

COMMERCE 1E03 Business Environment and Organization Fall 2025 Course Outline

**Strategic Management Area
DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course will examine the relationship between business organizations, their functional areas, and the environments - social, political, legal and regulatory, and technological - that affect them. This is a sustainability-related course based on the [AASHE](#) standards for sustainability.

Prerequisite: Registration in Business 1

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Carolyn Capretta (she/her)
Zoom Office Hours: TBA
TAs: TBA

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

NOTE: Send all communications using your McMaster email only and excluding Avenue to Learn (Avenue). Emails should follow grammar rules and be concise. They need to include the following: a completed Subject line with the course code, your section number, and communication purpose (e.g., COMM 1E03 C05 – Meeting Request); a salutation (e.g., Good Morning); the details of your request in the body; and a closing that includes your name and Avenue group number if your request is related to group work.

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT Skills:	Yes	Global View:	Yes
Avenue:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	Yes	Written Skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Group Work:	Yes	Oral Skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	Yes	Final Exam:	Yes	Guest Speakers:	Yes

COURSE INFORMATION

All organizations must continuously scan the business environment and understand what is happening externally so they know how to best leverage their internal strengths as they pursue their strategies. With a focus on Canadian business, you will be introduced to different functional areas of business. The Commerce Program will expand on the functional areas in the next few years and this introduction should give you an appreciation of the importance of these business areas and how they impact each other.

Lecture: 2 hours plus 1 hour meetings per week

Course Delivery Mode: In-person

Course Description: This course will examine the relationship between business organizations, their functional areas and the environments - social, political, legal, regulatory and technological - that affect them.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES (LOs)

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

- LO 1: Identify and apply principles and terms used by business practitioners.
- LO 2: Develop individual study habits to support identifying and applying principles and terms used by business practitioners.
- LO 3: Develop a toolkit of practical and useful skills, strategies, and approaches drawn from Business Organization and Environments.
- LO 4: Develop skills (e.g., active in-class participation, time management, communication, analytical, etc.) while optimizing academic performance.
- LO 5: Practice group collaboration and analytical skills to support identifying and applying principles and terms used by business practitioners.
- LO 6: Actively contribute to group decision-making that includes research and a group report.

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS

These items are an integral part of the lesson plan for the course, and not having these materials could have a negative impact on a student's learning outcomes for the course.

Required:

(1) Access to Three Online Platforms (Free): Avenue, Zoom and Connect

(2) Campus Store's Immediate Access Program (\$85.95): Digital access to Connect based on *Understanding Canadian Business*, 12th Canadian ed. by Nickels, McHugh, McHugh, Cossa, and Stevens

CLASS FORMAT

This is an in-person course, meeting twice a week, and the first class is two hours, and the second class is one hour in length. The three hours will consist of rapid problem-solving, mini-lecture, lengthier discussion, and more in-depth applied exercises (not necessarily always in this order). There will be a short break part way through the two-hour class 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

There are no extra assignments or re-weighting. (See p. 3 for what to do if a deadline is missed.) Your final grade is calculated as follows:

Individual: LO 1, LO 3, LO 4	Online Midterm: 5 Chapters In-person Final Exam: 7 Chapters	30% 40%
<hr/>		
Individual: LO 1, LO2, LO3, LO 4	Smartbook (SB) Assignments	15% ¹

Group: LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6	Team Charter	5% ²
Group: LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5, LO6	Group Report	10% ²
Total		100%
Individual: Plus Bonus LO4	Bonus: Connect orientation assignment	0.5%
Individual: Plus Bonus LO4	Bonus: Respondus Lockdown browser installation and midterm practice quiz	1%
Group: Plus bonus LO4, L05, L06	Bonus on final grade: Team Charter submitted 24 hours or more in advance of deadline	0.5%
Group: Plus bonus LO4, L05, L06	Bonus on Final grade: Group report submitted 24 hours or more in advance of deadline	0.5%

¹There are 12 SB Assignments. The best 10 SBs will contribute to your grade out of 15%. 10 SB assignments can give you a maximum of 15% for the grade component.

²Students not participating in a group at the time of the deadline will receive a mark of zero, as they will not have completed the group report and the term will be over. Groups are formed during class as per the course schedule.

Deadlines

Deadlines are firm and a missed deadline will result in a mark of zero unless an extension is an option as noted below. Review the [Missed Course Work Policy](#) for details on the [McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#) and the [Notification of Absence](#).

Component	Platform	Day of Week	Deadline (EST)	What to Do if You Miss the Deadline and Do Not Want Zero
Before Class: SB Assignments	Connect	Mon. (See course schedule)	11:59 p.m.	<p>Note: Acknowledging that life does not always run perfectly, overall there are 12 SB Assignments. The best 10 SBs will contribute to your grade out of 15%. 10 SB assignments can give you a maximum of 15% for the grade component.</p> <p>MSAF will not be approved and no extension will be granted</p>

Bonus: Connect Orientation Assignment	Connect	Fri., Sept. 12	11:59 p.m.	MSAF will not be approved and no extension will be granted
Bonus: Respondus lockdown browser plus practice midterm	Avenue	Thurs. Oct. 2	11:59pm	Required for online exam
Online Midterm	Avenue	Sat. Oct. 4	6:30pm – 7:20pm	Contact the Student Experience Office (buscom@mcmaster.ca) to request conflict approval and include supporting documentation when completing a Notification of Absence ; if approved, please contact the instructor
Team Charter	Avenue	Early submission Bonus: Thurs. Oct. 9 Due date: Fri. Oct. 10	11:59pm	MSAF will not be approved and no extension will be granted
Group Report	Avenue	Early submission Bonus: Thurs. Nov. 20 Due date: Fri. Nov 21	11:59pm	MSAF will not be approved and no extension will be granted
In-person Final Exam	In- person on campus	To be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar	To be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar	Contact the Student Experience Office (buscom@mcmaster.ca) to request conflict approval and include supporting documentation when completing a Notification of Absence ; if approved, be prepared to complete a Midterm <u>in the days following the deadline</u>

Conversion

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	LETTER GRADE	PERCENT
A+	90 – 100	C+	67 - 69	F	0 - 49
A	85 - 89	C	63 - 66		
A-	80 - 84	C-	60 - 62		
B+	77 - 79	D+	57 - 59		

B	73 - 76	D	53 - 56
B-	70 - 72	D-	50 - 52

COURSE DELIVERABLES

This foundational active learning course is delivered on campus. No class recordings will be posted so regularly attend your registered section. Arrive on time and prepared to engage with both the content and your peers.

As has always been the case, expect that significant learning will take place outside the classroom so create your learning schedule. Weekly Avenue modules will outline scheduled work. This includes completing assigned work *before* class (e.g., review posted class files and complete pre-tests such as SB Assignments) as well as *after* class (e.g., read Avenue Announcements). To maximize your academic performance (LO 4), stay focused and remain informed by attending class and making notes, regularly reviewing the Course Outline and Avenue files, and daily reading your McMaster emails and Avenue Announcements. More component details will be communicated as deadlines approach. Finally, schedule sufficient time to complete the work by each deadline which includes preparing for each Midterm as the chapters are completed each week.

I. Examinations (70%):

In-person, on campus Online Midterm (30%) via Avenue Quizzes

Worth 30% of your final grade, the “closed book” in-person online Midterm will cover five chapters, and will take place in-person, on campus, at the location indicated on Avenue. Completed through Avenue Quizzes, the Midterm will consist of equally weighted multiple-choice questions based on course content (e.g., chapters and class discussions). An Avenue online sample quiz and Smartbook Refresh will support you in your familiarity with the online quiz format and sample questions.

In-person Final exam (40%) on campus and as scheduled by the Office of the Registrar

Worth 40% of your final grade, the in-person Final Exam is non-cumulative and will cover seven chapters. Completed on campus as scheduled by the Office of the Registrar, it will consist of equally weighted multiple-choice questions based on course content (e.g., chapters and class discussions). An Avenue sample quiz and Smartbook Refresh will support you as you study; however the final exam is in-person (not online).

II. Connect: E-Text and SB Assignments

Connect is a Web-based learning solution with access to SB (Smartbook). SB includes an adaptive e-text as well as SB Assignments. Connect instructions are available in Avenue’s *Getting Started* module. While you can access Connect through the Avenue homepage widget, access your SB Assignments through the weekly Avenue modules to avoid “overdue” messages.

a. Before Class Pre-Tests > SB Assignments (15%): Mondays by 11:59 p.m.

SB Assignments are publisher created multiple-choice questions based on chapter concepts. You will complete an assessment on approximately 26 concepts per chapter though the number of chapter concepts vary. Questions are based on highlighted content in the adaptive textbook; however, you are responsible for **all** associated chapter content for the midterm and final exam.

Note: Acknowledging that life does not always run perfectly, two missed SBs or your lowest two scores out of 12 SBs will not impact your final SB grade. See p. 3 for details.

NOTES:

- Direct all Connect issues to Connect Support with contact details in Avenue.
- Estimate 30 - 45 minutes per Assignment. Wrong answers will generate additional new questions.

- You may complete each Assignment early, in multiple sittings, and through **unlimited** attempts.
- Refresh your page regularly especially if you step away from your electronic device.
- Partial marks (based on the correct number completed by the deadline) are possible.
- Reasons for missed deadlines (e.g., "I had Internet issues") will not be accepted
- If using the ReadAnywhere App, link to the Internet for answers to be submitted by the deadline.
- After the due date, scores do not change and assignments are converted to Recharge mode. Recharge allows you to continue practicing concepts and receiving feedback.

III. Team Charter (5%)

For the purpose of building collaboration skills while working on a report in which you will apply concepts from Comm 1E03, you will be working with a fixed group of peers for the Team Charter and the Group report. You will be working in a group of eight, which will be formed in-person and in-class as per the course schedule. You will have the opportunity to create your own group, to be finalized in Week 3 during class.

Form your group of eight students in your registered section. There will be class time dedicated to skill-building activities and you will be able to meet and complete the activities with a variety of your peers. Think about who you can see yourself working with while completing the activities. You will be assigned a group number by your instructor and it will be posted under Communication>Groups in Avenue.

There will be a peer evaluation. **If you believe that peer contributions are equal, do not submit a peer evaluation because if no peer evaluation form is submitted, contributions will be considered equal.** Everyone who contributed to the submission will receive the same grade. Submitting your Team Profile more than 24 hours in advance of the deadline will earn you a 0.5 bonus mark which will be added to your final grade.

The Team Charter is not eligible for an MSAF. Late assignments will receive a 10% deduction per partial/full day up to a maximum of 3 days, after which the report will not be accepted. Please see the section on missed work, later in this course outline, if you are not able to attend or missed the class where groups were assigned. You will also work regularly in different breakout groups

IV. Group Report (10%)

You will remain in your group of approximately 8 (formed for the Team Charter) and stay in your group for this grade component. Assignment details will be available during class. Submitting your Group Report more than 24 hours in advance of the deadline will earn you a 0.5 bonus mark which will be added to your final grade.

The Group Report is not eligible for an MSAF. Late assignments will receive a 10% deduction per partial/full day up to a maximum of 3 days, after which the report will not be accepted. Assignment details discussed in class and on Avenue to Learn.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Students who wish to correspond with Instructors or Teaching Assistants directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email accounts. (See email requirements on p. 1.) 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 will receive feedback for at least 20% of their final grade prior to the final date by which a student may cancel the course without failure by default. Your Instructor 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 by reviewing [Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#) and this link: <http://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/>.

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

USE PROHIBITED

Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. In alignment with McMaster academic integrity policy, it “shall be an offence knowingly to ... submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source”. This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also state in the policy is the following, “Contract Cheating is the act of “outsourcing of student work to third parties” (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment.” Using Generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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 ONLINE 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

This course will not use online proctoring software for tests and exams.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster University student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate respectful and dignified interactions within all our living, learning, and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights and 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, Zoom for delivery) will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved student’s 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 (e.g., podcasts) 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 or other methods of instruction *are strictly prohibited during this course except by your Instructor*. If your Instructor records the lectures, she has no plans to release these recordings. As a result, you are encouraged to attend the lecture so that you do not fall behind. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded 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.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrollment in COMMERCE 1E03 will be considered implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above or any other that may be announced during lecture and/or in Avenue. **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

**Comm 1E03
Business Environment and Organization
Fall 2025 Course Schedule
See Avenue to Learn**