

Commerce 3MA3
MARKETING RESEARCH
Fall 2026 Course Outline

Marketing Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

C02 Class Hours: Monday 11:30 AM – 2:20 PM

Instructor: Vidhya Krishnaraju

Email: krishv4@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: Tues 11:00 AM to 12:00 noon

Student TA: Chenrui Zhang

Office Hours: TBD

Course Website: Avenue to Learn (<https://avenue.mcmaster.ca/>). Please check the course website daily for announcements and content.

COURSE ELEMENTS

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

COURSE INFORMATION

The course is largely structured to follow the steps in the marketing research process. We first address the more qualitative and conceptual aspects of marketing research. Topics include problem definition, research design, sampling, data collection methods, questionnaire design, and measurement issues. We then focus on causal research and methods of data analysis, with an emphasis on hands-on data analyses and the interpretation and use of these data analyses.

The class sessions will only roughly parallel the text and readings. Rather than merely rehashing concepts discussed in the text, class sessions will be devoted to probing, extending, and applying

the text material. Therefore, you must complete the assigned readings and think about them prior to the class session. We will use cases, videos, problems and discussion exercises to illustrate how different marketing research methods have been applied to solve real-world problems. The emphasis will be on the appropriateness and use of the research methodologies and techniques as well as on the larger strategic issues. Additional material (in the form of magazine and newspaper articles of current events) may also be distributed to you through links to websites. This will help you integrate concepts covered in class with real world events.

IMPORTANT LINKS

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

Upon completion of this course, you will have had the opportunity and training to:

1. understand the needs of marketing managers for information;
2. develop specific marketing questions that can be addressed through research;
3. determine the specific objectives of the marketing research project;
4. select the appropriate research design to address the research problem and best achieve the objectives;
5. understand and critique various sources of secondary and internal data and be able to assess their quality and usefulness to management;
6. understand the stages of the marketing research process;
7. understand when NOT to conduct primary research;
8. learn how to design effective questions and questionnaires, using different (and appropriate) measurement scales;
9. determine how best to analyze survey data;
10. learn how to turn statistical findings into marketing information that gets attention and assists the manager in making decisions;
11. learn when and how to conduct causal research;
12. learn how to write reports and present findings and recommendations that convey marketing information simply and effectively and encourage marketing action;
13. be aware of and understand ethical issues related to marketing research; and
14. manage a reasonably complicated research project, work in a team, and make effective oral and written presentations.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS

Today's marketing environment presents managers with increasingly complex problems and opportunities and the ongoing need for current, accurate, pertinent information about their customers, competitors and the markets in which they operate. The purpose of this course is to provide a fundamental understanding of marketing research methods employed by well-managed firms. The course is aimed at the manager who is the ultimate user of the research and the one responsible for determining the scope and direction of research activities. The key learning objectives of the course are to help you develop skills (a) to become better supervisors and users of marketing research and (b) to conduct marketing research yourself. An overall goal is to develop an appreciation for the potential contributions and limitations of marketing research in making business decisions. This course is relevant to managers in marketing as well as nonmarketing fields (e.g., consulting, HR, buy and sell-side analysis, investment banking).

COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Required:

- **Textbook:**
 - *Marketing Research Essentials* by Carl McDaniel, Jr., Roger Gates, Subramanian Sivaramakrishnan and Kelley Main (2nd Canadian Edition). Available as:
 - Paperback (ISBN: 978-1-118-04317-2)
 - Loose leaf (ISBN: 978-1-118-82300-2) - \$124.95
 - An E-text (ISBN: 978-1-118-82336-1) - \$50.00
 - **Additional Materials:**
 - Handouts, problem sets, discussion exercises and other readings distributed in class and/or the course website.
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• **CLASS FORMAT**

- 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.

COURSE EVALUATION

Learning in this course results from attendance at lectures, staying current on the readings, coming to class prepared and contributing to class discussions, completing the problem sets, and being an effective team member of your group research project. Course components include work to be completed both individually and as a member of a group. Team members will share the same grade, adjusted by peer evaluation if warranted.

Missed Tests/Exams: Missed tests/exams will receive a grade of zero unless the student has submitted and been approved for a Notification of Absence or MSAF.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will be penalized one grade level (e.g., from A- to B+) for each day they are late.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

A: Class Contribution (Individual)	15%
B: Midterm Exams (Individual)	40%
<i>a) Exam 1</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>b) Exam 2</i>	<i>20%</i>
C: Research Project (Group)	45%
<i>a) Research Proposal</i>	<i>3%</i>
<i>b) Survey Proposal</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>c) Presentation</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>d) Final Report</i>	<i>20%</i>
Total:	100%

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

COURSE DELIVERABLES

Class Contribution (15%)

A large part of the benefit that you will derive from this course is related to your willingness to expose your viewpoints and conclusions to the critical judgment of the class, as well as of your ability to build upon and critically evaluate the judgments of your classmates. **Participation in class discussion is extremely important and each student is expected to contribute.** Name cards and class pictures are used to help give credit for your participation. You must have a name card, or log in, with your **full first and last name clearly** written and displayed for every class.

Since student participation is an important component of this course, official McMaster student ID photographs will be used to ensure that each student is assessed accurately. The instructor will use the photograph to ensure the accuracy of participation marks, group work, and for identifying students for grading purposes.

15 % of your grade depends on class participation, with a greater emphasis on participation in discussions of exercises. Effective (i.e., quality as well as quantity of) participation can therefore mean the difference between a higher and lower grade. Some of the criteria used to evaluate class participation include:

1. Do comments go beyond facts and add to our knowledge and understanding?
2. Do comments reflect an understanding of theories and tools presented in class?
3. Are comments relevant to the discussion and points made by others?
4. Do comments move the discussion along through the provision of new perspectives?
5. Are comments concise and clear or are they confusing and rambling?
6. Do comments reflect a concern for maintaining a civil and constructive classroom atmosphere?

The key to high contribution grades is making quality contributions to every class discussion. The participation grades will map to an assessment of the quality of the contribution by the T.A./Professor. Participation marks will be posted on the course website on a regular basis. Please see me if your marks are low, or well before if you are concerned that they might be low. There are ways I can help you to participate more effectively. At the end of the term, an overall participation grade will be given according to your participation marks in all classes.

Please note the following regarding Class Contribution:

- **Two photographs of the class will be taken in the beginning and end of class. These photographs will be used to facilitate accurate recording of your participation.**
- I expect you to be punctual . When you arrive late, your action disrupts the class. Please do not leave the classroom in the middle of class for a few minutes and then return; this also is disruptive. When you are present in class, all cell phones should be turned off unless I am notified prior to class of a possible personal emergency requiring them to be on.
- Reading newspapers or magazines in class, sending or reading text messages/email in class, or using your cell phone, tablet or computer for activities other than those related to the day's class, is not permitted. These activities not only impede your learning but also distract and reduce the value gained by your classmates from the course and therefore constitute "negative class participation ".
- I expect you to treat me, your TA and your fellow students with respect and in a professional manner at all times.

- Absence from class is a serious matter, since you obviously can't participate if you're not there. If there are legitimate reasons for you to miss class, please email me ahead to get approved.

Midterm Exams (40%)

Both midterm exams are individual, closed-book and non-cumulative. There will not be a final exam for this course. Computers, cell phones and tablets are not permitted for the exams. You may use a McMaster standard calculator for each exam; however the calculator must not be able to store text. I will provide you with formulas for each exam – I will discuss with you (in class sessions prior to the exam) about the formulas to be included in the exam. The exams will be application oriented – they will be designed to assess your understanding of marketing research concepts and your ability to apply these concepts to marketing research problems and decisions. The exams will include multiple choice questions, quantitative problems, short answer and/or short essay questions. You will be responsible for both the material covered in class and for the material in the text and readings – both will be addressed by questions in the exams. Sample exams will be posted to the course website and discussed in class.

Please note the dates for the exams. Please do not schedule job interviews or other activities in a manner that prevents you from taking the exams on the scheduled dates. Relief for one missed exam for legitimate reasons (e.g., MSAF) will be reweighted with all the other course components.

Research Project (45%)

The objective of the term-long research project is to provide you with some hands-on experience in applying concepts and methods of marketing research to a real-world marketing research problem. **The project will be done in self-selected groups of 4-6 persons and requires a collaborative team effort.** At the end of the term, each student will evaluate the performance of each of his/her peers in the team. Peer evaluations will be considered in determining the final project grade assigned to each individual team member. Above all else, keep in mind that everything you do in the research project reflects on McMaster University, the DeGroote School of Business, your professor and your research team. Over the years, we have developed a good reputation with the business community and the public. Let us enhance it through conscientious work, competence, integrity and total honesty.

In summary, you will:

1. Begin to form a four or five-member team immediately. Submit in the dedicated group dropbox team members' names, McMaster email addresses and phone numbers.
2. Submit a one-page memo (Client Profile) identifying the client and your current understanding of the research problem to be addressed by the project.
3. Ensure that all contact with the client is conducted in a professional, business-like manner. This includes written as well as personal interactions.
4. Submit the Research Proposal for your Team Project. The final version of this proposal must be formally approved by me before being signed by the client.
5. Submit your Survey Proposal for your Team Project.

6. Each team will provide a formal in-class presentation of its research project. All teams must upload their slides to Avenue before the first presentation.
7. Submit your Final Report and your peer evaluation sheet.
8. See Appendix 1 for further description and details of the Team Project.

It is important that you make progress on your project throughout the term. Waiting till the end of the term to undertake key project activities may put you in a difficult position. A suggested project activity schedule is as follows:

WEEK	ACTIVITY
1, 2, 3,4	Form Groups- Identify potential clients and projects – Select client and projects.
4, 5	Conduct secondary/exploratory research- Define the problem- Prepare the research proposal
6, 7, 8	Select sampling approach – Select mode of data collection Design questionnaire – Pretest questionnaire- Prepare the survey proposal
9, 10	Send out survey – Follow up on survey
11, 12, 13, 14	Code data – Analyze data – Prepare presentation and report

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. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites daily during the term and to note any changes.

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

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>.

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, A2L and/or McMaster email.

RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

All researchers conducting research that involves human participants, their records or their biological material are required to receive approval from one of McMaster's Research Ethics Boards before (a) they can recruit participants and (b) collect or access their data. Failure to comply with relevant policies is a research misconduct matter. Contact these boards for further information about your requirements and the application process.

McMaster Research Ethics Board (General board): <https://reo.mcmaster.ca/>

Hamilton Integrated Research Ethics Board (Medical board): <http://www.hireb.ca/>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce 3MA3 will be considered as 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

Please note that the schedule may be modified to accommodate student feedback.

Week / Date	Topic	Activity / Deadline
Week 1-2 - Sep 14	- Course Overview - Role of Marketing Research - Marketing Research Process - Problem Formulation - Internal and Secondary Data	Readings: Chapters 1,2, 3, and 9 (267-270) Due Sep 20th, 4pm: Team Contract
Week 3 - Sep 21	- Research Design - Exploratory Research: Focus Groups and In-depth interviews - Exploratory Research: Projectives Tests	Readings: Chapter 4 and 9 (271-275) Due Sep 27th, 4pm: Client Profile
Week 4 - Sep 28	- Observation - Survey Research: Measurement and Scaling	Readings: Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (276-279)
Week 5 - Oct 5	- Survey Research: Questionnaire Design and Survey Methods - Project Q&As	Due Oct 11th, 4pm: Research Proposal
Week 6 - Oct 12	MIDTERM RECESS (Oct 12 to 18)	
Week 7 - Oct 19	Exam 1: October 19	
Week 8 - Oct 26	- Survey Research: Sampling Design and Procedures - Survey Research: Sample Size	Readings: Chapter 11 and 12
Week 9 - Nov 2	- Ethical Issues in Marketing Research - Data Analysis: Road Map - Data Analysis: Single Variable Analysis, Cross Tabs	Readings: Chapter 13 and 14 (442-448) Due Nov 8, 4pm: Signed Agreement of Intent, Interim Peer Evaluation, Questionnaire Survey Proposal
Week 10 - Nov 9	- Data Analysis: Regression - Causal Research	Readings: Chapter 14 (442-461), Chapter 10 (295-324)
Week 11 - Nov 16	Exam 2: November 16	
Week 12 - Nov 23	Using SPSS & Excel for Data Analysis	
Week 13 - Nov 30	Data Analysis: Team Project	Due Dec 6, 4pm Powerpoint Slides

Week 14 - Dec 7	• Presentations	Due Dec 13 , 4pm: Final Report, Peer evaluation forms, Copy of Client Invoice (if applicable)
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