

**Commerce 4FY3
Introduction to FinTech
Winter 2025 Course Outline**

**Finance & Business Economics Area
DeGroot School of Business
McMaster University**

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Section C01: Thursday 14:30 -17:20 Dr. Iris Wang wangj854@mcmaster.ca Office: DSB A212 Office Hours: by appointment	Section C03: Wednesday 14:30 -17:20 Dr. Iris Wang wangj854@mcmaster.ca Office: DSB A212 Office Hours: by appointment
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Student TA
Ruinan Liu
[TBD](#)
TA Office Hours: by appointment

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

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value: 3	Leadership: Yes	IT skills: No	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: No	Guest speaker(s): Yes

COURSE INFORMATION

Lectures: 3hr x1/week

Course Delivery Mode: in person

Course Description: The course provides a broad overview of the financial technology (FinTech) industry. Specifically, it will cover; how financial services have evolved key players and their roles; existing products, how FinTech has evolved key players and their innovations; technologies underpinning FinTech innovations, major FinTech innovations and their impact on financial services, regulations governing the financial services industry and how to identify and analyze future trends/opportunities of FinTech.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [Mosaic](#)
- [Avenue to Learn](#)
- [Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations](#)
- [McMaster University Library](#)

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Analyze the impact of FinTech on traditional financial services.
- Evaluate the regulatory and ethical implications of FinTech innovations.
- Gain experience in analyzing real cases of companies in the FinTech sector.
- Acquire skills in pitching new FinTech startup ideas.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS

- Understand the fundamental concepts and components of FinTech.
- Understand the challenges and strategic options facing entrants and incumbents.
- Understand the regulatory debates surrounding challenges in FinTech.

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS

Required: No textbook is required for this course. Self-contained lecture notes and readings will be posted on the course website before each lecture.

All cases can be accessed via Ivey Publishing (estimated cost: \$17.34 CAD per student)

1. Go to the Ivey Publishing website at www.iveypublishing.ca
2. Log in to your existing account or click "Register" to create a new account and follow the prompts to complete the registration. If registering, choose the "Student" role.
3. Click on this link or copy into your browser: <https://www.iveypublishing.ca/s/ivey-coursepack/a1ROF000002zyJ32AI>
4. Click "Add to Cart".
5. Go to the Shopping Cart (located at the top of the page), click "Checkout", and complete the checkout process.
6. When payment has been processed successfully, an Order Confirmation will be emailed to you immediately and you will see the Order Confirmation screen.
7. Once you have completed your order, click on your username on the top right --> Orders --> Purchases

CLASS FORMAT

This is an in-person 3-hour course. The three hours will consist primarily of lectures, supplemented with examples, case discussions, small presentations, interactive activities, and guest speakers. There will be two short breaks part way through at a convenient time based on what we are working on. Please use this time to take care of personal needs of various kinds.

COURSE EVALUATION

GRADE COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
Participation	15%	Class participation
Assignments	20%	Write-up assignments: 2 x 10% each
Quiz	15%	2 x 7.5% each
Group Project Presentation	30%	Fintech startup pitch book presentation
Peer Project Review Report	20%	Evaluate and critique a group project presented by peers

COURSE DELIVERABLES

Participation: 15%

Participation is evaluated based on the quantity and quality of contributions to class discussion. You should expect to be cold called. You need to do the reading to contribute effectively to the flow of the discussion. Please come to class prepared to engage, listen, and learn.

- Active participation in class discussions and group activities is crucial. This includes contributing to discussions on case studies, sharing insights on assigned readings, and engaging in class exercises.
- A name card aids in crediting your participation in a class. You must have a name card, with your full first and last name clearly written and displayed for every class.
- Since student participation is an important component of this course, official McMaster student ID photographs will be used to ensure that each student is assessed accurately. The instructor will use the photograph to ensure the accuracy of participation marks, group work, and for identifying students for grading purposes.

Assignments: 20%

There are two individual/group assignments in this course that in total account for **20%** of your final grade.

Quiz: 15%

There are two in-class quizzes in this course that in total account for **15%** of your final grade.

Final group project presentation: 30%

Groups of size 5 will prepare a slide deck pitching a new Fintech startup idea to a potential VC investor at the end of the term (Duration: 20 minutes including Q&A). Please upload and submit the slides right after your presentation.

- Each team's idea must be developed independently of other teams. You should start to form groups and brainstorm ideas early.
- The group project will be evaluated on:
 - Originality, feasibility, and depth of analysis
 - Quality of presentations and professionalism of slides
 - Effective teamwork
- Suggested list of things to consider:
 - Market analysis: What's the industry and competition? Who are the target customers?
 - What pain points does your startup address? What is the new technology that will be used and how it drives the product/service innovation?
 - Who are your closest competitors? How sustainable are your competitive advantages?
 - What are the assumptions and risks (financial, technological, operational)? How do you overcome or mitigate these risks?
 - What's the regulatory environment? How will you comply with relevant laws and regulations?
 - How do you monetize and scale? What's your capital need?
 - What are your milestones?

Peer project review report: 20%

A short essay (2-page max not including appendix & exhibits) evaluating one of the group projects presented in the final two sessions.

- Each student will select one group project (other than their own) presented and write a short essay analyzing and critiquing the project. The report should clearly state why you would or would not invest in the pitched company.in one of the companies that was pitched.
- Students are encouraged to take notes and ask questions during the project presentations to aid in their analysis.
- Suggested components to include:
 - Briefly summarize the selected project and analyze how well the project addressed market needs and utilized technology. However, this should not be the primary focus.
 - Critique the proposed business model using tools learned in class and support your arguments with evidence. You are encouraged to involve additional analysis beyond what was presented.
 - Offer suggestions for improvement.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will not be accepted.

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.

- For Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this feedback must equal a minimum of 20% of the final grade.
- For Level 3 courses and above, this feedback must equal a minimum of 10% of the final grade.

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/>

* Non-Commerce students must follow the Missed Course Work protocols outlined by their home faculty and Program Office.

COURSE MODIFICATION

From time to time there may be a need to remove/add topics or to change the schedule or the delivery format. If these are necessary, you will be given as much advance notice as possible.

GENERATIVE AI

Students may freely use generative AI in this course so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited following citation instructions given in the syllabus. Use of generative AI outside assessment

guidelines or without citation will constitute academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

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](#).

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. Avenue to Learn, 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, 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, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce **4YF3** 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 4FY3
Introduction to FinTech
Winter 2024 Course Schedule**

WEEK	WEEK OF	CLASS TOPICS	ACTIVITY	DUE
1	Jan. 6	Introduction Blockchain & DeFi I	Forming groups	
2	Jan.15	Blockchain & DeFi II		
3	Jan. 22	Digital Banking	Case: Elixir	Deadline to form groups
4	Jan.29	Lending I		
5	Feb. 5	Lending II Reward-based Crowdfunding		
6	Feb.12	Equity-based Crowdfunding		Assignment 1 due Feb.12
7	Feb.19	Mid-term recess: No classes		
8	Feb.26	Payments I Alternative data		Virtual recording
9	Mar.4	Payments II Valuation	Case: Square	Assignment 2 due Mar.4
10	Mar.11	InsurTech		
11	Mar.18	Robo-advising	Case: Wealthfront	
12	Mar.25	Retail investment		
13	Apr.1	Final project presentation		Slides deck due right after your presentation
				Peer project review due Apr.17

Note: This schedule is tentative. I reserve the right to adjust the course content and delivery method as the course unfolds to better serve the student needs.