

**Commerce 3MB3  
 Consumer Behavior  
 Winter 2026 Course Outline**

**Marketing Area  
 DeGroote School of Business  
 McMaster University**

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***COURSE OBJECTIVES***

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This course is designed to introduce you to key theoretical concepts in consumer behavior and build your ability to apply these concepts to real-world marketing problems.

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***INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION***

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Thursday 2:30-5:20 KTH B124

Friday 2:30-5:20 KTH B124

**Instructor: Dr. Maureen Hupfer**

**Office: DSB 213**

**Contact Information: email preferred [hupferm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hupferm@mcmaster.ca); 905-525-9140, ext. 24101**

**Office Hours: By appointment for in person or Zoom meeting.**

Course website: This course has an Avenue learning website at <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>.

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***COURSE ELEMENTS***

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

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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### ***Theory, Business Application and Perspectives***

How does who do what and why? The field of consumer behavior attempts to explain and predict the ways in which consumers think and behave in given situations. How do consumers interpret advertising information? Why do people buy? Why not? Who and what are consumers relying upon for information? How can marketers predict behaviors from attitudes? How do consumers make decisions? How do we consume and dispose of products? To answer these questions, consumer behavior draws heavily on the disciplines of psychology, economics, sociology and anthropology. In this course, you will survey the relevant theory and learn how to apply these concepts to real world marketing situations. Class-time discussion of theory always will be supported with examples drawn from past and current business practices as well as consumers' everyday lives; we will be considering the social, ethical, regulatory, environmental and technological contexts in which consumers think and act. This course has a North American emphasis but we also will be comparing and contrasting international examples with consumer behavior in Canada and the United States.

This course stresses understanding, application, and generalization rather than memorization. In every field that you are studying, the body of accepted knowledge is growing and changing at an increasingly rapid rate. Because your success as a marketer will depend in part on your ability to find out about new knowledge and apply it to your own marketing problems, your performance in this course will be evaluated in terms of how well you are able to integrate textbook theory with business facts to arrive at explanations and recommendations.

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### ***IMPORTANT LINKS***

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

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### **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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

- Prepare for and participate in classroom discussion
- Demonstrate a mastery of course concepts through performance in exams

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### **COURSE LEARNING GOALS**

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- understand current theories from psychology, economics, sociology and anthropology that provide insight into consumer behavior
- recognize which theoretical concepts are relevant to a particular decision-making context, demonstrate clearly how these principles apply, and provide responses that are supported with evidence
- be able to apply theory to understand, analyze and address real world marketing problems

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### **REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS**

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There is no required text for this course. The PPT material that will be posted on Avenue (no cost) and covered in class provides comprehensive coverage of the theory and is supported with numerous examples to assist your learning in this course.

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT**

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Learning in this course results from class discussion/engagement as well as out-of-class reading, analysis, and preparation for exams. Your performance will be evaluated on an individual basis throughout the term.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Midterm 1 (25%)  
Midterm 2 (30%)  
Final Exam (30%)  
Participation (15%)

*NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator is allowed during examinations in this course. See McMaster calculator policy.*

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

<b>LETTER GRADE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>	<b>LETTER GRADE</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
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
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## **COURSE DELIVERABLES**

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### ***Two Midterm Exams (Midterm 1 25% and Midterm 2 30%)***

Students will complete two two-hour midterm exams that apply textbook theory to real-world marketing situations. These exams are non-cumulative and open-book. You will be allowed to bring any and as much paper-based course material that you think would be helpful (e.g., PPT slides, answers to class activities, your own notes, a dictionary, etc.). These exams will consist of 50 multiple choice and 3 written short answer questions.

### ***Final Exam (30%)***

The final exam is two hours, non-cumulative and will be scheduled by the Registrar during the final exam period. The format will be identical to the two midterms.

### ***Participation (15%)***

Name cards and class pictures are used to help give credit for your participation. You must have a name card with your **first name and initial of your last name** clearly written and displayed in front of you for class. **Use the first name that you prefer to be called**; this is not necessarily your name on Mosaic or Avenue if you prefer a shortened or different version of your first name. **This is the name that you need to use throughout the term**. Since student involvement is an important component of this course, official McMaster student ID photographs will be used to ensure that each student is assessed accurately. I will use the photograph to ensure the accuracy of participation marks and to identify students for grading purposes. If your ID photograph is not available on Mosaic (or if you look quite different now), I will be asking you to email me a photo.

I will be assessing your participation throughout the term using a four-level grading scheme (0 = not present, 1 = present but very little or no involvement, 2 = moderate involvement, 3 = active, thoughtful commentary). Marks will be recorded on Avenue each week and you should be checking these postings to ensure that they are consistent with your own record of attendance and degree of contribution. **I cannot guarantee that I will be able to assess your participation if you bring name cards with you that use different names from the ones that you supplied at the beginning of the term.**

**You need to attend your own section unless it is necessary to switch on occasion.** If you have a good reason for switching for a particular day (e.g. job interview, doctor or dentist appointment, you have missed a class or know that you will miss a class and want to make it up), you should let me know in advance so that I will be prepared to adjust your attendance and participation. The order of content coverage in this class is Thursday, Friday, and your participation marks after this weekly cycle is complete should be posted by the following Monday. **Requests for review or changes to these grades must be made within a week of their posting. If you are unable to attend class during a given week, an MSAF will be required to avoid a mark of "0" for that week.**

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## **COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK**

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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.

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.

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## **REQUESTING RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC WORK**

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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.

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## **COURSE MODIFICATION**

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

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## **GENERATIVE AI**

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Students may wish to use generative AI in this course for their own study purposes.

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## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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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](#), 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.

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## **AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION**

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**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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

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## **COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT**

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***Some courses may*** use on-line elements (e.g. email, Avenue to Learn (A2L), web pages, TopHat, MS Teams, 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.

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## **ONLINE PROCTORING**

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***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.

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## **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

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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.

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## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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

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

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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.

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## **COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING**

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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.

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## **EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES**

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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.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES**

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Your enrolment in Commerce 3MB3 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.