SPAN 3373: Convivencia, Spring 2025. Student answers to survey (given this week)

Por favor, contesta las preguntas siguientes en inglés o en español:

English version:
This semester, you've had access to a variety of AI tools (like ChatGPT 4 for brainstorming, editing, and writing help) and research aids (like Ellicit, Undermind, and library databases).

- **Which tools did you use** for your **first (shorter) research paper**, and **how did you use them**?

- **What did you find most helpful or surprising** about working with these tools?

- As you begin your **longer final paper**, do you **plan to use any tools differently**? Why or why not?

- Finally, **how has having these tools affected your attitude** toward the research and writing process (e.g., more confident, less anxious, more motivated, etc.)?
  Please be as specific as you can—your answers will help improve future versions of this course.

Versión en español:
Este semestre has tenido acceso a diversas herramientas de inteligencia artificial (como ChatGPT 4 para generar ideas, editar y revisar textos) y recursos de investigación (como Ellicit, Undermind y las bases de datos de la biblioteca).

- **¿Qué herramientas usaste** para tu **primer trabajo de investigación (más corto)** y **cómo las utilizaste**?

- **¿Qué te resultó más útil o sorprendente** al trabajar con estas herramientas?

- Ahora que estás empezando a trabajar en tu **trabajo final más largo**, ¿**planeas usar alguna herramienta de manera diferente**? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no?

- Finalmente, **¿cómo ha influido el tener acceso a estas herramientas en tu actitud** frente al proceso de investigación y redacción (por ejemplo, ¿te sientes con más confianza, menos ansiedad, más motivación, etc.)?
  Por favor, sé lo más específico/a posible; tus respuestas ayudarán a mejorar futuras versiones de este curso.

STUDENT 1:

1. I used it mainly to check my grammar especially because it was in Spanish and I didn't want to get points taken from my grammar.

2. How accurate it got information and how quick it checked my grammar and just gave me options to fix certain sentences to improve them.

3. No, maybe just use more of the tools because I didn't really use it besides the spelling and grammar, but this time I might use it to help me build a better thesis.

4. It has helped me a lot, I felt a bit less stressed and like if I had the extra support for the assignment. I felt like I didn't have to bother my professor every 10 seconds because I had the tools to help me with that instead.

STUDENT 2 (note: this person did an outstanding first research paper)

1. For my first research paper, I used Undermind to help me refine my thesis and find sources. I also used the SMU library database to find sources as well.

2. I found using ChatGPT to read over my paragraphs and fix grammatical mistakes to be most helpful. Additionally, it added accent marks that I missed, which was helpful.

3. I definitely plan to use ChatGPT to read over my paragraphs and edit for grammar again. Because this paper is longer, I might use AI tools to ask for advice on where to expand my writing and what to elaborate on if I am stuck.

4. Having these tools has made me feel much less stressed and overwhelmed at the thought of writing a research paper. Having the tools to rely on makes the process much easier and gives me ideas for insightful topics I would not have thought of on my own. I also feel more motivated to complete the essay and feel that with the tools I can complete it faster, which, in turn, makes the process less daunting to start.

STUDENT 3 (also did an excellent first research paper)

Which tools did you use for your **first (shorter) research paper**, and **how did you use them?** For my first research paper I used Undermind, Perplexity, and ChatGPT. I used Undermind to help concentrate my thesis on one thing and help find sources. I used ChatGPT to help me find reasons and give me suggestions for editing and revising. I used Perplexity as an editor and reviser too.

What did you find most helpful or surprising about working with these tools?

I was so surprised at how Undermind could take one broad idea and turn it into something super specific. I also found its help with finding resources super helpful. I also was surprised that Perplexity is better at editing and revising than ChatGPT. Also, it's better at offering suggestions for expanding analysis.

As you begin your **longer final paper**, do you **plan to use any tools differently**? Why or why not?

I think I'll use them the same. I was happy with the final state of my research essay. Maybe I'll use Perplexity more, though.

Finally, **how has having these tools affected your attitude** toward the research and writing process (e.g., more confident, less anxious, more motivated, etc.)?
I definitely feel more confident. The thesis is normally very hard for me to come up with, so it's nice having a tool like Undermind to help point me in the right direction. It makes me feel more organized, which in turn makes it so much easier to finish the paper. Normally, in a paper longer than four pages, I find it difficult to write without repeating. However, with the tools that I was introduced to in this course, I find it a lot simpler and faster.

STUDENT 4:

1. I used ChatGPT to help me find a research topic and to edit my grammar and vocabulary.

2. I found that it was very easy to use and how I was able to get feedback.

3. I plan to use this earlier and use it as an outline for my essay.

4. it makes the writing process less stressful or dreadful.

STUDENT 5:

For the first paper, I used ChatGPT, Elicit, and Undermind. I used Elicit and Undermind to find sources, while I used ChatGPT to narrow down my topic and perfect my writing abilities before turning in my paper. I think that before I didn't really know how to use AI to help me in my studies in fear of it being considered cheating. I think this class helped me have less fear and understand that AI can only help you with what you ask it to help with. I think that with this paper I will be using Elicit and Undermind less, however, I still think AI is a very valuable tool especially in the brainstorming phase of writing. It is very helpful to bounce ideas off of and get immediate feedback. Also, it is great for editing. My Spanish writing skills are not as advanced as my English ones (for obvious reasons) but using ChatGPT to elevate my language without changing content was extremely valuable in my first paper. I will definitely be using it again for the next paper. I think using AI made the whole assignment less stressful because I felt like there were guides to help me. Even if I was confused on a certain theme I could use AI to answer any questions and get me back on track.

STUDENT 6:

I used ChatGPT for my first paper, mainly to help me find evidence because I had trouble finding good, reputable sources on the topic I was covering. I also used it to help me come up with new ways to approach an argument I wanted to make. I found it helpful to ask ChatGPT to help with an outline based on information I gave it (ex: topics 1-3, thesis). I usually struggle with a good conclusion and opener before the thesis, and ChatGPT helped get me past that usual writing block. It also helped me modify my transitions between body paragraphs to be a little more clean. I plan on doing something similar for this next paper, though I doubt I'll use it to help me find sources as the ones it produced weren't always reliable. These tools have helped me be a little more confident in my writing, especially on topics I'm not an expert on. I like to run my papers through with the rubric attached and see where I can improve before submitting. This helps me better understand where I tend to go wrong in my writing and what my weakest points are. Not only does it identify my problem areas, but it also helps me rectify them and get out of certain ruts.

STUDENT 7:

I think I am more confident using AI, I use Chat GPT frequently to proofread emails in my personal life but was unaware that we were allowed to use Chat GPT to proofread papers according to the honor code - just because sometimes Chat GPT will give suggestions on how to improve clarity, wording, etc., but this definitely makes me less hesitant to use it for research assignments.

In the first research paper I remember I found a few of my sources using Undermind then the rest from Chat GPT, I don't remember my prompt exactly, but I told it my thesis and asked it to look up any academic sources that might be relevant in my paper. Another thing I sometimes do before turning in a paper is I copy and paste the rubric and have Chat give my paper a grade based on it. Then after I had completed my paper, I let Chat proofread it and I told it to make any edits in bold so I can go back to review them.

I don't think I will be using anything differently.

STUDENT 8:

English version:

For my first paper, I used ChatGPT 4 to help me understand texts better. Although I am fluent in Spanish, there are some words that I do not know, and AI helped me develop a better understanding. I also used the SMU library database to gather ideas and research resources for my paper.

These tools were very helpful in understanding or simplifying texts to be better understood.

I plan to keep the same techniques in this research essay since I found them very useful.

These tools allowed me to feel more comfortable with what I was writing. Sometimes, when I am having writer's block, these tools help me brainstorm ideas for what I want my essay to look like.

Spanish Version:

Para mi primer trabajo, utilicé ChatGPT 4 para ayudarme a comprender mejor los textos. Aunque hablo español con fluidez, hay algunas palabras que no conozco, y AI me ayudó a desarrollar una mejor comprensión. También utilicé la base de datos de la biblioteca de SMU para obtener ideas y recursos de información para mi trabajo.

Estas herramientas fueron muy útiles para comprender o simplificar los textos para que se entendieran mejor.

Pienso mantener las mismas técnicas en este ensayo de investigación ya que me resultaron muy útiles.

Estas herramientas me permitieron sentirme más cómoda con lo que estaba escribiendo. A veces, cuando tengo un bloqueo de escritor, estas herramientas me ayudan a pensar en ideas sobre cómo quiero que sea mi ensayo.

STUDENT 9:

For the shorter paper, I used some AI - predominantly Claude. I used it to help me reword specific points that I could get across in Spanish, just not to the same extent as my English. I find AI pretty bad when it comes to finding specific information so I rarely use it to research. Claude also has no access to the internet so what I did was give it a portion of my writing that I wanted to improve and attach the PDFs of my sources so it could make sure that it would only change things based on the information i provided from the PDFs.

As I begin the longer paper, I have already changed my approach and started using AI as a way to research. Elicit and Undermind are both incredibly easy to use and almost make the library database too much work for what it's worth. I am now confident in my ability to write a full paper based on sources that were sourced from AI research engines.

Having these tools has definitely increased the quality of my work but also my ability to create quality work. I feel like I am not doing enough now if I don't at least consult AI when it comes to theme or brainstorming or trying to improve clarity. AI has definitely helped me to understand what a really good thesis and paper should look like after the research and writing process.

STUDENT 10:

Which tools did you use for your first (shorter) research paper, and how did you use them?

For my first (shorter) research paper, I used ChatGPT 4 and Undermind. I used ChatGPT 4 to help me choose a topic that truly interested me, I asked it to give me questions for each topic that we were allowed to write about. I chose the topic I was able to answer the questions more accurately and able to write more about. I used Undermind to help me develop an accurate research question, which led to a better thesis, and ultimately better and relevant articles that align with the topic.

What did you find most helpful or surprising about working with these tools?

I believe the most surprising thing about these apps is that they have assisted me with figuring out what I really wanted to write about. I was able to find useful articles to support my claims. The overall accuracy surprised me, since we were told we could not use these apps because it could lead to plagiarism, which would lead to academic problems. I believe it is really cool that we were able to utilize these tools in our work.

As you begin your longer final paper, do you plan to use any tools differently? Why or why not?

For my longer final paper, I do plan to use the tools I used before for this paper. However, I would use Undermind differently, instead of using it as an article finder I would maybe like to use it to answer questions and make sure that I'm making sense. I think I would like to focus more on the SMU library database for my articles as evidence. I believe I will be more successful finding an article more concentrated.

Finally, how has having these tools affected your attitude toward the research and writing process (e.g., more confident, less anxious, more motivated, etc.)?

Please be as specific as you can—your answers will help improve future versions of this course.

I believe that having these tools has changed my attitude toward the research and writing process because, while it can get complicated using these tools it can also be quite easy and can facilitate the writing process. Has its pros and cons.

STUDENT 11:

For my first research paper, I used ChatGPT4 to edit my essay grammatically and Undermind to help me focus my research and develop a thesis.

I found Undermind to be extremely helpful, it felt like I was having a conversation with an expert on the topic that I could bounce ideas from. Additionally, chat GPT really helped me with editing and gave me feedback on how I was structuring my essay.

As I begin my final paper, I plan on exploring Undermind for my research and finding other ways in which I can maximize ChatGPT for editing my essay other than just focusing on grammatical errors; I would be interested in using it for conciseness and flow.

Having access to these tools has helped me feel more confident and motivated in the writing process. I think it also makes it easier knowing you have a tool at the tip of your fingers that is easier to access than having to schedule appointments to physically meet with someone for help.

STUDENT 12:

I have found the implementation of AI into this coursework incredibly helpful. For the shorter essay, I used both Ellicit and Undermind to help me find sources and narrow them down. It was particularly useful when I needed a source to back up a specific point. Once I had developed a rough draft of my paper, I used Chat GPT 4 to help me better transition between paragraphs and find more efficient ways to write certain phrases in Spanish. I found it incredibly surprising how Undermind helped me develop a stronger and more specific thesis. I also found it helpful that after I developed this thesis, Ellicit gave me a better idea of how to move through the paper and use sources for this. As I begin my longer paper, I plan to use both Ellicit and Undermind to start the rough draft of my paper like last time, as I feel my process was very efficient and helped me learn. These tools have strongly improved my attitude towards the research and writing process. I have never been the greatest researcher or writer. I have always had fear or nervousness about the process of STARTING my paper. I feel like I do not know where to begin sometimes. These tools are immensely helpful in this process. Rather than being scared, I am excited to dive in and start writing my paper.

STUDENT 13:

Creo que utilicé ChatGPT en el primer trabajo de investigación para que me pudiera explicar o simplificar algunas cosas que no entendía. Me ayudó a formular ideas o mejor me ayudó a descifrarlo.

Con ChatGPT pues es algo eficiente ya que busca lo que necesito inmediatamente sin tener que abrir varias tablas al mismo tiempo.

Probablemente usaré ChatGPT para que exponga unas variedades de perspectivas del argumento que tengo. En esta escritura me gustaría no solamente hablar de mi perspectiva pero también la perspectiva del argumento opuesto al mío.

Con ChatGPT yo puedo depender en él debido a que algunas veces no entiendo alguna frase así que hago que él sitio web me lo explique. Esto me asegura que no me falte ningún detalle.

STUDENT 14:

1. The tools that I utilized for my first short essay were Undermind by using this to better strengthen my argument, find articles that support my argument, and further amplify my vision while also using ChatGPT to clean up any inconsistencies in my paper or any grammar issues.

2. What surprised me the most about working with these tools is how well it can clean up my work and can describe how the sources relate to my argument and in what regard it can support my essay.

3. I do not plan to use the tools differently because the uses it has will help me to polish my paper, strengthen my argument, and has helped me find credible sources, so there will be no use to use them in a different matter.

4. Having these tools have affected my attitude toward the research and writing process by making me more confident and relaxed as I do not need to always seek perfection and have some liberty to make a few mistakes, and I have room for more creativity.

STUDENT 15:

I used ChatGPT for the first paper by helping with translations and to find sources.

I think the translating was super helpful because even though I think I speak Spanish pretty good, my grammar is not "proper" so it helped me find synonyms and make my paper sound more academic.

I think in the last paper I will use more for the sources again. ChatGPT doesn't find the sources but I asked it what type of sources would help strengthen my argument and it gave me a few ideas on what to look up.

At first writing an entire academic essay in Spanish was a bit intimidating because I tend to write how I speak and in Spanish it's more casual so I was worried it would sound unprofessional but the AI has helped a lot. I will say sometimes it doesn't fully understand what I mean in my dialect and it might come up with material that doesn't fit into my paper so I have to do it myself, I think this has also helped with my "proper" Spanish vocabulary.

STUDENT 16:

Use ChatGPT para que me ayudara a que mi texto tuviera mejor orden o hiciera más sentido

La verdad sí ayudó pero a la vez cambió unas frases que no quería porque eran quotes de mis resources y no me di cuenta hasta que se entregó

Probablemente pero tendré que ser más cuidadosa en que no cambie lo que quiero decir, probablemente solo que ponga mis oraciones en orden

No hay mucha diferencia porque trato de no ser dependiente de ello pero de cierta forma puedo estar un poco tranquila de tener una forma de darme más ideas de cómo puedo escribir mejor ciertas cosas

STUDENT 17:

For my first (shorter) research paper, I mainly used ChatGPT 4 and the library databases. I used ChatGPT to help brainstorm topic ideas, outline the structure, and clarify how to frame my thesis. Once I had a draft, I used it to review clarity and grammar. The library databases were especially helpful for finding scholarly articles that supported my argument.

What surprised me the most was how helpful ChatGPT was in clarifying complex ideas. I was also surprised at how easily I could test out different ways of organizing my argument by just talking through it with the AI. It helped me get unstuck when I wasn't sure how to move forward.

As I begin my longer final paper, I plan to use these tools more intentionally. For example, I want to use Ellicit to help find relevant papers and synthesize information faster, and I'll rely more on ChatGPT for refining my argument and checking for logical flow. I also plan to experiment with Undermind for identifying potential counterarguments.

Overall, having access to these tools has made me feel more confident and less anxious about the writing process. I feel like I have a reliable support system that helps me clarify my thinking and produce better writing. It's made research feel more approachable and even kind of enjoyable.

STUDENT 18:

I did not complete my research paper, but I was using AI, ChatGPT, as well as the search engine through SMU Libraries' database. ChatGPT is not able to write the paper for you — you have to first create the draft, and then it can polish your writing or make it more academic, etc.

For the second paper, I plan to be more intellectually honest, have my own thoughts, write a full draft myself, and then at the very end ask AI tools if there's anything they think can be better.

AI makes things less daunting because you know it's there to help you, and it can help you get started and give you some ideas — but really, it is on you to do the work to create a good product.

STUDENT 19:

1. I used Elicit for the first paper and ChatGPT 4. Elicit helped me find sources relevant to the topic and chat helped me structure my paper and develop it. I think I should have used chat to grammar check my paper.

2. I think Elicit / Undermind feature was very cool because it gave you very good sources and stuff that actually related to your topic. Before finding these tools, it would take a while to find reputable sources to use for papers.

3. As I start my longer paper, I plan to use chat for refining my work more than I did in the first paper. In the first paper, I was rushed so I did not get a chance to revise my paper for grammar. I think Chat will be a helpful tool, catching mistakes I read over. I also plan to use Undermind / Elicit to find outside sources for my longer paper.

4. I think having these tools made me more relaxed for the writing process. It can definitely help speed up the research process; however, it almost produces a better outcome in the research process. It is very useful for brainstorming. I think I will use it to jump start the project / build off of my current ideas for the paper. I think it is useful in the research process because it just speeds up the whole process while producing better results.