McMaster University | **DeGroote School of Business**

Commerce 4MH3 C01
Digital Marketing
Fall 2025 Course Outline

Marketing Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course provides an introduction to emerging digital marketing strategies. The purpose of this course is to help students build a fundamental understanding of some popular digital marketing strategies and gain basic skills for adopting those strategies. The course will also introduce cutting-edge digital marketing business models and help students to develop their own understandings of these models.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Monday 11:30 am – 2:20 pm   **See Avenue for Class Location**

Dr. Ruhai Wu   **Rehan Khan**
wuruhai@mcmaster.ca   khanr137@mcmaster.ca
Professor   Teaching Assistant
Office: DSB 214   Office:
Office Hours: After class or by appointment.   Office Hours: by appointment
Tel: (905) 525-9140 x 23048

Course website: Avenue to Learn (A2L): for lecture slides and readings, assignment submission

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COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
A2L:	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:	No	Guest speaker(s):	Yes

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IMPORTANT LINKS

- Mosaic
- Avenue to Learn
- Student Accessibility Services - Accommodations
- McMaster University Library

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Class sessions will consist of a combination of lectures, case discussions, projects, and guest talks. Students should finish assigned readings, participate in class discussions, and complete individual and group assignments and projects. It is a highly experiential-learning course. Students are expected to spend substantial time on the course projects, apply digital marketing strategies and **self-study** fundamental digital marketing operations in the projects. Participation and contribution are valued in the course. The lectures/discussions are designed to strengthen and expand on, but not to substitute for, the learning through the assigned homework.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. To learn the basic digital marketing concepts, principles, and business models.
2. To develop basic practical skills in digital communication and promotion.
3. To understand cutting-edge digital marketing strategies.

COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

- Lecture slides, reading materials, and assignments are provided on Avenue to Learn (A2L).
- Business cases and simulations are provided in a coursepack at Harvard Business Publishing at https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1326570 , Price: US$ 30.85.
- An AI coach software https://chat-aiagora.ca/home will answer students questions on digital marketing automatically.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

In this course, learning results from in-class lectures and discussions, as well as out-of-class readings, assignments, and a field project. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis except in instances where group work is required. In these cases, group members will share the same grade, adjusted by peer evaluation. Timely submission of all assignments is required as per the instructions provided. Accommodation for late submissions or missing quizzes and participation will only be considered if you submit an MSAF or discuss the matter with the professor in advance. The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights

A.	Class participation		10%
B.	Quizzes		15%
C.	Assignments		25%
D.	Digital Marketing Project		50%

- Website Audit Report   20%
    - Preparation Report   5%
    - Web Audit Report   15%
- Digital Promotion Presentation + Plan   30%
    - Preparation Report   5%
    - Ads Campaign Proposal+ Presentation   25%
    - Campaign implementation (Bonus)   up to 10%

TOTAL: 100% +10% bonus

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
A+	90 - 100	C+	67 - 69
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
		F	00 – 49

Course Deliverables

ACTIVITIES	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
Lectures	In-person	Live in-person lectures	In person
Quizzes	In-person	Conducted in classes	A2L
Case discussions	In-person	Students should read the case carefully before the class discussion.	Harvard Business Courseware
Guest talks	In-person or through Zoom	Guest talks by industry experts on specific digital marketing topics	In-person or Zoom
Assignments	Asynchronous	Individual and group assignments	Submitted to A2L
Project reports	Asynchronous	Students will work in a group to help a business client to improve its digital marketing performance.	At each group's discretion

A. Class Participation (10%)

You are encouraged to raise questions and present your own views and insights during lectures. In case discussions, comments and further discussion on classmates' opinions will be appreciated. Your class participation marks are based on your class attendance and contributions to class communication. The teaching assistant will evaluate your performance in each class and will calculate an overall participation mark by the end of the semester. If you are concerned about your participation mark before then, feel free to check with her about your performance and expected mark.

B. Quizzes (15%)

In-class quizzes on key digital marketing concepts and principles will be administered in the same class in which the content has been taught. The quiz questions are either multiple-choice questions or short-answer questions. Most in-class quizzes will be conducted via Avenue to Learn during the class time.

C. Assignments (25%)

There will be about seven assignments that you are required to complete individually after classes, including case preparation questions, practical questions on digital marketing principles, and two online simulations. The two simulations are included in the Harvard Business Publishing coursepack.

Unless otherwise specified, the assignments will be posted on Avenue to Learn following the *Course Schedule* on the second last page of the course outline. The default due time of an assignment is midnight before the following class if not specified.

D. Digital Marketing Project: (50%)

Several business partners have committed to collaborating in this course. Students will work in a group for an assigned partner to improve its digital marketing performance. Each partner will work with several groups.

The project is composed of two tasks: 1) to complete a web audit report to help the partner company to refine its website; 2) to design (and maybe implement) a two-week digital promotion campaign for the partner.

Web audit report (20%): The business partner will explain its business and provide access to its Google Analytics account. Students will investigate and assess its website and provide a website audit report to help the partner improve its web design.

- By **Sept. 28th**, each student group will submit a "**Web Audit Preparation Report**" **(5%)**, which addresses the website objectives, target audience, and expected website offerings. This work will help students better audit the partner's website.
- By midnight of **Oct. 19th**, each student group will submit a formal **Web Audit Report (15%)** in PowerPoint format. The report should
  1. Summarize the website's main objectives, functionalities, and target users.
  2. Evaluate the website's strengths and weaknesses from perspectives including navigation structure, page layout, contents, and search engine optimization. (Using Google Analytics data to justify your analyses and recommendations.)
  3. Offer suggestions to improve the website.
- In the class on **Oct. 20th,** each student group will give a five-minute **presentation** (not counting for marks) summarizing the key insights of their web audit report.

Detailed format/structure requirement of the two reports will be provided separately.

Digital promotion plan (30%+10% bonus): Students will design a two-week digital promotion campaign for the partner company. The partner will outline its expectations and needs for the campaign, commit an advertising budget, and provide information content and historical data of its previous digital advertising activities. Based on these resources, student groups will develop a detailed proposal for the campaign.

- By **Oct. 27th**, each group will submit a "**Digital Ads Campaign Preparation Report**" **(5%)**, which addresses the campaign objectives, target audience, and channel selections.

- By midnight of **Nov. 16th**, each group will submit a **Digital Ads Campaign Proposal** in PowerPoint format. The proposal should:
  1. Identify quantitative objectives and the metrics to measure the campaign's success.
  2. Select appropriate advertising channels and strategically allocate the budget.
  3. Specify *detailed operational settings* for each selected channel (e.g., keywords/audience selection, bidding and daily budget settings, key features of advertisements, etc.).
  4. Explain how the proposed campaign will meet the partner company's expectations.

- In the class on **Nov. 17th**, each group will have 20 minutes to **present** their proposal. In most cases, the presentation slides are a subset of the proposal slides. The proposal slides and the presentation will be graded together and totally account for **25%** of your overall average.

- Each business partner will select one proposal and will implement it with the assistance of the selected group. *The ads campaign should start no later than Nov. 27th*.

- The selected group will work with the business partner to set up and manage the ad campaign. It is expected to take the group a substantial time and effort. The selected group will trace the campaign performance and will present the outcome and relevant experience/lessons to the business partner and the professor *in the week of Dec 15th-19th*. Each student in this group will gain *up to 10 bonus points* which depend on the campaign outcome. Basically, up to 4 points for helping the partner to implement the campaign, up to 3 points if the campaign reaches the partner's initial goal(s), and up to 3 points if the campaign performs better than the partner's expectation.

Detailed format/structure requirement of the report and the presentation will be provided separately.

Group Work Issues: Each group will consist of five to six students (exceptions may be made by the professor given the class enrollment).

- Group Sign-up: After you form a group, please name your group and email the teaching assistant you group members' names and IDs, as well as your group name. The teaching assistant will create a group for you on Avenue to Learn. All groups should be formed by the end of the second week.

- **Peer Evaluation**: Peer evaluation will be used to assess each group member's work. A peer evaluation form is provided on the last page of the course outline and is **required** to be submitted by **Dec. 4th**. The evaluation form will be valid only if all the group members sign it or send a confirmation using their McMaster email accounts. (If you fail to do so, I will assign your evaluation marks at my discretion based on information at my disposal.)

The result of the peer evaluation process will reflect each group member's true contribution to the project. Students are expected to resolve any residual conflicts based on fairness. Members who contribute more may see an increase in their overall grades, while those who contribute less may see a decrease. *You are highly recommended to discuss the **collaboration schedule** and **reward system** in your first group meeting*.

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.

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.

Students who have concerns about the course content, evaluation methods, or delivery should first reach out to the course instructor. If your concern remains unresolved after speaking with the instructor, you may then reach out to the relevant Area Chair for further consideration.

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

UNRESTRICTED USE: Students may use generative AI throughout this course in whatever way enhances their learning; no special documentation or citation is required.

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 4MH3 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

Dates	Schedule	Assignments	Group Project
		Due at midnight before the class date if not specified	
Sept. 8th	• Introduction		
Sept. 15th	• Web Design and Web Analytics • Google Analytics	Asgn 1: Fundamentals of Online Marketing (2%)	
Sept. 22nd	*Digital Marketing Project: Meeting with clients for the web analysis project* • Search Engine Optimization	Asgn 2: Google Analytics (4%)	
Sept. 29th	• Search Engine Advertising		Web Audit Prep. Report
Oct. 6st	• *Case: GiveIndia* • *Guest talk: TBD*	Asgn 3_GiveIndia (4%)	
Oct. 13th	Mid-term recess	Asgn 4_Online Paid Advertising (2%)	
Oct. 20th	*Digital Marketing Project: Meeting with clients for the digital promotion project*		Web Audit Report (PPT format)
Oct. 27th	• Social Media Marketing Principles • Organic Social Media Marketing		Ads Campaign Prep. Report
Nov. 3rd	• Social Media Advertising • AI application in content creation	Asgn 5_Social Media Marketing Practices (4%)	
Nov.10th	• Strategic Concerns in Social Media Marketing • *Case: Synapse*	Asgn 6_Synapse Campaign Design (5%)	
Nov. 17h	*Digital Marketing Project: Presentations on digital promotion campaigns*		Ads Campaign Proposal
Nov. 24th	• Email Marketing and Online Customer Relationship Management • *Guest talk: TBD*		
Dec. 1st	• Digital Marketing Analysis • *Case: Rocket Fuel*	Asgn 7_Rocket Fuel (4%)	Ads Campaign launch by **Nov. 27th**
Dec. 15th - 19th	*Digital Marketing Project: Presentations and feedback on campaign implementation (by only the selected team)*		Peer evaluation form due by **Dec. 4th**

IMPORTANT NOTE: The above schedule is to be considered tentative and can be changed by the professor during the semester. You will be informed through Avenue to Learn if such a change is made.

APPENDIX
4MH3 Digital Marketing Group Evaluation Form

Instructions:

1. Please assign each person in your group an amount of money which represents each individual's contribution to the project and the assignment. You may each wish to complete a form individually and then share these forms at a group meeting but only ONE FORM is to be submitted for each group and it must be signed by all group members.

2. Your total budget to distribute among the people in your group is $600 * (the number of people in your group). For example, if there are 5 people in your group, then pretend that you have $600 * 5 = $3,000 to pay to the group.

3. If everyone contributed equally, then pay each person $600.

4. Adjust the fee according to your honest personal assessment of the value of each person's contribution. In our example, the fee could be as low as $0 or as high as $3,000.

5. The factor arrived at for each team member as a result of the peer evaluation will be applied to the group work in this course.

6. TREAT THIS EVALUATION SERIOUSLY.

7. MAKE SURE THAT THE FEES PAID ADD TO $600 * GROUP SIZE.

Group Name: _____

GROUP MEMBER	SIGNATURE	FEE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____