

Special Topics: Machine Learning in Astronomy

I. Course Information

AST 7939

Semester 2023 Spring

Meeting Day/Time: M 1:00 – 2:20 pm, W 1:40 – 3:00 pm

Location: BRT 0003

Instructor

Prof. Jaehan Bae

Email: jbae@ufl.edu

Office location: BRT 316

Office hours: Monday 3 – 5 pm

Office hours location: BRT 316. Alternatively, we can meet remotely on zoom. If you choose the remote option, send the instructor a canvas message before Monday 3 pm to set up a meeting.

The preferred method for contacting the instructor outside of class and office hours is via the canvas messaging system.

Course Description

Modern science is increasingly enabled by efficient, careful, and detailed analysis of big data. This course will aim to (i) introduce students to AI/ML analysis techniques, and (ii) apply those techniques to real world datasets via coding-based assignments and term project. The course would be Python-based and would make use of common Python packages including Scikit-learn, TensorFlow, Keras, and/or PyTorch. Many of these packages can be run with and without GPU support, allowing students to explore the importance (and limitations/complications) of GPU computing.

The first half of the course will include lectures on a topic (see weekly course schedule below), followed by hands-on sessions during which time students are given a (partly completed) Jupyter notebook and data to apply the techniques covered during the lectures. The second half of the course will include paper presentation and term project presentation.

Course Materials

The course will be taught based on course notes and some combination of the following books:

- *Introduction to Machine Learning with Python*, O'Reilly Media, Müller & Guido, ISBN: 9781449369415
 - This will be the main textbook of the course.

- It provides an in-depth introduction to Machine Learning with Python including heavy use of Scikit-learn, but with a more general (i.e. less physical) focus.
- Accompanied with a [series of Jupyter notebooks](#) which give good examples that are significantly broader in nature than those provided with the *Python Data Science Handbook* (see below).
- The full text of this book is available to read online at UF libraries.
- *Statistics, Data Mining & Machine Learning in Astronomy*, Princeton University Press, Ivezić, Connolly, VanderPlas, & Gray, ISBN: 9780691198309
 - Part of the book (and lots of useful resources) is available online at <http://www.astroml.org/>
 - This book can be very useful in that it provides a lot of examples about how wide range of techniques can be applied to astrophysical survey (i.e. very large datasets).
 - The full text of this book is available to read online at UF libraries.
- *Python Data Science Handbook*, O'Reilly Media, VanderPlas, ISBN: 9781491912058
 - If you are not familiar with Python this book offers a great place to start.
 - The full text of this book is freely available online at <https://jakevdp.github.io/PythonDataScienceHandbook/>
- *Machine Learning Techniques for Physics and Astronomy*, Princeton University Press, Acquaviva
 - This book offers probably the most relevant examples to this course as the author is an Astrophysicist. However, this book is under development at the time this course is offered and is not available for purchase. Some astrophysical examples from this book will be introduced during the course.

Statement on Materials and Supplies Fees

N/A

II. Schedule & Coursework

Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Note
Week 1	Introduction to machine learning	
Week 2	Supervised learning for classification: k-nearest neighbors and decision trees	MLK day
Week 3	Evaluation metrics, cross validation, parameter optimization, imbalanced data	
Week 4	Supervised learning for classification: support vector machines	
Week 5	Regression methods	
Week 6	Ensemble methods for classification and regression	
Week 7	Unsupervised learning: clustering and dimensionality reduction	
Week 8	Deep learning	
Week 9	Deep learning	midterm
Week 10	No classes	spring break
Week 11	Term project proposal presentations	
Week 12	Paper presentations	
Week 13	Paper presentations	
Week 14	Guest lectures*	
Week 15	Term project presentations	
Week 16	Term project presentations**	

* This is due to a conference the instructor needs to attend.

** Depending on the final enrollment we may need to meet on Apr. 28 (reading day) or one of the days during the final week.

List of Graded Work

Work	Description	Points
Homework Assignments	Homework assignments consist of comprehension questions and coding problems. Homework assignments will ask students to apply the concepts and techniques from the lecture and readings, with a goal of assessing student comprehension. Homework assignment sets will be graded for accuracy. All homework assignments must be submitted through the canvas website.	50
Exam	There will be one exam (midterm) during the course. The exam will be a written exam, and will be closed book and closed notes. The test is designed to assess student comprehension of the concepts covered in the course, and will feature topics from lecture and homework assignments. The exam will be graded for accuracy.	20
Paper Presentation	There will be one paper presentation. Students choose a published paper which applies machine learning techniques to astronomical data.	10
Term Project & Presentation	The term project will be used for students to apply the concepts and techniques from the course to real world astronomical datasets in a more in-depth fashion. Students are welcome to apply machine learning techniques to their own research projects, and are encouraged to consult with the instructor on the topic of their term project. The term project will consist of proposal presentation, submitted code, a write-up, and an oral presentation to the class. The term project will be graded based on the accuracy and efficiency of the submitted code, the submitted written project description, and the final oral presentation.	20

The course canvas site will make clear all assignment dates and deadlines. Any questions about deadlines should be directed to the instructor.

III. Grading

Statement on Attendance and Participation

Attendance and Participation:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

- Attendance itself is not a graded component of this class. Nevertheless, critical information will be disseminated through our class meetings. Thus, students are expected to either attend class, or otherwise obtain the material discussed during class.
- All assignments are due at 5 p.m. on the assigned due date unless noted otherwise. Students must submit completed assignments via canvas in the format specified in the assignment. Late assignments will generally not be accepted unless a documented reason is provided that qualifies under UF’s approved/excused absences.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	90 – 100%		C	70 – 73.99%
A-	87 – 89.99%		C-	67 – 69.99%
B+	84 – 86.99%		D+	64 – 66.99%
B	80 – 83.99%		D	60 – 63.99%
B-	77 – 79.99%		D-	57 – 59.99%
C+	74 – 76.99%		F	<56.99

IV. Using HiPerGator Resources

Students may use HiPerGator resources for homework and term projects. Students that need to access HiPerGator for course-related activities should ensure that they are properly registered in their course. Those who already have HiPerGator accounts will be added to the class group; the rest will have a temporary HiPerGator account created for them to use for the class. Students who join the class late should remind their instructor to send Research Computing a request to add them to the class. Note that class accounts will expire (and any associated data deleted) two weeks after the “Classes End” date listed for the semester: [UF Catalog: Dates & Deadlines](#).

V. Required Policies

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Privacy Considerations for Remote/Recorded Lectures

Should there be circumstances remote/recorded lectures are given, the following policy will be applied.

When course meetings are being recorded, students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared.

As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited. Specifically, you may not video record, audio record, screen shot, or otherwise record any course meetings. Nor may you share any recorded material from class (legitimate course recordings, or otherwise). Uniform adherence to this policy is critical to ensuring a safe and academically engaging environment. Violations of this policy will be immediately escalated to the Dean of Student Affairs' office.