



SOUTHERN
VIRGINIA
UNIVERSITY

SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY · TECH PROGRAMS

Applied AI Mastery Certificate

24 credit hours · 8 courses · two semesters · online

BY THE END OF THIS PROGRAM

You become someone who **ships real AI software.**

Not someone who watched lectures about AI. Someone who has designed, built, secured, and deployed production-grade AI systems, and can prove it. You graduate with a portfolio of real, working software and the judgment to direct AI tools like a professional.

OPERATE AN AI-AUGMENTED WORKSPACE

Set up and run a development environment integrating coding assistants, agents, and automated workflows.

BUILD & DEPLOY WITH AI

Design, build, and deploy production-grade AI software by directing and reviewing AI-generated code.

GROUND AI IN REAL DATA

Use retrieval to ground AI in real business knowledge, and prove output quality through an evaluation discipline.

AUTOMATE & BUILD AGENTS

Build workflows, automations, and autonomous agents that integrate with real business systems.

PROVE THE ROI

Analyze workflows to find where AI delivers measurable value and produce defensible business cases.

SHIP A REAL CAPSTONE

Complete a real-business capstone with documented outcomes and a structured industry internship.

THE PROOF YOU GRADUATE WITH

You don't leave with a certificate alone.

You leave with the evidence employers actually ask to see: deployed systems, a real-business capstone with measured ROI, a passing security audit, and verified internship experience. That portfolio is what turns a credential into a job.

Roles this prepares you for

AI Engineer	Build and deploy AI-powered software
AI Automation Specialist	Design agents and automated workflows
Applied AI Developer	Ship grounded, production AI systems
AI Solutions Consultant	Find ROI and build the business case

What makes graduates hireable

Every build is judged on five questions: Does it work? Is it smart? Can you prove it? Can you explain it? Would you hire this person? You don't pass by finishing. You pass by being ready.

Program at a Glance

CREDENTIAL V School Certificate	CREDIT HOURS 24 (3 per course)
COURSES 8 sequential	DURATION Two semesters
FORMAT Online, self-paced	PREREQUISITE Foundations Assessment
CIP CODE 11.0102 · Artificial Intelligence	START TERMS Fall · Spring · Summer

What This Program Is

A comprehensive pathway from AI and internet foundations to shipping production-grade, AI-powered software that delivers measurable business value. You learn to direct and review AI-written code rather than write every line yourself, building a portfolio of deployed systems as you progress, and finishing with a real-business capstone and a structured industry internship.

Who It's For

Students starting from little or no coding background who want to enter the field of applied AI. No technical prerequisite. What you need is the willingness to build, to sit with hard problems, and to prove your work.

What You'll Walk Away With

- A V School Applied AI certificate
- A portfolio of deployed AI systems, defended in oral review
- A real-business capstone with measured ROI and a passing security audit
- A verified industry internship and a Career Launch portfolio

8 COURSES · 24 CREDITS · TWO SEMESTERS

Built in Sequence

Every course builds on the last and closes with a real, deployed deliverable. Semester one takes you from foundations to grounded, agentic systems.

COURSE 1 · 3 CR

AI Foundations & the Modern Internet

Thinking frameworks, how AI works (tokens, context, failure modes), internet literacy (HTTP, DNS, REST, auth), multi-tool literacy, and a first Model Context Protocol install. Closes with a Technology Map of a real business.

COURSE 2 · 3 CR

AI-Powered Software Architecture

A hands-on build course: AI writes the code while you architect, direct, review, secure, and deploy. Web foundations, a frontend framework, an Express + MongoDB + JWT backend. Closes with a deployed app integrating the Claude API and an MCP server, defended in an oral review.

COURSE 3 · 3 CR

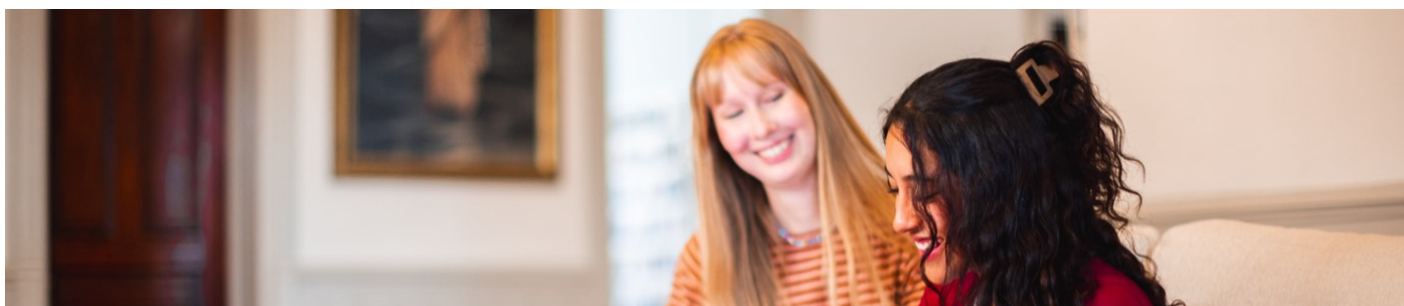
Grounded AI Systems: RAG, Evaluation & Production

Give AI trustworthy access to a business's own knowledge: real data, embeddings, vector stores, the RAG pipeline, citations, an evaluation discipline, and production hardening. Closes with a deployed Grounded Knowledge System exposed as an MCP tool.

COURSE 4 · 3 CR

Agentic AI: Automation, Agents & MCP

Make AI act: orchestration and reusable skills, automation platforms and patterns, the agent loop and autonomy levels, and building and deploying an MCP server with enterprise patterns. Closes with a governed Agentic Automation System.



FROM PRODUCT TO PLACEMENT

The Capstone Arc

Semester two turns skill into proof: a designed product, a real business case, a measured capstone, and an industry internship.

COURSE 5 · 3 CR

AI Product Design & Growth

Make it usable, beautiful, and able to grow: UX and usability, visual design, accessibility, multimodal asset production, and an owned, automated growth surface (lifecycle email, landing pages, SEO). Closes with a designed product and its growth machinery.

COURSE 6 · 3 CR

Business Systems & AI Consulting

The ROI reveal: discovery and user research, opportunity heuristics, business economics, ROI methodology, marketing strategy and metrics, and smart dashboards. Closes with a business case on a real business and an approved capstone scope.

COURSE 7 · 3 CR

Capstone: ROI in the Real World

A complete AI implementation for a real business with measured value, through a mandatory security audit gate. Produces a deployed system, before-and-after metrics, a case study, a security audit report, and a recorded presentation.

COURSE 8 · 3 CR

Career Launch Internship

A part-time industry internship (around 100 hours) concurrent with the semester, plus career preparation, mock interviews, and reflection. Produces a verified placement, a supervisor evaluation, and a Career Launch portfolio.

How This Program Works

No lectures to sit through, no tests to cram for. You learn by building real systems and proving you understand them.

Mastery-Based

You move forward by demonstrating you can do the work, not by logging seat time. Every course closes with a real deliverable and a review that verifies you understand what you built.

- Project-based, build-first
- Skill-focused assessments and oral reviews
- A portfolio that compounds course over course

Online & Self-Paced

Delivered fully online so you can fit it to your life, with optional live workshops and mentoring along the way. A live, end-of-course assessment keeps the bar real.

- Self-paced within each term
- Optional live workshops & mentoring
- Direct support when you get stuck



Is This Right for You?

This isn't a list of requirements. It's an honest look at what separates the students who thrive from the ones who struggle.

You Can Write Clearly

Much of this program is written work: analyses, client-facing documents, case studies. You don't need perfect grammar. You need to explain complex ideas so a busy person follows your reasoning in one read.

You Can Protect the Time

Self-paced does not mean no time. It means hours that are genuinely yours, or that you're willing to free up. Be honest with yourself about the hours before you start.

You Can Change Your Mind

This program challenges what you believe about AI, technology, and your own abilities. Students who thrive treat every belief as a hypothesis to test, not a position to defend.

You Can Sit with Confusion

Every week puts you somewhere you don't fully understand. That's by design. The students who thrive try something, read the error, and try again, instead of waiting to be told the answer.

You're Comfortable with a Computer

You don't need to know how to code. You do need to install software, navigate a file system, use a browser beyond the basics, and type at a reasonable speed.

You Have a Specific Reason

Students who finish have a reason beyond "this sounds interesting": a career they're building toward, a gap they're closing. Know what you're working toward.



What Does NOT Matter

- **Your degree, or lack of one.** The program starts from foundations.
- **Your technical background.** Everything is taught from scratch.
- **Whether you've used AI before.** Course 1 covers that.
- **How fast you learn.** The program is self-paced for this reason.



You're Not Doing **This** Alone

MENTORING & WORKSHOPS

Optional live workshops and mentoring throughout, plus direct support through the parts where you get stuck.

CAREER PREPARATION

Course 8 builds in mock interviews, reflection, and a Career Launch portfolio, not as an afterthought but as part of the program.

REAL BUSINESS WORK

You don't just build practice projects. The capstone is a real implementation for a real business, with measured value.

VERIFIED INTERNSHIP

A structured industry placement of around 100 hours produces a supervisor evaluation and real workplace experience.



A Credential That Holds Weight

This certificate is awarded by V School, the program's credentialing partner. You earn it through for-credit coursework at Southern Virginia University, a private liberal arts university in Buena Vista, Virginia, accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

SVU's accreditation is what makes the coursework for-credit and the credential real. You earn university coursework backed by a real institution, a V School certificate, a teaching team, and a curriculum built around real, deployed work, inside a close-knit, values-driven community.

"Our best days are ahead of us."

Aaron Hale, President, Southern Virginia University

FUNDING YOUR CERTIFICATE

Ways to Pay for It

Cost should not be the thing that stops you. SVU admissions will help you map the funding that fits your situation before you commit. Common paths:

VA EDUCATION BENEFITS

If you've served, talk to admissions about applying your VA education benefits toward this program.

FINANCIAL AID

SVU's financial aid team can walk you through federal aid and payment options available for the certificate.

CREST CREDIT

Credit for Recognized Experience, Service, or Training. Missionary and military service may translate into credit toward your path at SVU.

TALK IT THROUGH

Every situation is different. A short call with admissions is the fastest way to see what you qualify for.

One conversation

Bring your questions about benefits, aid, and timing to a single admissions call. You'll leave knowing exactly what your path costs and how to fund it.

What You Need

COMPUTER

Apple or Windows laptop, 2022 or newer, with at least 8 GB of RAM.

AI TOOLS

At least one paid LLM subscription. Budget around \$100/month for AI tools and licenses.

INTERNET

A reliable connection for online coursework and optional live sessions.

PREREQUISITE

Complete the Applied AI Foundations Assessment before enrolling. No prior coding experience required.

Start Terms

The certificate runs over two semesters. You may begin in Fall, Spring, or Summer, subject to SVU's published academic calendar.

ENTRY TERM	COURSES 1–4	COURSES 5–8
Fall 2026	Fall 2026	Spring 2027
Spring 2027	Spring 2027	Summer 2027
Summer 2027	Summer 2027	Fall 2027

Attendance, grading, withdrawal, refund, academic-integrity, and accommodation policies are governed by SVU's institutional policies as published in the current academic catalog. AI use is expected and governed by course guidelines; students remain accountable for understanding, verifying, securing, and defending all work they submit.



Ready to **Start?**

Here's how to get in.

- 1 Take the Foundations Assessment**
A short assessment that measures how you think, learn, and communicate. It's not a knowledge test. It helps you and us figure out if this is the right fit.
- 2 Talk to Admissions**
We'll walk you through enrollment, funding options, and how the certificate fits your path, and answer your questions.
- 3 Pick Your Start Term**
Choose Fall, Spring, or Summer based on your timeline.
- 4 Start Building**
From Course 1 you learn by doing. By the end you have a portfolio of deployed systems, a real-business capstone, and an industry internship.

Talk to SVU Admissions

No commitment. Let's talk about the program, funding, and your start date.

APPLY NOW