

**Commerce 4SM3  
Sports Management  
Winter 2026 Course Outline**

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

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***INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION***

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**Section 1: Thu 7:00-10:00**

**Grace Huang**

Instructor

huangg12@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: after class

Class Location: as per Mosaic

**Alannah Augustyniak**

TA

aaugust@mcmaster.ca

**Course website:** Avenue to Learn

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***COURSE ELEMENTS***

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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: No	Final Exam: No	Guest speaker(s): Yes

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## COURSE INFORMATION

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Lectures: Thursdays 7:00pm-10:00pm

Course Delivery Mode: In-Person

Course Description:

*This course explores the formation of the Sporting Goods and Sports Marketing industries with an entrepreneurial lesson from the industry's two giants, Nike and Adidas.*

*This class features an examination of social and digital strategies, their differences, and how large companies can use them. Additional topics discussed include behind the scenes of University Sports; promoting, hosting and organizing major sporting events; Digital eSports and the decision-making process mainstream companies had to face regarding this quickly growing industry; the risks and benefits of celebrity endorsements, and how decisions are made in a professional sports league.*

*This class is taught primarily through the case-method but also includes readings, lectures, guest speakers and videos.*

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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 completion of this course, students will be able to

- Set up an organization's structure in order to maximize future growth, while anticipating the problems it will face as it grows.
- Understand the relationship between sports marketing and corruption and how to avoid it.
- Identify and pursue new business opportunities. Lead a change in corporate strategy.
- Understand how to devise a communications strategy in a highly competitive environment.
- Identify strategic approaches in implementing social media campaigns. Distinguish a social strategy from a digital strategy on social platforms.

- Consider how a company assembles an integrated marketing campaign with multiple objectives and layers, and how the product and promotions pieces of the plan need to be aligned to constitute a cohesive strategy.
- Discuss the pay-offs and risks involved in celebrity endorsements and understand the reasons for choosing celebrities as a promotion strategy.
- Define a strategy for a well-established company to enter a new industry. Which paths of entry would synergize well and have a meaningful impact on long-term growth.
- How to segment the market in a new, fast-growing industry.
- How to prioritize business objectives when facing multiple potential opportunities.

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### ***COURSE LEARNING GOALS***

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- Understand and make connections between different elements in sports business
- Analyze business cases to make decisions for businesses, considering resources and limitations
- Collaborate with group members to help each other develop a further understanding of stakeholders involved in sport

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### ***REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS***

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Cases will be provided on Avenue to Learn  
No textbook required

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### ***CLASS FORMAT***

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This is an in-person 3-hour course. 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 at a convenient time based on what we are working on. Please use this time to take care of personal needs of various kinds.

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### ***COURSE EVALUATION***

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The execution of this course will involve a mix of in-class case discussions, group collaboration, guest lecturers from the sports industry, and external research. The two group assignments will be evaluated

as a group, meaning that all group members will receive the same grade. The other components are individual.

There has been universal design applied to this course so there is flexibility in the following components.

Current Event: Your group will have weeks to put together the assignment, so there are no excuses

Live Case: This group assignment will be allotted class time and a full week to complete.

Case Exam: You will have a week to submit this. There will be no in-person class on case exam week.

Weekly Quizzes: lowest grade will be dropped

Weekly Participation: lowest grade will be dropped

ISP: Your group will have weeks to put together the assignment, so there are no excuses

Late assignments will receive a ZERO. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

### **Components and Weights**

<b>Live Case</b>	Written Report (group)	10%
<b>Current Events</b>	Presentation (group)	15%
<b>Take Home Case Exam (due week 8)</b>	Written Report (individual)	25%
<b>Integrated Strategic Plan (due week 11)</b>	Based on Course Content (group)	25%
<b>Weekly in-class quizzes</b>	Based on past week's content (individual)	10%
<b>Participation</b>	In-class Contribution (individual)	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

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### ***COURSE DELIVERABLES***

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#### ***Live Case- McMaster Sports and Recreation***

The interim Live Case is worth **10%** of your final grade.

Representatives from McMaster Sports and Recreation will present a case to the class and students are to take this opportunity to ask questions to further understand the current situation to craft a solution. The case solution can be presented however your group finds suitable. Previous successful formats included infographics, business reports, videos, and PowerPoints. Solutions will be graded on feasibility, depth of analysis from data pulled, and creativity. Case winners will be chosen by McMaster Sports and Recreation.

## Current Events

Due: Beginning of class on chosen week, starting on the third week of class.

This assignment is worth **15%** of your final grade and will be completed as a group (6-7 people). This means everyone in your group will receive the same grade.

Group selection and sign up for the assigned presentation week will occur at the beginning of week #2. All topics must be pre-approved by the TA before the presentation. Presentations begin week #3. The schedule will be shared on Avenue.

The purpose of the assignment is to understand different perspectives of stakeholders in the sports related current event. Choosing a topic with some controversy is key.

Sample topic idea: Shohei Ohtani's \$700M Dodgers contract – the impact it has on everyone from players to team owners, to local businesspeople. Is it worth it? Who benefits? Who suffers?

There will be **one** in-class presentation which can be presented in a multimedia format.

The presentation will be covering the nature of the event and explain at least two opposite perspectives. Generally the perspectives would be **for** or **against** the event, and if against, what would they have done instead. A minimum of 3 stakeholders on each side must be presented, with research-backed evidence for how they may react. The presentations will begin after the break and will be a maximum of **ten minutes**. Not all group members need to present, but all members must contribute. Creativity is key, but it is the group's responsibility to bring the right equipment to class to set-up during the break. Presentations will be back-to-back after the break.

This is your chance to become experts at one controversial current event and share with the class in the way you find most appropriate and engaging. In past years we've seen skits, fictional news videos, and court room debates. Research may need to be extrapolated and interpreted to get your point across. Class engagement is encouraged.

## Take Home Case Exam

Due: Thursday Thurs. March 19, 2026 at 7:00pm Sharp

This case exam is worth **25%** of your final grade, and will be completed individually.

Questions will be provided in advance. The full write up for the case exam should not exceed 1,000 words. Include the total word count on the title page.

- The total report is limited to **1,000 words** of text;
- Your full name, student #, section #, must be on the cover page and on the top right corner of each page
- **NO** paper copies will be accepted
- Assignments must be submitted on Avenue

- Assignments must be converted into PDF format before being submitted. Only PDF's will be accepted
- 8.5 X 11 inch paper, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, line spacing should be 1.5 lines.
- Each assignment should contain a cover page. The cover page should include: your full name, student #, section #, name of case, total word count
- Assignments that are handed in late will receive a grade of **zero**

### ***Integrated Strategic Plan (ISP)***

Due: Beginning of class # 11, Thursday Thurs. Apr. 2, 2026 at 7:00pm Sharp

This assignment is worth **25%** of your final grade, and will be completed as a group (6-7 people). Group selection will occur at the beginning of week #2.

This plan draws from the learnings in each case as covered in class. Groups can choose to represent either: a new start-up company, an existing fictitious company, or an existing real company. The plan should detail how the organization is going to either gain new market share in their existing market or reach out into a new market.

Topics to cover:

- Financing decisions (how to acquire the capital required to roll out the new plan).
- Detail the challenge of going up against the market leaders (or how to deal with smaller niche competitors) and how to overcome this obstacle.
- What will the corporate strategy be and will it need to be changed in order to pursue the new opportunity?
- Detail the social strategy behind your plan and which social platforms you will be using. Will this strategy give you a sustainable competitive advantage? Identify the benefits and limitations associated with your strategy (fully developed, innovative ideas are key here).
- Will your plan incorporate a major sporting event?
- Will your plan involve a Celebrity Endorsement (if so, be sure to discuss the appropriate fit between the chosen celebrity and your brand)?
- Could corruption within the sports industry could be an issue? How it will be addressed?
- When faced with multiple expansion opportunities, how will you assess the potential of each opportunity and ultimately decide where to invest?

Not every topic listed above will be relevant for each group's plan however it must be clearly stated if the team does not believe a topic will be applicable to their plan (for example "Our team has chosen not to use a celebrity to endorse our new product line at this time").

Students will be evaluated on the thoroughness of presentation content, creativity and on communication skills. Teams are encouraged to be as **creative** as possible when making these presentations and may use any presentation theme or format they wish as long as each team member has relatively equal presentation time.

The final product must be in **video** format. These videos should be uploaded to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) (it is your choice to make the video public or unlisted). Before the deadline, students will submit their YouTube video URL via Avenue. Do not miss the deadline as outlined in Avenue. Late submissions will not be accepted and will receive a zero grade.

Video presentations must be between **8-12 minutes** in length.

## **Participation**

In class participation is worth **10%** of your final grade.

The **case-method** requires students to be cooperative in sharing their views. Instructors and TAs will feel free to **cold-call** on anyone at any time. Hence, it is imperative that you prepare for each and every case and reading. In general, contributions are evaluated in an ascending order from good chip shots, to quite substantial comments, to case cracking contributions. Debate and challenge are important activities that help in the learning process and the willingness of individuals to engage in such activities with their classmates is appreciated. However, using **air-time** involves an obligation to actually contribute. None of us has time for recitation of case facts, bland summaries of prior discussion, and so on, that are devoid of implications. Before you speak, always answer the question **so-what?** Participation will **NOT** be graded by counting each contribution a student makes. Participation will be graded by examining the quality of contributions in each class.

Attendance will be taken at the beginning and end of every class. Students must remain online / in class for the entire lecture. Partial attendance will not count for participation marks.

Effective communication is a prerequisite to success in the business world. For that reason, all marks in this course will be based on both the substance of your work and the quality of your written and oral communication. Particularly poor communication could result in a reduction in your overall final mark as great as one or two letter grades. With respect to case discussions in particular, try to contribute comments that:

- get the discussion off to a productive start by highlighting the key characters in the case and the main decisions that still need to be made,
- shape the discussion through the meaningful introduction of theoretical concepts, current events, financial calculations or alternative analysis,
- triangulate case discussions with current events or readings and by matching or referring to previous points made during the class,
- link or contrast the main highlights of this particular case with previous cases,
- change or reverse the direction of the discussion when appropriate and support the alternative hypothesis or opposing view, and
- summarize and bridge the comments of others without undue repetition.

Immerse yourself in each discussion case by reading it twice, the first time to obtain an overview, the second to flesh out the detail. Make notes to facilitate your contribution to the class discussion. Work with other students when preparing for a case discussion in order to learn from each other. You will get next to nothing out of a case discussion if you are not fully prepared, and you run the risk of being

embarrassed if you are called upon to contribute. Your TA will be assigning a grade for participation after each case discussion. Case discussion marks cannot be made up if you miss a class. **Your lowest participation grade will be dropped.**

## Quizzes

In class quizzes are worth **10%** of your final grade. There will be a 3-4 question multiple choice quiz every week starting on week #3. Quizzes will be on Avenue to Learn. **Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.**

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## LATE ASSIGNMENTS

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In-class work cannot be submitted after the class is over. Make sure you upload/hand-in any papers, worksheets, and so on before you leave the classroom.

All assignments handed in after the deadline will receive a grade of **zero**. Universal Design has been applied so MSAF is invalid.

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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.degrote.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 the 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 use generative AI in this course in accordance with the guidelines outlined for each assessment, and 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 limitations for use for each assessment and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately.

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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](#).

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. 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](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. 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.

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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, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES**

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Your enrolment in Commerce **4SM3** 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.

**Commerce 4SM3**  
**Strategic Sports Management**  
**Winter 2026 Course Schedule**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>
1	Thurs. Jan. 8	Discuss: Course outline schedule, participation, grading, expectations, Group selection for Current Event + ISP presentations (6-7 per group) Assign: Topic for current events presentations Lecture: Introduction to The Business of Sport
2	Thurs. Jan. 15	Case 1: Knight the King: The Founding of Nike Lecture: History of Nike, Leadership and entrepreneurship Prepare: Case for class discussion Due: Group selection for Current Event + ISP presentations
3	Thurs. Jan. 22	Case 2: Horst Dassler, Adidas, and the Commercialization of Sport Lecture: The beginning of sports marketing, corruption, and succession planning. Prepare: Case for class discussion Due: Current Event (3 groups)
4	Thurs. Jan. 29	Case 3: Nike Football: World Cup 2010 South Africa Guest Speaker: TBD Prepare: Case for class discussion Due: Current Event (3 groups)
	Thurs. Feb. 5	Special Activity TBD
5	Thurs. Feb. 12	Lecture: Integrated marketing campaigns, across various categories and products. Case 4: Name, Image, and Likeness: A New Era in College Sports Due: Current Event (3 groups)

	Thurs. Feb 19	No Class (mid-term recess)
6	Thurs. Feb 26	Class Activity: University Sports Live Case Guest Speakers: McMaster Sports and Athletics
7	Thurs. Mar. 5	Lecture: Global apparel sales, and evolution of B2B sales funnels  Case 5: Macroeconomic forces, The National Hockey League, and Winning the Stanley Cup Prepare: Case for class discussion Due: <b>University Sports exercise DUE 7:00pm March 5- A2L</b>
8	Thurs. Mar. 12	Case 6: Rush Street Interactive: Online Sports Betting Lecture: Choosing celebrities as a promotion strategy. Pay-offs and risks involved in celebrity endorsements. Branding strategies. Prepare: Case for class discussion <b>MID TERM EXAM becomes available on A2L at 10:00pm on Mar. 12</b>
	Thurs. Mar 19	<b>No Lecture. Take Home MID TERM EXAM DUE 7:00pm on Mar 19– A2L</b>

10	Thurs. Mar 26	Lecture: Business decisions facing leagues: expansion + media rights Lecture: Evolution of E-Sports Activity: ISP Practice
11	Thurs. Apr 2	Integrated Strategic Plan Due 7:00pm on April 2