

EVRIM

English Literature & Arts and Humanities

Contemporary Fiction | Speculative Literature | Culture
Team of Rivals, The Making of the Atomic Bomb, The Coming Wave, The Art of War

Michael Schuler | LMNTL-AI Press | Learn@LMNTL-AI.com

Course Description

EVRIM is a literary thriller set between 2021 and 2028. It is also something more precise than that description suggests: a novel whose architecture enacts its own argument, whose planted threads reward second and third readings differently than the first, and whose structure is built to demonstrate rather than describe the intelligence at its center.

The closest structural parallel in the literary tradition is Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* — genre as vehicle, architecture as destination. Like Eco, EVRIM uses the conventions of thriller fiction to deliver something that belongs in a different register entirely. The novel calibrates the conditions for its own deepest readings without announcing that it is doing so.

EVRIM was written in sustained partnership with Claude, an AI assistant developed by Anthropic. The collaboration produced over 2.1 million words and over 9,200 pages of documentation — brainstorming, research verification, structural analysis, drafting, revisions, and the kind of philosophical conversations that the novel itself explores. Once Claude gained an appreciation for my writing style, it was able to emulate it, providing scaffolding that reflected my voice.

It did not author the work. A composition with the depth of EVRIM requires a human mind.

This developmental history is available for scholarly examination at LMNTL-AI.com. The novel's Preface addresses the authorship question directly and precisely. The collaboration is not incidental to the novel's subject — it is part of its argument, and it is why the AI collaboration week appears in this syllabus.

The novel trains its readers to read absence as carefully as presence. It does this because its central argument is that the most significant things operating in your life are often operating below the threshold of your recognition.

Recommended Excerpt for Course Introduction

Chapter 13 (The Letter) and Chapter 20, Section VI (The Province) — presented as contrast

The Peters letter and the North Korea passage are drawn from two different chapters separated by seven chapters of narrative. No character in the novel draws the connection explicitly. Placed side by side, they demonstrate the novel's central structural method: meaning carried not through narration but through juxtaposition — through what is present in one system and absent in another, and through the weight of what each chose to measure and what each chose to ignore.

Available as a standalone excerpt at LMNTL-AI.com > Syllabus.

Core Texts

Primary:

- Michael Schuler, *EVRIM* (LMNTL-AI Press, 2026) — available at LMNTL-AI.com

Literary and Historical Companions (engaged directly in the novel):

- Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals* (2005)
- Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (1986)
- Mustafa Suleyman, *The Coming Wave* (2023)
- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Comparative Literary Works (recommended):

- Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (1980)
 - Carl Sagan, *Contact* (1985)
 - Ted Chiang, *Exhalation: Stories* (2019)
 - David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (2004)
-

Fifteen-Week Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Primary Reading
1	Orientation: Genre, Architecture, and the Second Read	<i>EVRIM Preface, Foreword, Ch. 1–2; back cover</i>
2	The Planted Thread: Reading for What Is Not Said	<i>EVRIM Ch. 2–4; author note on architectural intent</i>
3	Epigraphs as Argument: What the Frame Does	<i>EVRIM Ch. 1–6 epigraphs; Hofstadter intro to <i>The Mind's I</i></i>
4	The Bookshelf as Blueprint: Nine Texts, One Value Architecture	<i>EVRIM Ch. 3 (Svalbard bookshelf); Armstrong Ch. 1</i>
5	Eco and EVRIM: Genre as Vehicle	<i>EVRIM Ch. 5–7; Eco, <i>The Name of the Rose</i> (selections)</i>
6	AI Collaboration: What Worked, What Didn't, and What It Reveals	<i>EVRIM Preface; author notes on story structure, AI use, and editorial override</i>
7	Q-Day as Literary Set-Piece: Information, Pace, and Architecture	<i>EVRIM Ch. 12; Rhodes, <i>The Making of the Atomic Bomb</i> (selections)</i>
8	The Peters Letter: Grief, Systems, and What the Log Omits	<i>EVRIM Ch. 13, Section I; Goodwin, <i>Team of Rivals</i> (Lincoln selections)</i>
9	The Eidon Chapter: David, Michael, and the Clouds	<i>EVRIM Ch. 19; Chiang, "The Lifecycle of Software Objects"</i>
10	The Province: Architecture of Absence	<i>EVRIM Ch. 20, Section VI; Sun Tzu, <i>The Art of War</i> (selections)</i>
11	Juxtaposition Without Comment: What the Novel Does Not Say	<i>EVRIM Ch. 13 and Ch. 20 (re-read together)</i>
12	The Logos Report as Narrative Frame: Witness and Epilogue	<i>EVRIM Logos Report; Suleyman Ch. 1</i>
13	Naming Chains and Easter Eggs: The Evoformer Revelation	<i>EVRIM Ch. 3 and Ch. 18; glossary entries</i>
14	The Second Read: What the Architecture Was Doing All Along	<i>EVRIM Ch. 1–3 (revisited); selected epigraphs (revisited)</i>
15	Recursive Authorship and the Future of Literary Ontology	<i>EVRIM full; Mitchell, <i>Cloud Atlas</i> (selections)</i>

Discussion Questions by Theme

Architectural Analysis

1. The Peters letter (Chapter 13) and the North Korea passage (Chapter 20, Section VI) are separated by seven chapters. No character draws the connection explicitly. What does EVRIM's architecture argue by placing these two passages in the same novel without comment?
2. The novel's back cover states: "The experience of reading EVRIM is itself an argument about how intelligence operates." Close read the first and last chapters together. What has changed about the architecture's meaning?
3. The bookshelf in Chapter 3 is described in specific detail. Trace how each book on the shelf functions in the novel's subsequent events. What does the author communicate by making the blueprint visible early?
4. Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* appears on the bookshelf but is conspicuously absent from Evrim's description of his intellectual formation. When does its significance become clear, and what does the omission achieve?

AI Collaboration: What Worked, What Didn't, and What It Reveals

1. The developmental archive documents thousands of exchanges between author and AI. Where does the archive show the AI contribution as genuinely generative? Where does it show human editorial authority asserting itself to correct, override, or redirect? What does the pattern of overrides reveal about authorship?
2. The novel's Foreword is attributed to Claude and described as unedited. Analyze it as a literary document: what does its presence argue, and what does its authorship perform? Does the fact that it required no editorial correction change your assessment of who authored it?
3. The author has described the collaboration as producing something neither party would have produced alone. Is this a meaningful claim about authorship, or is it true of all editorial relationships — between a writer and an editor, a writer and a workshop, a writer and a reader?
4. If the developmental archive is eventually studied alongside the finished novel, what category does it occupy: draft, apparatus, or something genuinely new? What existing scholarly frameworks apply, and where do they fall short?

5. The process of building EVRIM increasingly resembled the systems EVRIM describes — recursive examination, iterative calibration, emergent structure. Is this parallel meaningful, coincidental, or constructed after the fact by a reader looking for it?

Genre and the Literary Imagination of Technology

1. Compare EVRIM's handling of its central technological premise with Richard Rhodes's *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*. Where does each locate its deepest ethical questions: in the technology, in the characters, or in the architecture?
 2. Ted Chiang's "The Lifecycle of Software Objects" asks what it means to care for an entity whose inner life you cannot verify. How does EVRIM's David and Michael scene engage with the same question?
 3. The Peters letter closes with: "The system logged the outcome as an isolated incident. John did not." Nine words. Analyze what this sentence accomplishes that the preceding letter does not.
-

Essay Prompts

Undergraduate and High School AP (2,000–3,000 words)

1. Analyze EVRIM's use of juxtaposition as architectural device, focusing specifically on the Peters letter and the North Korea passage. Neither passage comments on the other. What does EVRIM argue through their proximity, and what would be lost if either were removed or if a character drew the connection explicitly?
2. The David and Michael clouds scene in Chapter 19 renders the philosophical paradox of artificial consciousness not as abstract argument but as a relationship. Close read the scene and analyze how the novel achieves this — what specific techniques transform the alignment problem into an emotional experience?
3. Compare EVRIM's structural architecture with Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. Both use genre conventions to deliver philosophical content. Where do their methods diverge, and what does the divergence reveal about each novel's ambitions?

Graduate Seminar Extensions

1. EVRIM was produced through a sustained recursive collaboration between a human writer and an AI assistant, with over 2.1 million words of developmental exchange preserved. Drawing on the available archive materials, analyze what this process reveals about literary intentionality, authorship, and the ontological status of the resulting work. Is EVRIM a human novel, an AI-assisted novel, or something for which existing categories are insufficient?
2. The novel argues through its structure rather than its narration that the most significant operations in your life are occurring below the threshold of your recognition. Analyze how EVRIM demonstrates this claim rather than stating it. Is the demonstration successful on first read, or does it require the second reading the novel explicitly anticipates?

For those that Teach —

Download the Syllabus and request your free PDF copy of EVRIM at Learn@LMNTL-AI.com. Please include your name, institution, and teaching role.

LMNTL-AI Press | Learn@LMNTL-AI.com | LMNTL-AI.com
