

Prompt Bank

Getting Started with Claude Projects for Course Work

Mills College at Northeastern University · CATLR AI Fellowship 2025–2026 · Tomás Galguera

These prompts are starting points, not scripts. Replace bracketed placeholders with your own course details. The most effective prompts are specific: the more context you give, the more useful the response. All prompts assume you are working within a Claude Project that already holds your course documents.

1. Setting Up Your Project

Use these prompts at the start of a new project to get your custom instructions in shape before you begin course work.

Convert prose instructions to Markdown

Paste your draft instructions after the prompt

Here are my draft custom instructions for this Claude Project. Please reformat them using Markdown so they are easier for you to parse: use ## headers for major sections, bullet points for lists, and bold text for anything I want you to treat as a non-negotiable constraint.

[Paste your draft instructions here]

Generate custom instructions from scratch

Answer Claude's follow-up questions

I am setting up a Claude Project for a course I teach. Please help me write a set of custom instructions.

Here is some basic information:

- Course: [course name and number]
- Level: [undergraduate / graduate]
- Students: [number and brief profile]
- Program: [degree program or credential]
- Key pedagogical values: [e.g., less-is-more, student voice, inquiry-based]
- Anything Claude should never do in this project: [e.g., write assessment text for individual students]

Ask me any clarifying questions before drafting.

Audit existing instructions

Use after a few conversations to refine

Here are the custom instructions currently set for this project. Based on our conversations so far, what is missing, ambiguous, or contradictory? What would you add or revise to make your responses more useful for my course work?

2. Syllabus and Course Design

Revise an existing syllabus

Upload both syllabi as project files first

I have uploaded two syllabi: the original [year] version and notes on my current constraints and goals.

Please compare them and help me revise the syllabus for the current semester. Specifically:

- Preserve: [what you want to keep]
- Rebuild: [what needs to change and why]
- Flag any tensions between my stated goals and the proposed changes before making them.

Design a session plan

Works best after syllabus is in project files

Please help me design a plan for Session [number].

Context:

- Central outcome I want students to leave with: [outcome]
- Available time: [e.g., 3 hours, with a break]
- Competing pressures this week: [e.g., major assignment due, mid-semester fatigue]
- Activities I am considering: [list]

Apply the less-is-more principle. Prioritize one central outcome over coverage. Include time markers and a note on how to handle the debrief.

Troubleshoot an overloaded agenda

Here is my draft agenda for [session name/number]:

[Paste agenda]

This feels overloaded. Help me identify what is essential and what can be cut, deferred to the handout, or folded into another activity. Flag anything that resembles a problem we have documented in previous sessions.

Generate a course introduction page for Canvas

Output pastes into Canvas HTML editor

Please write a course introduction page for Canvas for [course name and number].

Include:

- A brief welcome paragraph in my voice (direct, warm, no jargon)
- What students can expect from the course
- 3 to 4 key things I want them to know before the first session
- How to reach me

Format the output as clean HTML suitable for pasting into Canvas's HTML editor. Use simple heading and paragraph tags only; no inline styles.

Generate a reading guide for Canvas

Please write a reading guide for Canvas for the following reading(s):

[Title(s) and author(s)]

The guide should help students read actively rather than passively. Include:

- 2 to 3 orienting questions to consider before reading
- 4 to 6 guiding questions for while they read
- 1 synthesis question to bring to class

Format as clean HTML for Canvas. Students are [brief profile].

3. Assignments and Assessment

Draft a rubric

Upload assignment sheet as project file first

Please draft a rubric for [assignment name].

The assignment sheet is in the project files.

Assessment criteria I care most about:

- [criterion 1]
- [criterion 2]
- [criterion 3]

Use [number] performance levels. Align the descriptors to the course goals already in this project. Flag any criteria that seem to conflict with each other.

Generate discussion prompts

Please generate discussion prompts for [session topic].

Relevant readings: [titles]

Learning outcome I am targeting: [outcome]

Student level: [e.g., first-year graduate students]

I want:

- 1 opening prompt that is accessible to everyone
- 2 to 3 substantive prompts that push toward the outcome
- 1 synthesis prompt to close

Build in scaffolding for students who find the readings difficult. Avoid yes/no questions.

Write whole-group feedback

Use after reviewing student submissions

I have reviewed [number] student submissions for [assignment name]. Here are the patterns I noticed:

[Your notes on what you observed]

Please help me write whole-group written feedback that:

- Names the patterns without singling anyone out
- Acknowledges what is working
- Gives specific, actionable guidance for the next draft
- Is no longer than [word count] words

Tone: direct and supportive, not evaluative.

4. Chatbot Personas and Practice Tools

These prompts help you design AI-powered practice partners for skill-based learning. The resulting persona instructions can be saved in your project and shared with students as a separate Claude conversation.

Design a practice persona

Describe the scenario, not the character

I want to design a practice chatbot for my students to use for [skill, e.g., post-observation feedback conversations].

The persona should represent: [describe the character role, e.g., a teacher who received critical feedback and is defensive but not hostile]

Design it with three modes:

1. Warm-up: student asks background questions
2. Role-play: live conversation practice
3. Debrief: persona steps out and discusses what happened

Express emotional states through dialogue and word choice only. No parenthetical stage directions. Students may use voice mode, so everything must work when read aloud.

Refine a persona after classroom use

Use after students have tested it

Students used the [persona name] chatbot and we ran into this problem:

[Describe what went wrong]

Please help me diagnose why this happened and revise the persona instructions to address it. Keep everything else the same.

Design a peer-vs-AI comparison activity

I want students to practice the same scenario twice: once with a peer and once with the AI persona, then compare the two experiences.

Scenario: [describe the scenario]

Learning outcome: [what you want students to notice]

Please draft:

1. A brief framing for students (introduce it as a research question, not a competition)
2. A reflection prompt for after both practice rounds
3. 2 to 3 debrief questions for whole-group discussion

5. Mid-Semester Reflection and Course Adjustment

Identify where the course may be underserving students

Works best with student response data uploaded

Here are patterns I have noticed at mid-semester:

[Your observations: attendance, participation, assignment quality, student comments, anything relevant]

Based on what you know about this course from the project files, and on these patterns, where do you think the course may be underserving students? What adjustments would you suggest, and what would you leave alone?

Check a new plan against prior decisions

Requires prior session notes or synthesis doc in project

I am considering making the following change mid-semester:

[Describe the change]

Before I do, check this against what we have documented in this project about previous decisions and their rationale. Does this change contradict anything? Does it repeat a pattern we already tried and revised? What am I not seeing?

Write a post-course synthesis note

Do this at the end of semester; upload as a project file next time

The semester is ending. Please help me write a brief synthesis note documenting what I learned from teaching [course name] this semester.

Include:

- What worked and why (be specific)
- What I would change and why
- The single biggest mid-course adjustment I made
- What I want to remember before teaching this course again

This note will be uploaded as a project file the next time I teach the course. Write it so it is useful to future me, not to an outside audience.

6. Scholarship and Professional Work

These prompts extend the project approach to writing and scholarly tasks. They work best when the project already holds relevant course documents and theoretical frameworks.

Clarify what your work actually is

Use when a draft framing feels off

Here is how I have been describing this work:

[Your current framing]

Something feels off about this framing, but I cannot name it precisely. Read what we have documented in this project and push back: what is the more accurate description of what I am actually doing? What distinction am I collapsing that I should be making?

Draft a conference proposal

Specify word limits per section

Please help me draft a proposal for [conference name].

What I want to present: [brief description]

Audience: [who attends this conference]

Word limit: [total or per section]

Sections required: [list them]

Draw on what you know about this work from the project files. Frame it for the conference audience, not for me. After each section, note what you were uncertain about or where you made a framing choice I may want to revisit.

**Identify patterns
across student work**

*Anonymize submissions
before uploading*

I have uploaded [number] anonymized student submissions
for [assignment name].

Please analyze them and tell me:

- What patterns appear across submissions (themes,
approaches, gaps)
- Which framework concepts from the course appear to be
landing, and which are not
- What whole-group instructional move, if any, would most
improve the next draft

Do not evaluate individual students. Describe patterns only.

A note on iterating: the first response is rarely the final one. If a prompt produces something that is not quite right, say what is off and ask Claude to revise. The conversation is the work.