Kirwan, Antonio López Peláez	Students AI Showcase
Coffee	Coffee	Coffee
Workshops Challenges in the context of AI WS7: How AI Amplifies Social Inequality and What Can Be Done About It Rachel Huber (University of Bern) WS8: Gender Bias Valentina Franzoni (University of Perugia)	Create your own AI Samuel Fricker, Stefan Hackstein (FHNW)	Lecture AI and digital social work at the crossroads: How to deal with digital vulnerability? Antonio López Peláez (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia) Closing and Evaluation Judith Sibold, Joshua Weber (FHNW)
Lunch	Lunch	
Lecture Ethical considerations and Universal Design of AI Gloria Kirwan (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland)	Create your own AI Samuel Fricker, Stefan Hackstein (FHNW)	
Coffee	Coffee	
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Abstracts of Lectures

Lecture 1

Human and artificial intelligence – a critical comparison

Thomas Fuchs (Heidelberg University)

Advances in artificial intelligence and robotics are increasingly calling into question the distinction between simulation and reality of the human person. On the one hand, they suggest a computeromorphic understanding of human intelligence and, on the other, an anthropomorphization of AI systems. Thus, we increasingly see ourselves as our machines and, conversely, liken our machines to ourselves. So what is the difference between human and artificial intelligence? And can artificial intelligence achieve consciousness at some point?

Lecture 2

Social Work & AI: Into the Matrix

Lauri Goldkind (Fordham University)

Large Language Models, such as ChatGPT, have captured the attention of the world for their ability to write jokes, poetry, and prose – in seconds and for free, bedazzling anyone who works with the written word. Educators have seen that it can write realistic student papers, including citations and personal anecdotes. Professionals have seen that it can generate realistic work-related writing such as progress notes, grant proposals and organizational newsletters. What are the implications for social workers and social work practice? We invite social workers to learn about AI in mental health and human services.

Lecture 3

The making of technology such as AI from a sociological point of view

Joshua Weber (FHNW)

Technologies like AI are deeply embedded in social processes. As a result of social processes of technology-making, technologies are in turn used in social contexts. This lecture explores how the development of technology – sometimes described as the hardening of the social – can be understood, and how this concept relates to the ways technology is used.

Lecture 4

Ethical considerations and Universal Design of AI

Gloria Kirwan (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland)

Digital technologies can be used to assist individuals and communities in many ways. From a social work perspective, it can be argued that there is a moral imperative for social workers to optimize the application of technology in their work to advance agendas of empowerment and social participation of service users. At the same time, technology use is not a neutral or value-free activity and it is important that social workers can distinguish between ethical and unethical use of technology in their work. This presentation will explore these issues with particular reference to the use of AI.

Lecture 5

AI and digital social work at the crossroads: How to deal with digital vulnerability?

Antonio López Peláez (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia)

Covid-19 has led to an acceleration of the digitalization process in which social services and public administrations were already immersed. In many cases, users of social services have to process their applications through electronic administration. In this context, we will delve into an emerging risk, digital vulnerability, which goes beyond digital gaps in access and use. Artificial intelligence may represent a new factor of intensification of digital vulnerability, if it is used, for example, for a biased management of user triage. Or if artificial intelligence is used to produce diagnoses that reproduce discriminatory biases. To address this risk, we will analyze some strategies for designing digitized social services based on artificial intelligence, from a perspective based on citizen participation, co-design and human rights.

Workshops

Tuesday, June 3rd 2025

Workshop 1

Social Influencers:

The Power of Interdisciplinary Action Against Online Hate

Katja Girschik, Pius von Däniken (ZHAW)

How can the rise of online hate be addressed constructively? What are the possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration between social work and natural language processing? The workshop will first address the challenges of hate speech for social work and computer science. Proven methods for countering hate speech will be presented and discussed, taking into account the empirical results of the ongoing project "Social Influencer:in". It will then explore the opportunities and challenges for collaboration between the two disciplines to ensure civilised online discussions.

Workshop 2

Starting from Scratch: A Collaborative Journey to AI-Driven Reports

Jonathan Heimlicher (Quellenhof-Stiftung), Jana Fischer (Soziale Dienste Stadt Zürich)

How do you tackle a complex challenge in just two days? In this session, we'll take you back to the starting point of an interdisciplinary journey that began at the "Hack4SocialGood" Hackathon in 2024. The challenge: develop an AI-driven automated reporting tool for social work contexts. You'll step into our shoes and create your own approach to this challenge, followed by insights from our experience. We'll share how this initial concept grew into an

ongoing project, co-created with industry partners, and explore its current state and future potential.

Workshop 3

Affective Computing in Narration

Valentina Franzoni (University of Perugia)

Affective computing bridges technology and neurology, offering transformative tools for well-being. This workshop introduces applications to narrations, e.g., in the field of narrative medicine, as an artistic medium in art therapy, emphasizing interactive methods. Participants will understand what is an emotion and how it can be measured in computer science, and engage in a dynamic process where narrations inspire AI-generated processes, fostering creativity and self-reflection.

Workshop 4

From Problem to Impact: Crafting Social Business Plans with AI

Peter Zängli (FHNW)

How can AI support the development of impactful social business models? This session offers a hands-on workshop report on the Social-Impact-Modell, an evolving approach that integrates AI into social business planning. I will share insights from the development process, showcase first applications, and discuss opportunities and challenges.

Workshop 5

Feasibility study AI chatbot for youth work

Olivier Steiner (FHNW), Endrit Sadiku (Jugendarbeit Basel), Pascal Heid (FHNW), Khodor Kandouli (FHNW)

This workshop explores the potential of AI chatbots in youth work, focusing on an open-source Q&A system for JuAr Basel. Participants will learn about the technical, ethical, and economic requirements for implementing such a system in youth work. The session will present the findings of a feasibility study and discuss how to design and operate a sustainable AI chatbot solution.

judgment and contextual understanding must remain central. Predictive analytics should not replace human expertise but rather enhance it by offering data-driven perspectives that inform – rather than dictate – decisions. Maintaining this balance is essential to upholding both the effectiveness and ethical integrity of social work practice.

Workshop 6

Predictive Prognostics and Decision Making in Social Work Practice Christina Plafky (BFH)

In recent years, AI-driven predictive analytics has gained increasing attention in social work decision-making (e.g., Ahn et al., 2021; Gillingham, 2019; Hong, 2018; Elgin, 2018; Plafky et al., 2021, 2024a, 2024b). The integration of algorithmic insights with professional expertise presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly concerning bias, data quality, privacy, and transparency. Ensuring that social workers possess the necessary knowledge of machine learning technologies is crucial for the responsible and ethical use of predictive tools. As AI-technology becomes more embedded in practice, professional

Workshops

Wednesday, June 4th 2025

Workshop 7

How AI Amplifies Social Inequality and What Can Be Done About It

Rachel Huber (University of Bern)

The critical examination of machine learning systems and their societal impacts is of utmost relevance in today's world. As AI technologies increasingly permeate all areas of our lives – from healthcare and law enforcement to financial services and social media – their potential to reinforce existing social inequalities or even create new ones is also growing. The ability to understand these systems, critically question their effects on already marginalized societal groups, and develop solutions for a more equitable design is crucial for an ethically responsible and socially just technological future. This workshop provides essential foundational knowledge on ethical and trustworthy machine learning systems.

Workshop 8

Gender Bias

Valentina Franzoni (University of Perugia)

Gender bias in Artificial Intelligence poses significant challenges as AI systems increasingly influence decisions in areas such as healthcare, education, and justice. This workshop examines how bias arises in AI design, implementation, and datasets, and its impact on equitable decision-making. Participants will explore key issues related to gender bias and solutions for integrating gender balance principles into education, datasets, and scientific research.

Workshop 9

Create your own AI

Samuel Fricker, Stefan Hackstein (FHNW)

Participants will learn how to develop and apply appropriate prompting techniques and design, test, and release a CustomGPT chatbot. After an introduction and exercises, the participants will work in groups to conceptualise and program a chatbot for social work. The resulting chatbots will be presented on Friday.

Student Assessment

Students are assessed for their critical reflection skills and their ability to assimilate and reflect on specific aspects of the knowledge acquired during the Summer School.

Assessment is based on a group poster that elaborates on the selected content of one of the workshops and the various lectures. Posters are presented on the final day of the workshop.

Assessment Criteria for Posters

Formal

Structure, clarity, use of visual elements in relation to text, aesthetic appeal.

Content

Quantity and quality of the above aspects. Quality refers to the logical, concise, and consolidated design of information, that is, argumentation.

Reflection

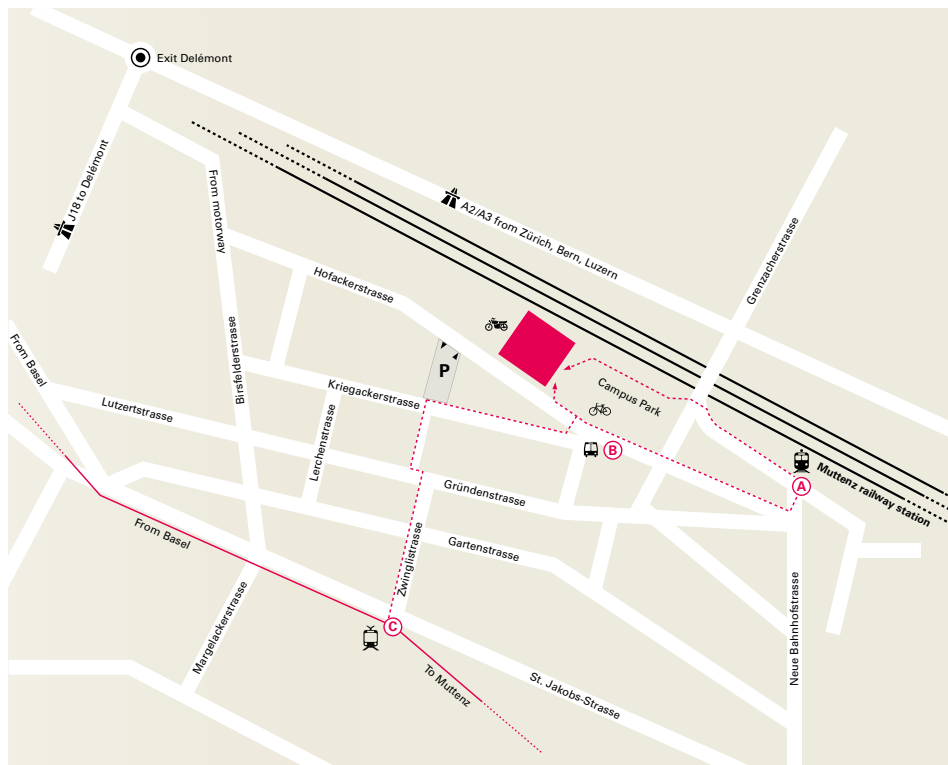
Succinct presentation of the topics and issues discussed in the workshops and lectures.

Grades

Pass/fail

Maps and Directions

FHNW Campus MuttENZ



A From MuttENZ railway station

A six-minute walk via Hofackerstrasse or Grenzacherstrasse and through the campus park

B Bus 47 (from Bottmingen) or 63 (from Dornach) to the "Fachhochschule" stop, then a two-minute walk

C From the "Zum Park" tram stop in MuttENZ Tram 14 from Basel and Pratteln, then a 10-minute walk via Zwinglistrasse and Kriegackerstrasse

Arrival by car

Hagnau junction, A18 towards Delémont then MuttENZ-Nord exit

Walking route from train/tram -----

FHNW University of Applied Sciences and Arts
Northwestern Switzerland
School of Social Work
Centre for Social Work Studies
Scientific Support Centre: International Office

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June 2nd – June 6th, 2025

FHNW Campus Muttenz

– BA Social Work

– MA Social Work with a special emphasis on Social Innovation

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