

Commerce 4FY3 Introduction to FinTech Fall 2026 Course Outline

Finance and Business Economics Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

INSTRUCTOR AND TA CONTACT INFORMATION

Section C02 - Wednesday 11:30 – 14:20

Dr. Katya Malinova

Instructor

malinovk@mcmaster.ca

Office: DSB A106

Office Hours: See A2L

Class Location: See Mosaic

Student TA

See Avenue to Learn for details

Course website: Avenue to Learn <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	No	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):	No

COURSE INFORMATION

Lectures: 3 hours per week

Tutorials: N/A

Course Delivery Mode: In-person.

Course Description: The course provides a broad overview of the financial technology (FinTech) industry. Specifically, it will cover; how financial services have evolved key players and their roles; existing products, how FinTech has evolved key players and their innovations; technologies underpinning FinTech innovations, major FinTech innovations and their impact on financial services, regulations governing the financial services industry and how to identify and analyze future trends/opportunities of FinTech.

IMPORTANT LINKS

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

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Explain how financial services have evolved, how the industry currently operates, and identify the roles of key players and existing products.
 - Describe the evolution of FinTech, the drivers of its growth.
 - Analyze the competitive landscape of FinTech across different market segments.
 - Understand the core technologies that underpin FinTech innovations, including blockchain and the infrastructure supporting decentralized finance.
 - Identify the key regulatory frameworks governing the FinTech industry and assess their implications.
 - Evaluate innovation strategies pursued by large financial institutions in response to FinTech disruption.
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COURSE LEARNING GOALS

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the rapidly evolving field of financial technology (FinTech). Students will gain an understanding of how technology is transforming traditional financial services, explore the innovations reshaping payments, lending, and investment management, and analyze the role of blockchain and decentralized finance in this transformation. The course emphasizes both conceptual understanding and critical evaluation, enabling students to connect theory with practice, assess risks and opportunities, and develop an informed perspective on the future of financial services.

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND TEXTS

Required:

Avenue registration for course content, reading materials and slides:

<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

No required textbooks for this course. All required readings as well as further suggested, optional ones will be posted on A2L.

Optional textbooks:

- Michael R. King & Richard W. Nesbitt – FinTech Explained: How Technology is Changing Financial Services and Driving Financial Inclusion (University of Toronto Press, 2023). Cost: \$49.95 (paperback)
- Campbell R. Harvey, Ashwin Ramachandran, & Joey Santoro – DeFi and the Future of Finance (Wiley, 2021). Cost: \$31.99 (amazon.ca; hardcover)

Second-hand copies are acceptable.

CLASS FORMAT

This course will be delivered in person. Sessions will combine lectures, in-class discussions, and in-class quizzes. Active participation in class discussions is expected and contributes to the Class Contribution grade.

COURSE EVALUATION

You will be evaluated based on the following components according to the weights below. Some components are individual and some are group-based.

Components and Weights

In-Class Quizzes (3 best out of 4)	40%
FinTech Profile Assignment (individual)	15%
Group Project (groups of 4)	35%
Class Contribution	10%
Total	100%

COURSE DELIVERABLES

This course has several deliverables. The overview below is intended to give you an idea of what to expect. Detailed instructions and requirements will be posted on A2L and discussed in class. All written submissions and presentation slides must be submitted through A2L unless otherwise indicated.

In-Class Quizzes (3 best of 4 = 40%)

Four 30-min in-class quizzes will be held during the term on September 23, October 28, November 18, and December 2. The quizzes will assess understanding and application of material covered in the course. They may include a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer, and brief applied questions or exercises. Further details will be provided in class and/or on A2L. Your best three quizzes count toward the final grade; the lowest score is dropped.

In-class quizzes will normally be held at the beginning of the scheduled class.

FinTech Profile Assignment (15%)

This individual assignment is worth 15% of your final grade. You will be asked to prepare a brief company profile for a specific FinTech. The assignment will include a written submission and an in-class component based on the profile. The written submission is due on Monday, October 19 at 11:59 p.m.; the in-class component will take place on Wednesday, October 21. Details and requirements will be posted on A2L. The written and in-class components together account for the 15% assignment grade.

Group Project (35%)

You will work in groups of four to develop and analyze a concept for a new FinTech company, product, or service. The project will also include a prototype or other tangible demonstration of the proposed concept, such as a simple app, website, or mock-up of the proposed concept. Students may use generative AI and other AI-enabled tools in developing the project and prototype. Details will be provided on A2L.

A brief project proposal/outline (1–2 pages) is due on Wednesday, November 11 and is worth 2% of the final grade. The written report is due on Wednesday, December 2 at 11:59 p.m. Presentation slides and any accompanying demonstration or mock-up, including any required access links or files, are due on Tuesday, December 8 at 11:59 p.m., and group presentations will take place in class on Wednesday, December 9.

The written report and presentation comprise the remaining 33% of the Group Project and will be evaluated according to the project requirements provided on A2L.

Class Contribution (10%)

You are expected to actively participate in each class and to contribute to the in-class discussion, for instance, by asking and answering questions. Participation grades will be based on an assessment of a variety of factors, including the quantity and the quality of your in-class contributions.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Each written submission will include a 30-minute grace period with no penalty, to accommodate unexpected technical issues. Beyond this grace period, late submissions will not be accepted and will instead be treated as Missed Academic Work in accordance with the Missed Course Work Policy (see below). In-class quizzes and other in-class assessments must be completed during the scheduled class period. Because the lowest quiz score is dropped, a single missed quiz receives a zero and is dropped; no documentation is required. Any additional missed quizzes, and other missed in-class work, will be handled in accordance with the Missed Academic Work policy.

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/>

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

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.

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.
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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. email, 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 4FY3 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.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Commerce 4FY3: Introduction to FinTech Fall 2026 Course Schedule

The topics listed are tentative and may be adjusted following the in-class discussions and/or any significant developments in the space

Week	Date	Topics and Activities
1	Sept. 9	What is FinTech? Why now?
2	Sept. 16	Payments I: How money moves; payment systems and key challenges.
3	Sept. 23	Quiz 1 (in class). Payments II: Payment innovation; Consumer-Driven Banking (Open Banking).
	Sept. 30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – No Classes
4	Oct. 7	FinTech in Lending and Credit: digital platforms, data, and AI applications.
	Oct. 14	Reading Week / Mid-Term Recess – No Classes
5	Oct. 21	FinTech Profile in-class component. Written submission due Monday, Oct. 19 at 11:59 p.m. FinTech in Wealth Management and Personal Finance: digital advice, personalization, and AI applications.
6	Oct. 28	Quiz 2 (in class). Blockchain Foundations I: blockchain, consensus protocols, and smart contracts.
7	Nov. 4	Blockchain Foundations II: applications, scalability, and evolving blockchain infrastructure.
8	Nov. 11	Group Project proposal/outline due at 11:59pm. Digital Money and Stablecoins: innovation, applications, and regulation.
9	Nov. 18	Quiz 3 (in class). Tokenization and Digital Capital Markets.
10	Nov. 25	Decentralized Finance (DeFi) and Digital Asset Markets.
11	Dec. 2	Quiz 4 (in class). Group Project written report due at 11:59 p.m. AI, Fraud, Financial Crime, Emerging FinTech issues.
12	Dec. 9	Presentation slides and any accompanying demonstration or mock-up due Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 11:59 p.m. Group presentations (in class).