Commerce 2AF3
Global Business Experience
Fall 2026 Course Outline

Human Resources & Management Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

Course Objectives

This goal of this course is to critically appraise the evolution of global capitalism and corporate power and its impacts on societies at home and abroad. The course is separated into three modules. Module 1 will examine key concepts, trends and outcomes associated with the historical development of modern corporations. Module 2 will conceptualize multinational corporations and key trends in their activities within and across international boundaries. Module 3 will focus on social issues such as the impacts of corporate power on democracy, the environmental crisis, and human rights under digitalization. This module will conclude by exploring alternative models of social organization. The course's overarching objective is to push students to question conventional ideas and practices related to firm governance and the regulation of business.

Instructor and Contact Information

Fri 2:30pm – 5:20pm
Dr. Sean O'Brady
Instructor
obradys@mcmaster.ca
Office: DSB 406
Office Hours: By appointment

Student TA
Name: TBD
Email: TBD
Office Location/Hours: Zoom, by appointment

Course Elements

Credit Value:	3	Leadership:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global view:	Yes
A2L:	Yes	Ethics:	Yes	Numeracy:	No	Written skills:	Yes
Participation:	Yes	Innovation:	No	Group work:	Yes	Oral skills:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	Yes	Final Exam:	Yes	Guest speaker(s):	Yes

COURSE INFORMATION

Lectures: Listed above
Tutorials: None
Course Delivery Mode: In person
Course Description: *A survey of the core concepts and issues within the study of global capitalism, the operation of corporations, and their effects on societies around the world.*

IMPORTANT LINKS

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND GOALS

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:

- Obtained a critical understanding of the historical development, social organization, and societal outcomes of modern corporations at home and abroad
- Developed critical thinking skills by reading complex text, developing skills in argumentation, and challenging conventional wisdom across a range of topics
- Gained an understanding of contemporary issues relating to firm governance and societal issues in Canada and in other countries
- Internalized core values and ethical principles relating to the management of large firms
- Acquired practical research skills in a team setting through the development of a research proposal
- A more international mindset, achieved through core course materials and involvement in a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project with students from Peru

COURSE MATERIALS AND TEXTS

Carroll, W. K., & Sapinski, J. P. (2018). *Organizing the 1%: How corporate power works*. Fernwood Publishing.

Course pack available for purchase at the following link: https://www.iveypublishing.ca/s/ivey-coursepack/a1ROF000006Cf2L2AS

Additional readings will be made available on Avenue to Learn or via links in the course outline.

CLASS FORMAT

The class will consist of weekly 3-hour in-person meetings. Class time will be dedicated to lectures, exercises, group discussions, and presentations.

COURSE EVALUATION

Missed tests/exams will receive a grade of zero unless the student has submitted and been approved for a Notification of Absence or MSAF-AR. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

EVALUATION

GRADE COMPONENT	WEIGHT	DESCRIPTION
Participation	**18%**	In-Class Participation
Quizzes	**24%**	Four scheduled in-class quizzes
COIL Project	**27%**	In-class presentation of research proposal + reflection paper
Final Exam	**35%**	Completion of a final cumulative exam scheduled in the exam period

COURSE DELIVERABLES

Participation
Participation in the form of attendance, reading assigned material, engagement in class exercises and discussions, and submission of requisite deliverables. Generative AI is not permitted during in-class activities. Violating this rule entails a 2% penalty on your final grade. Overall, class participation is worth **18%** of your final grade.

Quizzes
There will be four quizzes throughout the course. Each quiz is worth 6% of your final grade. Each quiz will contain 10 multiple choice questions (+ 2 bonus questions). The dates of the quizzes are indicated in the course schedule below. In total, these quizzes will amount to **24%** of your final grade.

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project
The COIL project involves preparing a proposal for an international research study. This study must analyze an issue that intersects with Canada and Peru. This project will be carried out in teams and will involve collaboration with Peruvian students from Universidad del Pacífico. The final deliverables are a research proposal presented in class, as well as a reflection paper. Further instructions will be provided in separate cover. The COIL project is worth **27%** of your final grade.

Final Exam
The final exam is cumulative and covers material from all sessions and is worth **35%** of your final grade.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day they are late.

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. 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.

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

USE PROHIBITED

Students are not permitted to use generative AI in this course. In alignment with McMaster academic integrity policy, it "shall be an offence knowingly to … submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source". This includes work created by generative AI tools. Also state in the policy is the following, "Contract Cheating is the act of "outsourcing of student work to third parties" (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016, p. 639) with or without payment." Using Generative AI tools is a form of contract cheating. Charges of academic dishonesty will be brought forward to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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*, 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.

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. 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.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

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.

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, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Acknowledgement of Course Policies

Your enrolment in Commerce 2BC3 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

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Global Business Experience
Fall 2026 Course Lecture Schedule

Week	Date	Assignment
Session 1 *Introduction*	Sept.11	**Reading:** Fulcher, J. (2015) *Capitalism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press. (Chapter 5)
Module 1: Unravelling the corporation		
Session 2 *Corporate power in contemporary capitalism*	Sept.18	**Readings:** Carroll, W. K., & Sapinski, J. P. (2018) *Organizing the 1%: How corporate power works*. Fernwood Publishing. (Chapter 1) Roach, B. (2007) Corporate power in a global economy. Global Development and Environment Institute - Tufts University. 1-36. **Debate:** Should we reign in corporate power? How and to what end?

Session 3 *The historical evolution of the corporation*	Sept.25	**Reading:** Carroll, W. K., & Sapinski, J. P. (2018) *Organizing the 1%: How corporate power works*. Fernwood Publishing. (Chapter 2) **Video:** The Corporation. Found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6v8e7dUwq_Q. **Quiz #1 (Sessions 1-3)** **Group Discussion:** Documentary Analysis
Session 4 *Unpacking corporate control*	Oct.2	**Reading:** Carroll, W. K., & Sapinski, J. P. (2018) *Organizing the 1%: How corporate power works*. Fernwood Publishing. (Chapters 3 and 4) **Guest Speaker:** Andrew Jones, Project Commercial Manager, Hatch
Session 5 *The 'externalizing machine'*	Oct.9	**Reading:** Bakan, J. (2004) *The Corporation*. Free Press. (Chapter 3) **Case Study:** The Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Responding to the Crisis in the Gulf of Mexico
	Oct.16	**Midterm recess**
Module 2: Global capitalism and the multinational corporation		
Session 6 *Multinational corporations*	Oct.23	**Reading:** Geoffrey, J. and Pitteloud, S. "Multinationals in Historical Perspective." Chap. 1 in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of Multinationals and Society*, edited by Geoffrey, J. and Pitteloud, S. Cambridge University Press, 2026. Pages: 11–37. **Quiz #2 (Sessions 4-6)** **Case Study:** In Search of Global Regulation
Session 7 *Supply chains and exploitation in the global south*	Oct.30	**Readings:** Deva, S., & Anand, P. (2024). A global south perspective on labour rights and supply chains for a post-growth world. *Labour Law Utopias*, 90. Bhagwati, J. (2007). Why Multinationals Help Reduce Poverty. *World Economy*, *30*(2), 211-228. **Case Study:** H&M, Rana Plaza, and Beyond: Fast Fashion Under the Microscope

Session 8 *Financialization of business and capitalism*	Nov.6	**Readings:** Foster, J. (2007) The financialization of capitalism. *Monthly review*. https://monthlyreview.org/articles/the-financialization-of-capitalism/. Akyüz, Y. (2022) Inequality, stagnation, financialization, and the Global South. In *Handbook of Economic Stagnation* (pp. 183-200). Academic Press. Friedman, M. (2007) The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. In *Corporate ethics and corporate governance* (pp. 173-178). Springer. **Class Presentations (Part 1)**
Module 3: Social issues		
Session 9 *Powerful actors and democratic futures*	Nov.13	**Readings:** Carroll, W. K., & Sapinski, J. P. (2018). *Organizing the 1%: How corporate power works*. Fernwood Publishing. (Chapter 6) Maitland, A., Taneja, A., Kamande, A., Brown Solá, C., Bignell, H., Lawson, M., & Møller Stahl, R. (2026). Resisting the Rule of the Rich. Oxfam. https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/resisting-rule-rich (Executive Summary and Chapter 2). Keohane, G.L. (2026). Can Corporate America Protect Democracy? In the Trump Era, CEOs Need to Define Redlines. *Foreign Affairs*. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/can-corporate-america-protect-democracy# **Quiz #3 (Sessions 7-9)** **Class Presentations (Part 2)**
Session 10 *Global firms and the environmental crisis*	Nov.20	**Readings:** Gamsos, J. (2026). Multinational Corporations and Climate Change: Risks, Responsibilities, and Resilience. (Chapter 2) Carrington, D. (2025). 'Food and fossil fuel production causing $5bn of environmental damage an hour'. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/dec/09/food-fossil-fuel-production-5bn-environmental-damage-an-hour-un-geo-report- Pearce, F. (2025). 'Green Grab': Solar and Wind Boom Sparks Conflicts on Land Use. *YaleEnvironment360*. https://e360.yale.edu/features/solar-land-grabs-agrovoltaics. **Class Presentations (Part 3)**
Session 11 *Corporations and data colonialism*	Nov.27	**Readings:** Mejias, U. A., & Couldry, N. (2024). Data grab: The new colonialism of big tech and how to fight back. In *Data grab*. University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1)

		de Freitas, M. V. (2025). *Digital Sovereignty and Data Colonialism: Shaping a Just Digital Order for the Global South* (No. 2519). Policy Center for the New South. https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2025-10/PP_38-25%20%28Marcus%20Vinícius%20De%20Freitas%29.pdf **Class Presentations (Part 4)**
Session 12 *Alternative models*	Dec.4	**Readings:** Carroll, W. K., & Sapinski, J. P. (2018) *Organizing the 1%: How corporate power works*. Fernwood Publishing. (Chapter 7) Fulcher, J. (2015) *Capitalism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press. (Chapter 4) **Quiz #4 (Sessions 10-12)** **Class Presentations (Part 5)**
Final Exam		**Scheduled in Exam Period**