AI-Mediated Life Biography Learning Lab for Online Senior Learners

A public good initiative, this course was designed and delivered by Yi Lu to support online senior learners in crafting AI-assisted autobiographical narratives. It combines curriculum development and software design, creating a space where participants explore storytelling, memory, and digital tools in a community-centered environment.

Instructors: Yi Lu; Ms. Li
Class Schedule: This course runs for 8 sessions, held weekly on Saturdays.

Instructors' Profiles

Yi Lu: Holds dual master's degrees in Journalism and International Relations from Columbia University. She formerly worked as a CBS Television interview program editor and hosted the show *"Into America,"* interviewing numerous globally influential figures. She has extensive experience in conducting in-depth interviews and writing personal biographies.

Ms. Li: Holds a master's degree in Psychology from South China Normal University and is a National Level-2 Psychological Counselor. She has led a series of in-depth personal interviews and excels at combing through life experiences to identify the shining threads of value. With professional listening and insight, she gently yet precisely accompanies each person, awakening life stories and emotional moments worthy of being recorded.

Course Introduction

This is a warm eight-week journey of companionship. We are not simply teaching; instead, together with our senior learners we open up a treasure chest of life memories. Using cutting-edge AI technology, we string the scattered pearls of memory into a family heirloom that can be passed down through generations. In each class, learners will personally create a tangible "life gift" that they can see and touch. By the end, each participant will complete their own richly illustrated *AI Life Biography*.

Course Highlights

1. **Tangible outcome each session, with a full sense of accomplishment:** In every class, learners take home a beautiful, shareable creation. Learning is no longer an abstract concept, but a concrete creative process.
2. **Dual-instructor deep support, combining expertise and warmth:** Instructor Lu’s background (M.S. in Journalism/International Relations, former CBS interview editor with experience interviewing and writing biographies of world influencers) ensures each learner’s biography has depth and breadth that stand the test of time. Instructor Li, as a psychology professional and caring younger friend, guides learners to open their hearts and unearth the wisdom and emotions deep within their stories.

3. **Original "Story Teahouse" social learning:** We not only teach, we also foster a safe, warm peer community. In our "Story Salon" sessions, listening and sharing are equally treasured. Learners will form new friendships that resonate for a lifetime.
4. **Combining “teaching to fish” with “giving a fish”:** By course end, learners will not only possess a personal biography book, but also have mastered a set of lifelong methods to use AI for recording, organizing, and beautifying their life stories—empowering them to continue writing new chapters of their lives.

Course Outcomes

1. **A priceless life asset:** Gain your own *AI Life Biography* — a personal book (printed copy and e-book) filled with old photos and life wisdom.
2. **A profound life review and reconciliation:** Through systematic reflection, rediscover your origins, choices, and values, and achieve a beautiful reconciliation with your past.
3. **A cutting-edge, practical new skill:** Easily learn to use AI tools for creative writing and life journaling, becoming a "tech-savvy storyteller" among your peers.
4. **A warm, high-quality social circle:** Meet a group of new friends who are experienced, full of stories, and committed to lifelong growth, broadening your horizons.
5. **A ceremony of family legacy:** Create a "spiritual family heirloom" that can be passed down to your family. This is a contribution filled with love and honor, completing an act of legacy for you and your family.

Target Audience

- Seniors who want to systematically reflect on their lives and leave behind a complete record.
- Older adults with rich life stories who struggle to vividly document or write them.
- Young-at-heart elders eager to learn new things and willing to try smart tools to enrich their later years.
- Grandparents who cherish family heritage and hope to leave spiritual wealth to their grandchildren.
- Retirees seeking deep, warm social and learning activities.

Pre-class Preparation

No special preparation or materials are required from learners before the course.

Session 1: First Encounters and Beginnings – Our Online Story Teahouse Opens!

Knowledge Points: *(3 key components)*
1. **Warm Opening (15 minutes):**
- a. The instructor shares some of their own old photos and stories—being genuine is the top priority.
- b. Announce the "Teahouse Rules": encourage unmuting/video participation, but completely voluntary; chat contributions should be friendly. For any tech issues, type "111" in the chat for immediate TA help.

- c. Display the "Course Outcome Roadmap" poster: a single image that shows clearly what we will create together after eight sessions (your own personal e-book).
2. **Interactive Icebreaker: Our Era Memories (20 minutes):**
- a. To avoid hesitation in the first class, do *not* ask learners to fetch their own photos. Instead, the instructor shows a few iconic old photos (e.g. ration coupons, a vintage bicycle, group calisthenics) to spark memories.
- b. Initiate a poll or chat prompt: ask "Which picture could you talk about the most?" and encourage learners to type a keyword in the chat related to that image (e.g. *youth*, *hardship*).
- c. Invite a few learners to unmute and briefly share their thoughts.
3. **"Wow" Moment: AI Time Machine (15 minutes):**
- a. Demonstration: use a phone to scan an old photo and upload it to a chosen AI tool (for example, an app like Doubao).
- b. **Key:** After the AI generates a description, the instructor "adds flavor" live: e.g., *"Here the AI says I look very happy, but what it didn't write is that it was actually my first day as a master..."* — demonstrating human-AI collaboration. AI provides the base, but emotional depth comes from us.

Homework:
- *Required:* In the class group, share an old photo (or a description of one) and include one sentence: “In the photo, I want to say to my past self: _____.”
- *Optional:* Watch the provided how-to video and try scanning a photo yourself.

Session 2: River of Memory – Drawing My Life’s Treasure Map

Knowledge Points:
1. **"Life Timeline" method (30 minutes):**
- a. Share screen to show a prepared life timeline template (horizontal axis = age/years, vertical axis = "happiness level" or "importance").
- b. The instructor, using themselves as an example, marks 5 points on the timeline (e.g. age 18 started university, 25 began working, 30 started a family…) and narrates the story “from … to …” connecting those points.
- c. Distribute an electronic blank timeline template (image file) that learners can save on their phone and annotate.
2. **"Memory Keywords" extraction exercise (20 minutes):**
- a. Learners are *not* asked to draw a complete timeline immediately. Instead, lead a “mental exercise”: “Please close your eyes. When you think of **childhood**, what’s the first place that pops up? What is one smell? One sound?”
- b. Guide everyone to jot down these fragmentary keywords, either in the chat or in their notebooks.

Homework:
- Mark at least 3 **“life treasure points”** on the provided timeline template image, and write one keyword for each point.
- In the class group, share one of those points in a sentence: “One of my treasure points is __ **(event), because at that time I felt** ____.”

Session 3: The Treasure of Voice – Speaking Out Is Success

Knowledge Points: *(3 key components)*
1. **"One-Minute Story" formula (25 minutes):**
- a. Emphasize the formula: *Time + Place + Person + a small event + feeling at that time*. The instructor demonstrates by telling a story of their own (e.g. *"the first time I got my paycheck"*) using this formula.
- b. Interaction: start a quick round-robin game. Prompt, "Begin with 'When I was little…' and type a one-sentence story in the chat." Learners take turns quickly contributing a sentence.
2. **"Safe Space" interview exercise (25 minutes):**
- a. Use breakout rooms (2–3 people per group). *(If breakout groups aren't possible, do the exercise with the whole class.)*
- b. Provide a "Magic Questions List" on screen, for example: "What was the happiest game of your childhood?" "What was the first craft/skill you learned?" (Questions are specific and positive.)
- c. Each group's task: ask one question of each other and just listen to the answer without any judgment or comment. After a few minutes, return to the main meeting room.
3. **Tech Corner (simplified) (10 minutes):**
- a. Do *not* require formal audio recordings. The core demo: show how to use simple tools like the phone's built-in Voice Memos or WeChat voice input to turn speech into text ("dictation").
- b. Emphasize: "If technology is troublesome, writing down a few keywords by hand is just as wonderful!"

Homework:
- Using any method (recording audio, voice-to-text, or handwriting), complete a **one-minute story**. You can use the in-class question list for inspiration.

Session 4: The Feather of Text – Witnessing AI's "Turn Stone into Gold" Magic

Knowledge Points: *(3 key components)*
1. **Warm recap & "raw gemstone" showcase (15 minutes):**
- a. The instructor warmly greets everyone and quickly reviews the previous session's one-minute story homework.
- b. **"Story Blind Box" activity:** With permission from 2–3 learners in advance, the instructor anonymously reads aloud their raw story texts (full of conversational language, pauses, and repeats). After each reading, everyone is asked to describe their feeling in one word via chat (e.g. "authentic," "familiar," "just like I said it"). *This step honors the learners' original memories and sets an emotional foundation.*
2. **Core Magic: Three-Step Alchemy (30 minutes):**
The instructor focuses on one learner's raw story and shares their screen to demonstrate the following steps:
- **Step 1: Organize and tidy.** Input the colloquial text into the AI with the prompt, *"Please organize this informal story into a coherent paragraph."* Show the result, highlighting how the AI removed redundancies and smoothed the logic.
- **Step 2: Enrich and enliven.** Using the cleaned-up text, enter a second prompt: *"Please add some environmental descriptions and details to make the scene more vivid."* Show the new

additions (e.g. descriptions of weather, scenery, clothing).
- **Step 3: Tone and uplift.** Enter a third prompt: *"Please adjust the tone of this text to be warm and nostalgic, like a prose poem."* Show the final polished version.
- **Key teaching point:** *"We don't accept the AI output wholesale; we make choices like a director."* The instructor highlights an AI-generated sentence that *"feels over the top, not quite like me,"* and deletes it. This powerfully reinforces the learners' sense of control and agency in the creation process.

Homework:
- **Core assignment:** Take the draft of your one-minute story and use AI to perform at least one step of the "three-step alchemy" (for example, just do the "organize into coherence" step) — observe how it changes your story.
- **Sharing assignment:** In the class group, share a comparison of an *"original sentence vs. the new sentence"* from your story, and comment: "I feel that this change is **better**/**less like me** because …." *(All reactions are valid — there's no right or wrong.)*

Session 5: Puzzle of Stories – Building the "Bookshelf" for Your Life Book

Knowledge Points & Flow Design:
- *From Points to Line: Connecting your memory pearls (20 minutes):*
- The instructor shows a completed **"life story line"** template (a wavy line traversing several peak symbols representing different eras).
- Using a "model student" example, the instructor marks on the line the "memory anchors" collected in previous sessions (e.g. sent-down youth in the countryside, marriage, child's birth, job transfer).
- Learners are guided to draw their own life line (on paper or a digital document) and mark at least 4 points on it.
- *From Line to Surface: Organizing your life chapters (25 minutes):*
- **"Categorization game":** The instructor proposes several **"life baskets"** for grouping stories, such as **Roots of Growth** (childhood, hometown), **Song of Struggle** (education, career), **Boat of Relationships** (family, friends), **Light of Interests** (hobbies, travel), **Reflections of Time** (insights, aspirations).
- Guide learners to sort their memory points into these baskets. It's okay if one story fits multiple baskets—this exploration helps reveal what's most important in their life.
- *Give it a Name: Titling your life chapters (15 minutes):*
- Provide a "chapter title inspiration library" (shown on a slide):
- **Elegant style examples:** "Rural Imprints," "Symphony of Youth," "Prelude of Home," "Serendipities Among Mountains and Rivers."
- **Plain style examples:** "My Hometown," "Days at the Factory," "The Kids' Mom," "Life After Retirement."
- Encourage each learner to name each of their "baskets" with a title they love, to serve as chapter titles. Emphasize that their own intuition is what matters most.

Homework:
- Submit your **biography outline:** at least 3 chapter titles, each accompanied by one representative old photo (or a description of a photo).

- In the class group, introduce your book in one sentence: "My book is called **"[Nickname] Memoir"**, and the chapter I most want to write well is "**__," because it contains my** ____."

Session 6: Shared Reading and Resonance – The Online Story Teahouse is Open

Knowledge Points: *(3 key components)*
1. **Creating a sense of ceremony (10 minutes):**
- a. The instructor switches to a softer virtual background (e.g. a teahouse or a study room scene).
- b. Play a set piece of gentle, soothing entrance music.
- c. Reiterate the **"Teahouse Pact"**: listen with heart, respond with love. We share **feelings**, not judge right or wrong.
2. **Structured Sharing (40 minutes):**
- a. **"Story Lantern" ritual:** Each learner who volunteers to share begins by saying, *"Now, I would like to light my story lantern."*
- b. **Sharing content:** Following their outline from last session, the learner shares a specific short story from one chapter (about 3 minutes long). It's recommended to share the version refined with AI assistance.
- c. **"Starlight Feedback" mechanism** (a gentler alternative to the former "Diamond Feedback"):
- Listeners do not type or unmute; they simply listen attentively.
- After a story, the instructor prompts: *"Let's use the star emoji (🌟) in the chat to highlight a moment from the story that moved us."* Alternatively, ask: *"If the story just now was a painting, what color did you see?"*
- Discourage evaluative comments like "You spoke really well." Encourage responses focused on feelings: *"Your story reminded me of…"* or *"Thank you for letting me see…"*
3. **Warm wrap-up (10 minutes):**
- a. In the closing summary, the instructor doesn't evaluate story content but reflects the emotional atmosphere: *"Tonight, our teahouse was filled with warmth—touching moments, laughter, and heartfelt nostalgia."*
- b. Announce that next time, we enter the "final assembly" stage of our project — give everyone encouragement for the final stretch.

Homework:
- *Heartfelt assignment:* Inspired by something you heard tonight, add a small detail to one of your own stories (one sentence is enough).
- *Community assignment:* In the class group, **@mention** one classmate who shared a story tonight and tell them: "The [object/place] you mentioned in your story reminded me of similar times in my own life."

Session 7: Binding and Design – Crafting a Heirloom "Digital Treasure Box"

Knowledge Points & Flow Design: *(3 key components)*
- *Concept first: What is your "book of life"? (10 minutes):*
- Show different styles of book covers (elegant, nostalgic, minimalist) to inspire ideas.

- Launch a poll: *"If your life were a book, would you want it to look like a heavy, weighty history, a warm photo album, or a light and breezy prose-poem?"* Prompt learners to consider the desired "feel" or character of their personal biography.
- *"Three-Step Cover" minimalist design workshop (35 minutes):*
- **Principle:** Absolutely no complicated software! Provide a turnkey solution that anyone can do.
- **Step 1: Choose a template.** The instructor has pre-designed 3 beautiful PPT book cover templates: (A) Classical Chinese Elegance, (B) Nostalgic Film Style, (C) Modern Minimalist. Learners simply pick one they like.
- **Step 2: Swap in your content.** The instructor demonstrates live how to perform just three actions on the chosen template: 1) change the book title, 2) drag and replace the main cover image, 3) edit the author's name.
- **Step 3: Set a dedication.** Guide learners to think of a dedication for the book's flyleaf. Provide an example: *"Dedicated to my family, and the moments that never fade."*
- **Key Support:** At this stage, the instructor and TA offer one-on-one help in breakout rooms to assist learners with making these edits.
- *Online book fair & group photo (15 minutes):*
- Invite a few learners to share their screen, showcase their cover design, and briefly explain their design choice (*"I chose this photo because…"*).
- The instructor collects thumbnails of everyone's covers onto one PPT slide to create a "class life-book wall."
- For a celebratory photo, all learners hold up either their printed cover, their course certificate, or an old meaningful photo to the camera. At the count of three, everyone smiles for a screenshot to capture this milestone moment.

Homework:
- Complete and submit your final **biography cover** image.
- **"Pre-launch promotion" task:** Set your cover image as your WeChat profile picture or Moments banner for 24 hours, with the caption: "My new book is about to be finished." *(This builds excitement for our closing ceremony.)*

Session 8: Celebration and Legacy – A Starlit Ceremony of Love and Stories

Knowledge Points: *(3 key components)*
1. **Legacy Ceremony: Letting stories flow into the future (15 minutes):**
- a. Guide everyone to quiet down and ponder: *"Who do you most want to give this electronic biography to, as a gift?"*
- b. The instructor provides a **"legacy message" template**, and leads the group to softly speak it out (or type it in chat):
- *To my child:* "Here is a *me* you never knew, and my heart that will love you forever."
- *To an old friend:* "Our friendship is the brightest star in this story."
- *To myself:* "An ordinary life, precious memories. I am proud of myself."
- c. Announce that the complete, beautifully formatted personal biography e-book (PDF) will be delivered within 24 hours via an encrypted cloud link with a unique access code, sent privately to each learner (and to any email they designate).
2. **No goodbyes – the Teahouse never closes (10 minutes):**
- a. Announce that the class chat group will officially transition into the "Story Teahouse ·

Lifelong Alumni Club."
- b. Unveil exclusive alumni benefits: monthly themed story salons (e.g. a special session for "Travel Stories"), a mini-workshop on "Reading with Grandchildren," an internal newsletter of outstanding stories, etc.
- c. **Final group photo:** Everyone turns on their camera and holds up either their course certificate or their *"life book"* (printed cover or physical book). After a countdown, all smiles bloom for a screenshot to commemorate this moment.
- d. The instructor concludes with a heartfelt remark: *"To all the authors of your life stories: our story never ends. The teahouse is always open, waiting for your return. Congratulations on completing the course!"*

Homework:
- Save your digital biography book (check your messages for the file).
- Present it as a gift to the person you intended.
- Let us know if you'd like help designing and printing it as a physical book.
- And please drop by the "Story Teahouse" now and then to share your new stories!