

Commerce 4FA3

Applied Corporate Finance Winter 2023 Course Outline

**Finance and Business Economics Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course prepares students to understand various topics related to corporate actions. The class will cover a variety of topics including firm valuation, mergers & acquisitions, corporate governance, shareholder activism, the role of large institutions, leveraged buyouts, and corporate reorganization in financial distress/bankruptcy.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**Thursdays
2:30 – 5:20 p.m.
Robert G. Mulligan, CFA
Instructor
rmulli7@mcmaster.ca**

Office Hours: By appointment

Class Location
DSB B105

**Student TA
Eric Wilson
wilsoe40@mcmaster.ca**

Course website: <https://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	IT skills: Yes	Global view: Yes
A2L: Yes	Ethics: No	Numeracy: Yes	Written skills: Yes
Participation: Yes	Innovation: Yes	Group work: Yes	Oral skills: Yes
Evidence-based: Yes	Experiential: No	Final Exam: Yes	Guest speaker(s): No

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course prepares students to understand various topics related to corporate actions. The class will cover a variety of topics including firm valuation, mergers & acquisitions, corporate governance, shareholder activism, the role of large institutions, leveraged buyouts, and corporate reorganization in financial distress/bankruptcy. This class covers both theory and practical issues related to the corporate actions. This course provides economic intuition to understand the corporate actions and practical tools to perform in-depth financial valuation and analysis. The course emphasizes case studies/project work and team cooperation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to complete the following key tasks:

- Understand the principals for capital budgeting and firm valuation
- Conduct valuation and financial analysis for a firm
- Understand strategy, valuation principals, and execution of a merger and acquisition
- Understand the different mechanisms of corporate governance
- Evaluate risks and investment returns in different contexts.

COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Required:

Course Materials

- Avenue to Learn: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

Case Studies Course Pack

- Harvard Business Review: The link to download the course pack will be provided on Avenue to Learn.

Optional Readings:

- Avenue to Learn.



COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Learning in this course results primarily from in-class discussion and participation of comprehensive business cases as well as out-of-class assignment. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis except for case studies (reports and presentation) where group work is expected. In the case study analysis and presentation, group members will share the same grade adjusted by peer evaluation.

Missed exams will receive a grade of zero unless the student has submitted and been approved for a Notification of Absence or MSAF. Late assignments and case studies will NOT be accepted. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights

Case Study Reports	Three Written Reports, 15% each (group)	Avenue	45%
Case Presentation	Case Presentation (group)	In Class	10%
Midterm	Case Exam (individual)	Avenue	20%
Final Exam	Case Exam (individual)		20%
Participation	In-class Contribution (individual)	In Class	5%
Total			100%

NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator and/or a financial calculator is allowed during examinations in this course. See McMaster calculator policy.

COURSE DELIVERABLES

Case Studies

This course incorporates six case studies related to topics on corporate actions. You are required to write the written report in **three out of six** case studies. Each case study analysis (in written report) in this course accounts for **15%** of your final grade. Three case studies (in written reports) account for **45%** of your final grade. Details of each case study will be posted on Avenue. You will be provided with the links to download the case studies from Harvard Business Review.

Students will form teams and each team consists of 3-4 members. You need to form a team before the end of week 2. You are allowed to switch team for each case study but you need to inform the instructor in advance. For each case study, a list of questions will be posted on Avenue and your team is required to conduct analysis and write a report based on these questions. All written reports are submitted online via Avenue.

The written reports along with data files are due on the date of each case study presentation. Please find the due dates in the course schedule below.

Please note that a peer group evaluation will be performed by all groups for each case study. Students will set their own rules regarding the functioning of their group, which includes attendance at meetings, work allocation and contributions to the project. Students not performing according to the group's standards will have their grade lowered accordingly. (See Peer Evaluation instructions on the Peer Evaluation Form)

Case Study Presentation

Each team is required to present **one of the three case studies** of your choice. Your team can choose which case study to present. The case study presentation accounts for **10%** of your final grade. You have 20 minutes to present your case analysis and 5 minutes to answer the questions. The case study presentations will be held in class.

Midterm

The midterm is worth **20%** of your final grade. The purpose of midterm is to help you review the knowledge learned in the class and practice your ability to solve a case individually. The midterm will be submitted online via Avenue.

Final Exam

The final exam accounts for **20%** of your final grade. The final exam will be cumulative. The exam will be a case exam that relates to the topics discussed in the course. The final exam location will be announced later.

Participation

Student in-class participation accounts for **5%** of your final grade. You will get one point per lecture for your participation in the class.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. All students must receive feedback regarding their progress prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default.

Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” and the link below;

<http://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (Medical board): <http://www.hireb.ca/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce 4FA3 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Commerce 4FA3 Applied Corporate Finance Winter 2023 Course Schedule

Week	Date	Place	Due Date	Contents
1 (Week Jan. 12)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.			Introduction Lecture 1: Cost of capital
2 (Week Jan. 19)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Register your team members	Lecture 2: Valuation
3 (Week Jan. 26)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Case study 1 Due	Case Study 1: Discussion & Presentations
4 (Week Feb.2)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Case study 2 Due	Case Study 2: Discussion & Presentations
5 (Week Feb. 9)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.			Lecture 3: Merger and Acquisition
6 (Week Feb. 16)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Case study 3 Due	Case Study 3: Discussion & Presentations
7 (Week Feb. 23)			Winter Break, No Class	
8 (Week Mar.2)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Midterm Due	Lecture 4: Corporate Governance: Board of Directors, Agency Problems & Institutional Monitoring
9 (Week Mar. 9)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.			Lecture 5: Corporate Governance: Hostile Takeover and Shareholder Activism
10 (Week Mar. 16)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Case study 4 Due	Case Study 4: Discussion & Presentations
11 (Week Mar. 23)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Case study 5 Due	Case Study 5: Discussion & Presentations
12 (Week Mar. 30)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.			Lecture 6: LBOs and Corporate Restructuring
13 (Week April. 6)	Thur., 2.30 – 5.20 p.m.		Case study 6 Due	Case Study 6: Discussion & Presentations