Sociology 2LL3:

Introduction to Contemporary Sociological Theory

Winter, 2022.

Day(s) and Time(s) of Class:

Mon., 3:30 pm to 4:20 pm.

Thurs., 3:30 pm to 4:20 pm.

Classroom: HH 109.

Instructor: Dr. David Young.

Email: youngd@mcmaster.ca (**Important:** Please read the instructions in the “Email Communication” sub-section below **before** sending messages).

Office Location: KTH 629.

Office Consultation:

Through Zoom and by appointment only (**Important:** Please read the “Virtual Office Meetings” sub-section below for more information).

Office Phone: Ext. 23615.

# Course Outline

My name is Dr. Young. Welcome to the course! Please carefully read through the following information in this course outline. I have covered many issues that students are often wondering about.

## Contact Information

Email communication will be one means for you to ask me questions, but you can also discuss things with me through virtual office meetings. Please read the two sub-sections below for more information.

### Email Communication

If you have a question, it is best to contact me through email. Email provides an opportunity for you to develop or practice the strong business communication skills that employers are looking for! Before sending an email message, please ensure that you have carefully followed the instructions in the seven points below:

1. Please check to see if your question has been answered already somewhere in this course outline or in other course handouts. If your question has **not** been answered in the various course handouts, feel free to send an email message to me.
2. Please make sure that your question deals with something short and simple. Complicated matters can only be addressed through face-to-face interaction (i.e., during a meeting held by appointment through Zoom).
3. Please send your message from your McMaster email account. Do **not** send a message from another email account or from Avenue to Learn mail. Please understand that the Faculty of Social Sciences requires students to use their McMaster email account when communicating with university personnel, and university personnel are **not** obligated to reply if a message originates from another source.
4. Please use “Sociology 2LL3” as your subject line (so that I can quickly identify which of my courses you are in and more easily sort my email).
5. Please start your message with an appropriate greeting or form of address followed by my name (writing “Hi Dr. Young”, “Hello Dr. Young”, or “Dear Dr. Young”). In business communication, including communication with professors or TAs, please understand that it is proper etiquette to follow a greeting or form of address with the person’s name. Please also understand that “Hey” is **not** an appropriate greeting in business communication.
6. Please write your message in a professional manner. Be polite and respectful. Where appropriate, write “please” or “thank you.” Write in full sentences and with proper spelling. Please understand that writing business communication to a professor or a TA is **not** the same as writing a text to a friend.
7. Please bring your message to a close in a professional manner (writing “Thank you”, “Thanks”, “Regards”, “Sincerely” or something similar followed by your full name and your student number).

In the points above, I have emphasized some elements of business communication because I am trying to help you to develop the strong business communication skills that are crucial for many desirable occupations in the work world. I want you to develop these communication skills so that you can be successful out there!

After you have sent your email message, please keep the following points in mind:

1. Email that fails to follow the instructions noted above may **not** be answered (or, as a learning exercise, I may require you to re-write and re-send the email message before I will answer your question or address your concern).
2. Even if you have followed the instructions, please do **not** expect an immediate response. Please understand that professors and TAs are busy people, and it may take us up to two business days to reply. Furthermore, please keep in mind that email will **only** be read and answered during regular business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm). Please understand that evenings and weekends are personal and family time for me and for any TAs I may have for this course.
3. If you have not received a reply after two full business days, please check to see if you followed all the instructions provided above. If you did and still did not receive a response, it may be that the message was not received or somehow got missed. At that point, please send a follow-up message.

### Virtual Office Meetings

Most matters can be dealt with through email, but there may be some occasions when it is useful or necessary to speak face-to-face.

Due to the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am **not** prepared at this point to resume physical office meetings with students. My office is very small and lacks windows which open. Obviously, it is much safer to meet with students through virtual office meetings. If you wish to speak with me, please use your McMaster email account to send me a meeting request (along with several days and times that you are available). I will then be happy to set up a mutually convenient day and time for us to connect via Zoom.

## Course Description

This course is one of two courses at the second-year level that offers an introduction to sociological theory. Organizationally, the two courses cover different phases of an historical timeframe. Sociology 2KK3 (Introduction to Classical Sociological Theory) addresses early developments in the history of sociological theory, and Sociology 2LL3 (Introduction to Contemporary Sociological Theory) addresses later historical developments. Students are required to complete 2KK3 before attempting 2LL3. The former course provides the necessary foundation for the latter course.

Sociology 2LL3 addresses historical developments in sociological theory from the early 20th century up to the present. This is the basic timeframe for contemporary sociological theory. We will begin the course with an overview of contemporary theoretical ideas in sociology and get an understanding of how these ideas relate to the work of the classical theorists. We will then analyse several theoretical perspectives as well as the ideas of some particular theorists who have been associated with these perspectives. The perspectives to be examined include symbolic interactionist theory, structural functionalist theory, conflict theory, and neo-Marxian theory. We will conclude the course by considering how some perspectives and theorists have tried to challenge the failure of many sociological approaches to address issues associated with women, minority groups, and Indigenous peoples. More specifically, we will discuss contemporary feminist theory and sociological theory that has tackled “race” or colonialism.

## Course Learning Objectives

This course has several learning objectives. By the end of the course, you will:

* understand major concepts and ideas presented by key contemporary theorists in the period from the early 20th century up to the early 21st century.
* grasp how social, political, economic, intellectual, and biographical factors can influence theoretical ideas.
* comprehend how contemporary theoretical ideas in sociology build on classical theoretical ideas and can help us to understand events or circumstances in the 21st century.

All the objectives noted above are associated with the topic and content of the course. Additional objectives are connected to several of the [Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations](http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html) adopted at McMaster University. In particular, you will have the opportunity to enhance the depth and breadth of your knowledge as you learn about various theoretical ideas in sociology. Through written work, you will have the opportunity to apply knowledge acquired in the course and enhance your communication skills. Finally, you will be encouraged to deepen your autonomy and professional capacity by developing qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study and employment (e.g., business communication skills, reliability, maturity, time management skills, and behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility).

## Course Format

Unless McMaster University goes into another lockdown and shifts online again, **all classes in this course will be held in-person**. You are expected to be physical present for the classes.

The Scheduling Office has determined when class will be held in this course and the classroom location for this course. That information is specified above. There will be two 50-minute lectures each week. The two 50-minute lectures have been scheduled for Mondays and Thursdays. There will also be one 50-minute tutorial each week. Tutorials have been scheduled for various days and times. You are **only** permitted to go to the tutorial you are officially enrolled in. See the section below on “Tutorial Participation” for more information.

**Please Note (Hearing Disability):** Please keep in mind that I am partially deaf. This makes it difficult for me to hear comments or questions during lectures, especially if there are many students in a course or if a classroom has poor acoustics. Therefore, I would very much appreciate your co-operation in two ways:

1. If you are inclined to ask questions, please sit near the front of the classroom. If you would prefer to sit at the back, perhaps you could ask your questions after class (at a safe distance and while fully masked) or through email or a virtual office meeting. Depending on the size and acoustics of the classroom, I may not be able to hear questions from the back of the room.

2. When students are asking questions, or when any class discussions are taking place, please listen and refrain from making any noise. Competition from other sounds (talking, sorting notes, adjusting chairs, etc.) makes it extremely difficult for me to hear what someone is saying to me.

McMaster’s COVID-19 Protocols for In-Person Classes

During this term, you are expected to follow McMaster’s COVID-19 protocols for in-person classes. The protocols can be found in the [Mac Check](https://covid19.mcmaster.ca/maccheck/) and the [Health & Safety](https://covid19.mcmaster.ca/campus-health-safety/) sections of the COVID-19 Back to Mac webpage. Among other things, the protocols include:

* Completing the “Daily Check-In” on Mac Check and being prepared to display your green check mark to any university officials (including professors and TAs) who ask to see it.
* Being fully masked during classes (i.e., ensuring that a face mask fully covers your mouth, nose, and chin). Eating is **not** allowed in classrooms, but you are allowed to pull down your mask **very briefly** to take a sip of water. Masks are required unless students have met the conditions for a rare mask exemption and received an accommodation through Student Accessibility Services (SAS).

Please respect the rules noted above as well as the other rules that McMaster University has put in place to ensure the health and safely of faculty, staff, and other students as the pandemic continues.

## Overview of Course Requirements

The course requirements, and the weights attached to them in the calculation of your final grade, are as follows:

Mid-Term Test (30%); scheduled for Mar. 10.

Written Assignment (30%); due on Mar. 24.

Tutorial Participation (10%); grade determined in April after the end of classes.

Final Examination (30%); scheduled by the Registrar (Apr. 14 to Apr 29).

You **must** complete **all** these course requirements. More information about the course requirements can be found in the section below.

## Details of Course Requirements

### Mid-Term Test and Final Examination

Unless McMaster University goes into another lockdown, **the mid-term test and the final examination will be held in-person**. You are expected to be physically present to write the test and the later examination. There will **not** be an option to write the test or the examination online.

This course is divided into nine topics (as set out in the “Course Schedule and Required Readings” section below). The mid-term test will cover the first four topics, and the final examination will cover the last five topics. The final examination is **not** cumulative, so you will **not** be re-tested on material. Only topics **not** covered on the mid-term test will appear on the final examination.

The mid-term test will be 50 minutes long. It will include multiple choice questions as well as true/false questions (but **not** short-answer questions or essay questions). Most of the questions will be multiple choice, but some will be true/false. While the majority of the questions (at least 60%) will be based on the lectures, a minority of the questions (possibly as much as 40%) will be based on the required readings. Questions based on the required readings will cover important points that you should have picked up from doing the readings (e.g., definitions of concepts or explanations of key issues or ideas). Questions based on the lectures will go into greater detail (e.g., definitions of concepts, examples of concepts, and details of particular theories or studies). I will **not** ask questions about specific dates (e.g., the year in which a book was published), but I might ask questions about general timeframes (e.g., which of several theories was developed first or which perspective was dominant in a particular decade).

The final examination will be two hours long. It will include multiple choice questions, true/false questions, and possibly essay questions. For information about the nature of the multiple choice and true/false questions, please read the paragraph above. In addition to answering multiple choice and true/false questions, you may be expected to answer one essay question from a choice between two questions. In each of these essay questions, I will identify a specific section of the lecture on a topic and ask you to demonstrate your comprehension of the material covered in that particular section. You will need to show detailed knowledge of the definitions, examples, descriptions, and analyses presented in that part of the lecture.

Please be aware that all essay questions and all lecture-based multiple choice or true/false questions will be derived from the current lecture material. This means that you will need the definitions, examples, descriptions, and analyses presented in the version of the course that you are taking. If you use out-dated lecture notes from an earlier version of the course, you may **not** have the material you need to be successful.

Before each test or examination, I will post an announcement on Avenue to Learn which presents more specific information (e.g., noting testing locations, indicating the exact number of multiple choice and true/false questions, specifying the weights attached to particular types of questions, and providing other information). The announcement will appear on Avenue at least one week before the test or examination is to be held, and it is your responsibility to carefully read that announcement.

In-class tests will **not** be re-scheduled to accommodate vacations or other travel arrangements. If travel arrangements mean that you are not going to be available on the scheduled test date(s) noted above, you are advised to drop the course. Only certain conditions are acceptable grounds for missing in-class tests. For details, see the sections below regarding “Absences and Missed Academic Term Work” and “Accommodation for Missed Academic Term Work.” You should also be aware that McMaster’s Undergraduate Calendar states: “Examinations are **not** rescheduled for purposes of travel.” If you miss the final examination, I do **not** have the authority to let you write it. You will have to deal with other university personnel. Please see the Undergraduate Calendar for the university’s policies regarding deferred examinations.

If you miss an in-class test, and if I give you permission to write a make-up test (see the sections below regarding “Absences and Missed Academic Term Work” and “Accommodation for Missed Academic Term Work”), please be aware that you will be given only **one** chance to make up the missed test. Missing the scheduled make-up test (for any reason) will result in a grade of zero for that test. You will **not** get a third chance to write it.

### Written Assignment

Comprehensive instructions for completing the written assignment will be supplied on Avenue to Learn early in the course so that you have plenty of time to do the work. You are strongly advised to begin working on the assignment early in the term. Please note that it will take two to three weeks beyond the due date to finish the grading.

Students are expected to carefully read the “Assignment Instructions” as well as the handout on “Referencing Style and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty” (documents that will be available through Avenue to Learn). Students are expected to follow all instructions in these two documents when preparing written work for this course.

The written assignment is to be done individually. You are **not** permitted to form study groups with others, and there will be **no** collaboration of any form between students when working on the written assignment.

Please prepare your assignment for submission as a Word document. Please do **not** submit your assignment in any other format.

The written assignment will be submitted online (through the “Assignments” section of Avenue to Learn) by 11:59 pm on the due date specified above. I very strongly suggest that you do **not** wait until a few minutes before 11:59 pm to submit your assignment. If you do, and if you fail to complete the process by 11:59 pm, Avenue will label your assignment as late or (on the final possible night for submission) block your access and prevent you from submitting your paper. In the former case, a lateness penalty will be applied. In the latter case, a grade of zero will be applied. There will be absolutely no exceptions to this.

Upon submission, the assignment will be checked automatically for signs of academic dishonesty through a linkage to Turnitin.com. For more information, see the sub-section below on “Use of Turnitin.com.”

The written assignment will be checked for inappropriate (i.e., unauthorized) collaboration as well as plagiarism and other violations of McMaster University’s Academic Integrity Policy. If I suspect any violations of this policy, you may be required to answer questions about your written assignment in an oral examination. Evidence of academic dishonesty will result in serious sanctions. At a minimum, you will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. However, depending on the circumstances, more serious sanctions could also be imposed under the terms of the Academic Integrity Policy. For more information, see the sub-section below titled “Academic Integrity.”

If you wish accommodation for missing the due date for the assignment, you are required to meet certain conditions. For details, please carefully read the sections below regarding “Absences and Missed Academic Term Work” and “Accommodation for Missed Academic Term Work.” You are also strongly advised to carefully read the sections below that outline my policies regarding “Extensions on Assignments” and “Lateness of Assignments.”

### Tutorial Participation

Unless McMaster University goes into another lockdown, **the tutorials will be held in-person**. You are expected to be physically present for the tutorials. There will **not** be an option to participate in the tutorials online.

You will **only** receive credit for attending and participating in the tutorial you are officially enrolled in.

Please do **not** go to your assigned tutorial until I announce that the tutorials are ready to begin. Since I need time to meet my TA and get the TA prepared, the tutorials will probably not begin until the second or third week of the term. This is standard procedure in many courses.

Please understand that I am **not** able to move you to a different tutorial unless you have a conflict with another course that can be verified. Given the large number of students in the course and limited space in the tutorials, I’m afraid that I cannot move you to a different tutorial for any reason other than a documented conflict with another course. For example, finding the tutorial time to be inconvenient in some way, or having work obligations at the time of the tutorial, will **not** be the basis for being moved to a different tutorial.

Your tutorial participation grade will be based on a combination of **attendance at the tutorial** and **knowledgeable contribution to the tutorial**. You are expected to regularly attend your tutorial, to arrive on time for your tutorial, to stay for the duration of your tutorial, and to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner during your tutorial; see the section below on “Responsibilities Regarding Behaviour” for a description of actions that will be considered inappropriate, disruptive, or unacceptable. You are expected to come prepared by completing the required reading that your TA has indicated will be addressed in a particular tutorial, and you are expected to demonstrate knowledge of that reading through contribution to the tutorial (e.g., through participation in discussions or other active learning activities). All of these factors will be considered by your TA when deciding on your tutorial participation grade. Your TA is authorized to reduce your grade for tutorial participation if you arrive late, leave early, or behave in an inappropriate or disrespectful manner.

If you miss a tutorial and wish to receive credit for that tutorial, you **must** do all of the following: submit a McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) which indicates that you missed a tutorial in the course; arrange to have the automated MSAF email sent to Dr. Young (**not** to your TA); promptly send a follow-up email to Dr. Young (requesting accommodation and indicating who your TA is); and complete some make-up work that will be assigned and graded by your TA (based on the required readings discussed in the missed tutorial).

## Required Course Materials and Texts

You will need one textbook for the course, and it is available for purchase through the Campus Store. The textbook is:

Ritzer, G. & Stepnisky, J. (2017). *Introduction to contemporary sociological theory* (Custom Edition complied for Professor David Young for SOCIOL 2LL3, McMaster University). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

This textbook is crucial to your success in the course. It contains required readings. You must answer questions about the textbook chapters on the mid-term test and the final examination. You must show knowledge of the textbook chapters in the tutorial as part of what you need to do to earn a tutorial participation grade. Most significantly, you must utilize textbook chapters in your written assignment.

Please note that no other textbook is acceptable for this course. Please do **not** ask if you can use a different textbook written by other authors, another edition of the textbook noted above, or a different textbook written by the authors noted above. We will be using a custom edition of the textbook that has been prepared by the publisher specifically for my section of Sociology 2KK3. In an order to help you save money, I arranged for the publisher to create a version of the textbook that only includes the six required readings that I have assigned. This is much cheaper than buying the full textbook, which includes eleven other chapters you would not be required to read. If you elect to not buy the textbook or to use the wrong textbook, you accept full responsibility for what happens to your grades in the course.

You are very strongly advised to buy the textbook early in the term. The Campus Store will only order a certain number of copies and then order more copies if the supply runs out and it is still getting requests from students for more copies. If the Campus Store runs out of copies, it will take time to get another shipment from the publisher. Therefore, if you delay, you could find yourself temporarily without a copy of the textbook that you need to be successful in the course. You assume full responsibility for what happens to your grades if you do not purchase the textbook or if you fail to purchase it in a timely manner.

You are very strongly advised to buy the print version of the textbook and **not** attempt to buy a digital version. At the time this course outline was written, it was **not** clear if a digital version of my custom edition would be available from the publisher. That seems unlikely, and any other digital version (e.g., a digital version of the entire textbook rather than my custom edition) will obviously lack the same pagination and therefore be unacceptable. If you make it impossible for us to check the quality of your referencing by referring to the pages in the print version, you will receive either a reduced grade or possibly a failing grade for the assignment.

Course Lectures

In relation to the required readings referred to above, it is important to be aware of two key points about the course lectures:

1. The lectures will **not** cover everything in the readings. The readings go into much greater depth on topics than is possible within the context and the time constraints of lectures, so you are expected to do a certain amount of independent learning by completing the readings and picking up additional information on your own.
2. The lectures will include some material that does **not** appear in the readings. The lectures will at times address theories, concepts, issues, studies, etc. that are absent from the content of the textbook.

The lectures and the readings are intended to complement each other. Consequently, you need to be familiar with both and study both to be successful in the course.

## Course Schedule and Required Readings

The course schedule below identifies the course topics, the approximate dates when the topics will be addressed, and the required readings for the topics. We may progress a little faster or a little slower than the dates below indicate. You will be given reasonable notice if more significant changes must be made to the course schedule (e.g., dropping a topic because we have run out of time).

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: This lecture schedule is based upon current university and public health guidelines and may be subject to changes during the term. Any changes to the schedule or course delivery will be communicated on the course announcements section of Avenue to Learn. Please check the announcements prior to attending class.**

### Part I: Introduction

**Introduction to Contemporary Sociological Theory (Topic 1).**

Approximately Jan. 10 to Jan. 20.

Required Reading: Ritzer & Stepnisky, Ch. 1.

**No in-person classes. Recorded lecture available (through Avenue) on the start date noted above.**

### Part II: Some Key Theories

**Symbolic Interactionism (Topic 2).**

Approximately Jan. 24 to Feb. 3.

Required Reading: Ritzer & Stepnisky, Ch. 2.

**No in-person classes. Recorded lecture available (through Avenue) on the start date noted above. Tutorials begin the week of Jan. 24 and will be held virtually (through Zoom) for the weeks of Jan. 24 and Jan. 31.**

**Structural Functionalism and Conflict Theory (Topic 3).**

Approximately Feb. 7 to Feb. 17.

Required Reading: Ritzer & Stepnisky, Ch. 3.

**In-person classes and tutorials scheduled to begin on Feb. 7 (unless a further delay is implemented by McMaster University due to pandemic conditions).**

**Mid-Term Recess.**

No classes from Feb. 21 to Feb. 25.

**Mid-Term Test.**

Scheduled for Mar. 10.

Covering Topics 1, 2, and 3.

**Neo-Marxism (Topic 4).**

Approximately Feb. 28 to Mar. 14.

Required Reading: Ritzer & Stepnisky, Ch. 4.

### Part III: Other Important Theories

**Contemporary Feminist Theory (Topic 5).**

Approximately Mar. 17 to Mar. 28.

Required Reading: Ritzer & Stepnisky, Ch. 5.

**Theories of “Race” and Colonialism (Topic 6).**

Approximately Mar. 31 to Apr. 11.

Required Reading: Ritzer & Stepnisky, Ch. 6.

**Final Examination.**

Scheduled by the Registrar for a date as early as Apr. 14 and as late as Apr. 29.

Covering Topics 4, 5, and 6.

## Course Policies

Please familiarize yourself with the following course policies. You are responsible for being aware of and adhering to all policies established for this course.

### Use of Avenue to Learn

Some courses may use online elements, including Avenue to Learn. 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 McMaster email 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 online 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.

Avenue to Learn will be a crucial resource for this course. Avenue will be used to communicate announcements, to distribute various course handouts (such as a course outline or assignment instructions), to submit assignments, to post grades, and to meet other educational needs.

Please do **not** contact me through Avenue to Learn. There are two reasons for this. First, I prefer to use my McMaster email account for correspondence. Second, it is impossible to reply to a message sent from Avenue to a McMaster email account. Consequently, if you expect your message to be read and answered, please send the message from your McMaster email account to my McMaster email account.

Please be aware that material posted on Avenue to Learn is protected by copyright. You are permitted to print or download one copy of material that I have written (e.g., course handouts or certain course content) so that you can privately read or study this material. However, any further copying or any distribution of this material (e.g., to websites or to students not enrolled in the course) is strictly prohibited. If some academic writing has been posted on Avenue (e.g., an excerpt from a book), please note that this has been done under provisions in Canada’s Copyright Act.

### Absences and Missed Academic Term Work

Please note that work times or travel arrangements are **not** acceptable grounds for absences or missed academic term work. Tests and tutorials are held during scheduled class time(s), and examinations are held during a scheduled period at the end of the term. Since the scheduled class/testing time(s) and the scheduled examination period are published in this course outline and therefore known to you at the beginning of the course, you **must** ensure that you are available for scheduled testing or tutorials if you elect to continue with the course. If you are not available, you are advised to either reschedule your work/travel or to drop the course and perhaps take it at another time. Do **not** assume that work or travel which conflicts with class time(s) or course requirements will be grounds for accommodation by McMaster University. Indeed, you should be aware that McMaster University’s Undergraduate Calendar specifically states the following: “Examinations are not rescheduled for purposes of travel. Students must be available for the entire examination period.”

In accordance with McMaster University policy, only certain circumstances constitute acceptable grounds for absences or missed academic term work. Accommodation can be arranged for unanticipated, unfortunate circumstances occurring on or shortly before scheduled work dates during the term (such as a test date or an assignment due date). These circumstances include medical situations (e.g., illness) or personal situations (e.g., a death in the family). If you wish to be considered for accommodation, please carefully follow the instructions in McMaster University’s policy on “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” and pay particular attention to the “Documentation Requirements.” For more information, see the sub-section below on “Accommodation for Missed Academic Term Work.”

Please note that most or all requirements in my courses are worth over 25% of the final grade. As a result, you **cannot** use the MSAF online self-reporting tool to request accommodation for such missed requirements. Instead, you must contact your Faculty/Program Office and present acceptable documentation of illness, death in the family, or other serious circumstances occurring on or shortly before the missed date.

Please note that, according to McMaster’s policy on “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”, you are required to follow-up with your instructor **immediately** in order to make arrangements with regard to any missed work. Failure to follow-up in a timely manner may negate the opportunity for relief and result in no consideration given for missed work.

Please note that submitting an MSAF or submitting documentation is **not** an automatic guarantee of accommodation. Accommodation can be denied by your Faculty/Program Office or by your instructor for various reasons (e.g., submitting an MSAF far too late, submitting inadequate documentation or submitting the documentation too late, or failing to follow-up with the instructor in a timely manner to request accommodation).

If I grant you accommodation for missed term work, you will be required to enter into a written agreement with me (through email) with regard to arrangements pertaining to the missed work (e.g., establishing a date for writing a make-up test or establishing a new due date for an assignment). If you fail to meet the terms of this agreement (for any reason) and the work is still not completed by the alternate date, you will receive an automatic zero for that particular course requirement and there will be no further accommodation.

Please note that the McMaster policy on “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work” does **not** apply to a final examination. If you miss the final examination, I do **not** have the authority to let you write it. You will have to deal with your Faculty/Program Office and have compelling, documented medical or personal reasons for missing the examination. Please see the Undergraduate Calendar for the McMaster policy on “Petition for Special Consideration: Request for Deferred Examination.”

### Extensions on Assignments

Sometimes, students ask for extensions on the due dates for assignments. Please keep in mind that I do **not** grant what students typically think of as “extensions.” I will certainly give students a little more time to complete an assignment if accommodation is justified due to certain medical or personal situations (as covered by the McMaster University policy discussed directly above) or certain disabilities (as supported by an accommodation letter that some students will have from Student Accessibility Services). Any other explanations for not getting an assignment in on time (e.g., having full or part-time work obligations, having many assignments coming due at the same time, having vacation or travel arrangements, and having computer breakdowns) are **not** acceptable grounds for accommodation and will **not** result in extensions. I suggest that you start on your assignments early, organize your time throughout the term so that you can manage your various obligations or activities, and regularly create external backups of your work.

### Lateness of Assignments

If students lack acceptable grounds for accommodation (see the two sub-sections directly above), a lateness penalty will be imposed on their assignments.

The penalty for lateness in this course will be 5% per day. Late assignments are to be submitted through the “Assignments” section of Avenue to Learn. The day and time of submission (as recorded by Avenue) will be the basis for determining the lateness penalty. Assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm on a given day or they will be considered to be an additional day late. Assignments that are late by more than five days will **not** be accepted. Weekends will **not** be included in the lateness calculation.

### Use of Turnitin.com

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student-submitted work. In 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) that employs plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) to check the work for academic dishonesty.

Turnitin.com will be used in this course. Students who do not wish their work to be submitted to 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 plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., through an online search or the use of other software). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com, please refer to the [McMaster Turnitin Guidelines](https://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/turnitin/guidelines.html) on the website for the Office of Academic Integrity.

If you do not wish to submit your work to plagiarism detection software, please be aware that I will need time to perform the laborious task of checking your work manually for signs of academic dishonesty. Consequently, I reserve the right to withhold your work until I have had a chance to check it manually. This means that you should **not** expect to get a graded assignment returned to you on the same day that graded work is returned to the students who did submit their work to plagiarism detection software. You will have to wait several weeks longer.

If you do submit your work to plagiarism detection software, and if analysis by the software suggests that there may be a problem with your work, I reserve the right to withhold your assignment until I can carry out a further investigation.

### Grade Changes on Assignments

Sometimes, students disagree with a grade on an assignment and want to know what is involved with trying to get a higher grade. The basic process is as follows.

First, you are asked to wait at least one week from the time you received your graded assignment (so that you have the time to calmly and critically reflect on your work and try to understand why you were given that particular grade).

Second, if one full week has gone by and you still believe that you deserve a higher grade, you are asked to submit a polite and professional letter to the grader (either a TA or the instructor) in which you make the case that the assignment is of better quality than the grader thought (in relation to the several marking criteria that were identified, defined, and described by the instructor). You will cut and paste your letter into an email message (no attachments please) and send it to the grader from your McMaster email account (no other account). This letter will give the grader something to consider, but it is **not** a guarantee of a grade increase.

Third, after receiving your letter, the grader will re-examine the assignment and do one of three things. The grader may increase your grade, leave your grade as it is, or decrease your grade. The grader may find that there is no merit to your argument for a higher grade. With more time to examine the assignment, the grader may even notice problems with your work that were not spotted the first time around and find it necessary to reduce your grade. Therefore, if you elect to write and send a letter, you do so with the understanding and full acceptance that you are taking a risk with your grade.

### Marking Schemes

This course may utilize two different marking schemes, both of which are based on the grading system adopted by McMaster University. This system involves the following grades.

**Percentage Grades** **Equivalent Letter Grades**

90-100 A+

85-89 A

80-84 A-

77-79 B+

73-76 B

70-72 B-

67-69 C+

63-66 C

60-62 C-

57-59 D+

53-56 D

50-52 D-

0-49 F

Percentage grades will be used for any multiple choice and true/false testing, but letter grades may be used for written work. Letter grades are preferred for written work since a numerical scheme implies that it is possible to produce a perfect piece of writing. However, for purposes of interpretation and calculation of a final course grade, the numerical mid-point of a letter grade (or the approximate numerical mid-point) will also be provided. In the case of a failing grade (i.e., an F), the numerical equivalent (between 0%-49%) will be the decision of the marker.

### Course Conduct

In relation to this course, you are expected to exhibit polite and respectful behaviour. Such behaviour is required for interactions through email and through Zoom, just as it is required for interactions taking place in person. Professors, TAs, university staff, and your fellow students deserve to be treated in a courteous and appropriate manner.

Please exhibit polite and respectful behaviour while in-person lectures, tutorials, or seminars are in session. For instance, please do **not** talk during classes or play with a smartphone during classes. These are just some examples of rude and distracting behaviour which can make it difficult for a professor or TA to teach and difficult for students to learn.

It is important to avoid more extreme forms of unacceptable behaviour as well. This includes behaviour that is insulting, derogatory, or aggressive. McMaster University’s “Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities” (formerly known as the “Student Code of Conduct”) makes it clear that unacceptable behaviour also includes (but is not limited to) discriminatory, harassing, intimidating, or threatening behaviour. Such behaviour is **not** permitted in person, and it is also **not** permitted through any electronic media where there is a clear connection to the McMaster community.

Extreme forms of unacceptable behaviour that occur in or out of class may constitute a violation of McMaster University’s “Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities” and be punishable by various sanctions (penalties) that can be imposed on students by the university (including, in serious cases, suspension or expulsion from the university). According to the university, all McMaster students have an obligation to familiarize themselves with the “Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.” For more information, please see the official university statement below under the sub-section titled “Conduct Expectations.”

## Faculty and University Policies

Please familiarize yourself with the following Faculty and University policies. You are responsible for being aware of and adhering to policies established by the Faculty of Social Sciences and McMaster University.

### Faculty of Social Sciences Email Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster email account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply.

### Accommodation for Missed Academic Term Work

Students sometimes miss academic term work (e.g., a scheduled test or the due date for an assignment) as a result of medical situations (e.g., illness) or personal situations (e.g., a death in the family).

McMaster University has a policy on [Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work (MSAF)](https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=41&navoid=8622#requests-for-relief-for-missed-academic-term-work) which includes the “Documentation Requirements” for proving legitimate grounds for missed work. This policy is also in the Undergraduate Calendar.

As noted in this policy, the appropriate approach for requesting relief due to missed academic term work depends on the value of the missed work as well as your specific situation:

1. For medical or personal situations lasting up to three calendar days and affecting academic work worth less than 25% of the final grade, students must use the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) online self-reporting tool. No further documentation is required.
2. For medical or personal situations lasting more than three calendar days, and/or for missed academic work worth 25% or more of the final grade, and/or for any requests for relief in a term where the MSAF has been used previously in that term, students must report to their Faculty/Program Office (i.e., their Associate Dean’s office) to discuss their situation and will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation.

More detailed information can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar and at the website link provided above. You are strongly advised to read the entire policy statement and ensure that you have a full understanding of it. Failure to properly follow the instructions in the policy may negate the opportunity for relief and result in no consideration given for missed work.

### Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](https://sas.mcmaster.ca/) (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’s policy on [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Accommodations-Policy.pdf).

### 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 McMaster’s policy on [Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf) (the RISO policy). Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of the 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.

### 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. It can result in the grade of zero on an assignment; loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (the 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 McMaster’s [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-1-1.pdf) and visit the website for the [Office of Academic Integrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

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; and copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### 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 and Responsibilities](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf) (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., the use of Avenue to Learn or Zoom) will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor constitute 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 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.

### Course Modification and Extreme Circumstances

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather or labour disruptions). If modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice will be given to students with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels (e.g., McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn, and/or McMaster email). It is the responsibility of students to check these communication channels regularly during the term and to note any changes.