Sociology 2WW3:

Media and Power

Fall, 2022.

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

 Mon., 2:30 pm to 4:20 pm.

 Thurs.,12:30 pm to 1:20 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.

TA: ????? ?????

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

# 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. **The points in the two sub-sections below also apply to communication with any TAs I may have for the course.**

### 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! Consequently, 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, or if you need clarification about something in the outline or in other handouts, feel free to send an email message.
2. Please make sure that your question deals with something short and simple. Please note that complicated matters can only be addressed through face-to-face interaction (e.g., during a meeting held by appointment through Zoom).
3. Please send your message from your McMaster email account. Please 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 2WW3” as your subject line (so that it is possible to quickly and easily identify email pertaining to this course).
5. Please start your message with an appropriate greeting or form of address followed by my name (e.g., 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 formal business communication to professors or TAs is **not** the same as writing text messages to friends.
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, you may be required to re-write and re-send the email message before your question or concern will be addressed).
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 will utilize a neo-Marxian theoretical perspective to examine issues connected to media and power in Canadian society. The perspective of neo-Marxism builds on the critical analysis of capitalist society provided by Karl Marx. Neo-Marxism sees contemporary capitalist society as problematic while emphasizing sociological issues such as power, control, inequality, and conflict within the context of a political, economic, and ideological analysis. The focus will be placed on the political and economic aspects of neo-Marxian analysis as we investigate the media in relation to Canada.

We will begin with an overview of some theoretical perspectives on media, especially the neo-Marxian perspective of critical political economy. We will then get an understanding of how important Canadian media have been to the process of nurturing Canadian culture, identity, and citizenship. We will learn that this process has been under threat since the early 20th century because privately-owned American media companies have made available in Canada various American media (e.g., books, movies, musical recordings, and television programs). We will see that the difficulties facing Canadian media, Canadian culture, and Canadian identity or citizenship have been compounded in more recent decades by circumstances involving media ownership, global media, “me-media”, and social media. The deepening ownership concentration among capitalist media corporations, both Canadian and foreign, as well as the growing global influence of foreign media corporations, are developments that have had negative implications for the existence of public media space and the survival of culture in Canada as well as in other countries. The rise of individualized “me-media” (such as cable channels, blogs, and YouTube) and social media (including Facebook and Twitter) have contributed to the fragmentation of national media audiences while having other problematic implications (including surveillance and threats to privacy). All these media are under the control of capitalist corporations. Of particular concern in the discussion will be the impact of capitalist corporations like Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google. Such corporations are key centres of media power.

We will then turn to the negative impact which these powerful capitalist corporations and their media content have had on Canadian media. We will discuss historical developments and more recent developments involving traditional media in Canada (such as newspapers and conventional broadcasting, including public broadcasting). We will also discuss the implications for journalism. We will conclude by considering strategies for contending with media power and the problematic media change that has been wrought by media power. Since neo-Marxian analysis ultimately focuses on resistance and struggles to alter existing arrangements in capitalist society, we will address the potential for more positive media change. Can the negative impact of capitalist media corporations be challenged or at least minimized? What, if anything, can be done to preserve Canadian media and Canadian culture?

## Course Objectives

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

* comprehend different theoretical perspectives on media, especially the perspective of neo-Marxian critical political economy (which many media sociologists and other media scholars have used to analyse media and power).
* grasp the political and economic aspects of media and power in capitalist society.
* understand critical analysis of issues such as media ownership, global media, individualized “me-media”, and social media.
* be familiar with the concerns that critical media scholars have about the impact of current developments on traditional media and journalism in Canada.
* recognize some of the possibilities for challenging media power and developing a media system that better serves Canadians.

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. For instance, you will have the opportunity to enhance the depth and breadth of your knowledge as you learn about various theoretical and empirical issues associated with media and power. Through written work, you will have the opportunity to apply knowledge acquired in the course and enhance your communication skills. Finally, as one more example, 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, time management skills, reliability, maturity, personal responsibility, and behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility).

## Course Format

Unless McMaster University shifts online again, **all classes for this course will be held in-person**.

There will be three 50-minute periods of instruction each week. Lectures will be given during the two back-to-back periods on Mondays (noted at the beginning of this document). There will be a 10-minute break at a convenient point, which may **not** necessarily be at exactly the 50-minute mark. Students are expected to be physically present for the lectures. The additional 50-minute period on Thursdays (noted at the beginning of this document) will be used for different purposes. In one week, an in-person mid-term test will be held during this period. In other weeks, the time slot will be used to either continue the lectures or to hold voluntary tutorials. Voluntary tutorials may be held if a TA with sufficient hours is made available for the course. More information about arrangements for the third 50-minute period will be provided at the beginning of the term.

The in-person lectures (but **not** any tutorials, if there are any tutorials) will be recorded through Echo360 and available for viewing in Avenue to Learn within two or three days of being recorded. Although students are required to be physically present for the lectures, the lectures are being recorded for the benefit of any students who are absent due to COVID-19 or other illness and for the benefit of students who may wish to later review the material they heard in person. However, if technical problems prevent some lectures from being recorded, students who missed the lectures are responsible for obtaining notes from those who were present. For more information about the lectures, see the “Course Lectures” section below. **Important:** If you ask questions or contribute to discussions during the lectures, please be aware that the microphone may pick up your voice and your voice may be audible on the recording. If you are not comfortable with this, it may be best to ask any questions you have in other ways (e.g., after class, through email, or through a virtual office meeting).

**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 in other ways (e.g., after class, through email, or through 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.

## 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 35% Scheduled for Nov. 3.

Book Review 30% Due on Nov. 17.

Final Examination 35% Scheduled by the Registrar (Dec. 9 to Dec. 22).

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

## Details of Course Requirements

### The Mid-Term Test and Final Examination

Unless McMaster University shifts online again, **the mid-term test and the final examination for this course 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. Most of the questions (at least 60%) will be based on the lectures, but 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 about specific theories or studies). I will **not** ask questions about certain 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 specific 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 different 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.

If you are unable to write a test or an examination on the scheduled date due to certain circumstances (medical, personal, religious, spiritual, or disability-related situations), you **must** follow official procedures established by McMaster University to request accommodation.

### The Book Review

Comprehensive instructions for completing the 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 your assignment early in the term.

Students are expected to carefully read the “Instructions for the Book Review” 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.

The 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 assignment.

Your assignment will be submitted online (through the “Assignments” section of Avenue to Learn) by 11:59 pm on the due date (noted above).

If you are unable to submit your assignment on time due to certain circumstances (medical, personal, religious, spiritual, or disability-related situations), you **must** follow official procedures established by McMaster University to request accommodation.

If you do not qualify for accommodation and wish to submit your assignment late, please familiarize yourself with the course policy on “Lateness of Assignments” (in this course outline) and the more detailed “Policy on Lateness” (near the end of the assignment instructions).

Upon submission, your assignment will be checked automatically for signs of academic dishonesty through a linkage to Turnitin.com. For more information, please see the sub-section below on “Use of Turnitin.com.” Your 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 assignment in an oral examination. Evidence of academic dishonesty will result in serious sanctions (such as a grade of zero for your assignment). However, depending on the circumstances, even more serious sanctions could also be imposed under the Academic Integrity Policy. For more information, please see the sub-section below titled “Academic Integrity.”

Given the number of students enrolled in the course, please note that it will take two to three weeks beyond the due date to finish the grading. Four key criteria will be used when grading your assignment. We will consider your “knowledge” of the academic material to be addressed in the assignment along with the quality of your “organization”, the quality of your “writing”, and the quality of your “referencing.” For more information, please see the “Marking Criteria” near the end of the assignment instructions.

## Required Course Materials and Texts

You will need two books for the course, and they are available for purchase through the Campus Store. The two books are:

Stursberg, R. (2019). *The tangled garden: A Canadian cultural manifesto for the digital age*. James Lorimer & Company.

Taras, D. (2015). *Digital mosaic: Media, power, and identity in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

The first book (by Stursberg) will be the subject of your book review assignment. The second book (by Taras) will be your textbook of readings associated with the various topics covered in the course.

The print copies of the books are relatively inexpensive, and you are advised to purchase the print versions.

**Important:** If you elect to buy an electronic version of a textbook, you **must** buy a “Fixed Page eBook (PDF)” and **avoid** a “Reflowable eBook (EPUB).” The former will look exactly like the print version, but the latter will **not** have page numbers (or **not** have the same page numbers as the print version, and you need to cite the page numbers of the print version when preparing your assignment). A PDF version is suitable for academic work, but an EPUB version is only meant for casual reading (e.g., reading a book for interest or pleasure through a Kindle or a Kobo). If you are uncertain about which electronic version is being sold by a vendor, you are strongly advised to ask the vendor before purchasing.

The publisher has **not** made available a PDF version of the book by Stursberg. The publisher is only offering an EPUB version, which (as noted above) would **not** enable the required page referencing for your assignment. However, a PDF version of the book by Taras is available from the publisher by going to [Digital Mosaic at the University of Toronto Press](https://utorontopress.com/9781442608863/digital-mosaic/).

**Important:** All the required readings referred to above are crucial to your success in the course. You will be required to answer questions about the book by Taras on the mid-term test and the final examination. The book by Stursberg will be the basis for your book review assignment. You accept full responsibility for what happens to your grades in the course if you elect to **not** purchase or complete the required readings.

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 any required reading material.

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).

**Topic 1 - Theoretical Perspectives on Media.**

Approximately Sept. 8 to Sept. 19.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 1.

**Topic 2 - Identity, Citizenship, and Canadian Media.**

Approximately Sept. 19 to Sept. 26.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 2.

**Topic 3 - Media Ownership and Global Media.**

Approximately Sept. 29 to Oct. 6.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 3.

**Thanksgiving and Mid-Term Recess.**

No classes from Oct. 10 to Oct. 13.

**Topic 4 - Me-media.**

Approximately Oct. 17 to Oct. 20.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 4.

**Topic 5 - Social Media.**

Approximately Oct. 24 to Oct. 31.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 5.

**Mid-Term Test.**

Scheduled for Nov. 3.

Covering Topics 1, 2, 3, and 4.

**Topic 6 - Traditional Media I: Historical Developments.**

Approximately Nov. 7 to Nov. 14.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 6.

**Topic 7 - Traditional Media II: Recent Developments.**

Approximately Nov. 14 to Nov. 21.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 7.

**Topic 8 - Journalism.**

Approximately Nov. 21 to Nov. 28.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 8.

**Topic 9 - Contending with Media Power and Media Change.**

Approximately Dec. 1 to Dec. 8.

Required Reading: Taras, Ch. 9.

**Final Examination.**

Scheduled by the Registrar for a date as early as Dec. 9 and as late as Dec. 22.

Covering Topics 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

## 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 (including this one) may use online elements such as 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, usernames 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.

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

If you are absent due to medical situations or personal situations, and if you wish to receive accommodation, you are required to carefully follow the procedures established in McMaster’s [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Requests-for-Relief-for-Missed-Academic-Term-Work-Policy-on.pdf). Please note that this policy does **not** provide the basis for requesting accommodation associated with religious, spiritual, or disability-related situations. Such situations are covered by other McMaster policies.

Please note that, according to the policy noted above, you are required to follow-up with your instructor **immediately** to request accommodation after submitting a Self-Report MSAF (Type A) or obtaining a “special” Administrative Report MSAF (Type B). 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 a Self-Report MSAF (Type A) or submitting documentation to support an Administrative Report MSAF (Type B) is **not** an automatic guarantee of accommodation for missed academic term work. 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 accommodation for missed work based on the policy noted above, students will be required to enter into a written agreement with me through email. There will be no accommodation without an agreement. This agreement will specify arrangements for completing the missed work (e.g., establishing a date for writing a make-up test or establishing a new due date for an assignment). The agreement will also specify what happens if students still fail to complete the missed work by the new date that was established.

### Extensions on Assignments

In this course, extensions will be limited for three pedagogical reasons. First, as noted in the [Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations](http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html) adopted at McMaster University and described earlier in this document, students are required to develop autonomy and professional capacity (the qualities and transferrable skills necessary for further study, employment, etc.). Among other things, this includes learning personal responsibility and the time management skills that will be demanded by graduate schools and employers. In turn, this includes learning to complete work by stated deadlines, and extensions undermine such learning. Second, extensions can create unfair situations involving learning tasks. For example, if extensions are given to students who have delayed working on an assignment or otherwise failed to organize their time properly, such extensions become unfair to students who have diligently exerted themselves and successfully met the due date. Third, extensions may not be as beneficial as students think because they can put students at a disadvantage in terms of completing their learning tasks. For instance, an extension in one course can have a domino effect (triggering the need to get an extension in another course to meet the new deadline in the first course, all of which puts students further and further behind).

For all three of the reasons stated above, I will **only** give extensions to students facing exceptional circumstances that are completely beyond their control and well-supported by official written and time-dated documentation. Typically, this means that extensions will **only** be granted for the specific situations outlined below. I will give students a little more time to complete an assignment if:

* students have an MSAF (suitable for the weight of the assignment in relation to the final course grade) that covers an unfortunate and unanticipated medical or personal situation occurring on or shortly before the due date for the assignment (in accordance with McMaster’s [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Requests-for-Relief-for-Missed-Academic-Term-Work-Policy-on.pdf));
* students have an accommodation letter from Student Accessibility Services (SAS) which indicates that they are allowed to have an extension on an assignment due to a disability (in accordance with the McMaster’s policy on [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Accommodations-Policy.pdf));
* students have followed the procedures 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) to request accommodation (at the beginning of the term) for an observance that conflicts with the due date or the immediate time frame leading up to the due date for an assignment.

Very rarely, some students may experience serious situations that are completely beyond their control but do not fit into the three categories noted above. These students are advised to immediately contact me by email to discuss their circumstances. They will be required to present acceptable written and time-dated documentation of their situation to me through email. If I am convinced the situation warrants an extension, and if I find the written evidence of the situation to be appropriate, I may grant an extension. However, I reserve the right to refuse an extension (e.g., if I don’t think the situation warrants an extension, if I find the written evidence of the situation to be unconvincing, or if the request for an extension is made at the last minute).

If I grant an extension, students will be required to enter into a written agreement with me through email. There will be no assignment extension without an agreement. This agreement will specify the new due date for an assignment, and it will also specify what happens if the new due date is not met. Typically, students will be granted a few extra days and possibly up to one extra week to complete the work. Depending on the length of the extension, an assignment submitted after the new due date may be subjected to a lateness penalty or it may not be accepted at all.

### Lateness of Assignments

If students lack acceptable grounds for requesting more time to complete an assignment (see the two sub-sections directly above), a lateness penalty will be imposed.

Late papers will be subjected to a lateness penalty of 5% per day (**including** weekends and holidays) up to a maximum of seven days beyond the due date. After seven days, papers will **not** be accepted. Late papers 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 an additional day late. Assignments submitted **after** 11:59 pm on the final possible day for submission will **not** be accepted by Avenue and will be given an automatic grade of zero. For more specific information, please see the “Policy on Lateness” near the end of the assignment instructions.

### 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 visit the website for the [Office of Academic Integrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

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. In this course, the basic process is as follows:

1. Wait at least 24 hours from the time you received your graded assignment. If you are upset or angry, please take the time to calm yourself. Furthermore, please take the time to critically reflect on your work and try to understand why you were given that grade.
2. If 24 hours have gone by and you still believe that you deserve a higher grade, please prepare a letter to the grader (usually the TA) in which you make the case that the assignment is of better quality than the grader thought with regard to the four marking criteria that were identified, defined, and described by the instructor (knowledge, organization, writing, and referencing). Assignment grades are based on what you have **achieved** (in relation to the marking criteria), so please do **not** ask for a grade increase based on what you need, want, or desire (e.g., to maintain a certain grade point average, to be within a grade range that you prefer, to get a higher final grade in the course, or to get into a certain program).
3. Please ensure that your letter is written in a **polite** and **professional** manner while being limited to about 300 words. Insulting or otherwise disrespectful letters will **not** be acknowledged or tolerated (and may be reported to university authorities).
4. Please submit your letter to the grader within two weeks of the date the assignment grades were released to the entire class. Grade changes for assignments will **not** be considered beyond that point.
5. Please cut and paste your letter into an email message (no attachments) 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.
6. After receiving your letter, the grader will re-examine your 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 your 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 or true/false testing. Letter grades will be used for any 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.

### The Need for Appropriate and Respectful Behaviour

In this course, you are expected to exhibit appropriate 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, and your fellow students deserve to be treated in a polite and courteous manner.

It is your responsibility to conduct yourself in an appropriate manner during classes in this course. While we (either me or a TA) are trying to teach you, and while other students are trying to learn, please do **not** engage in any behaviour which is rude or distracting. Such behaviour includes (but is not limited to): having a private conversation with another student; eating food; reading a book or magazine; putting your head down or sleeping; doing work for another course; using a laptop computer for anything other than taking notes; and using a smartphone or other personal electronic device for any reason while the class or tutorial is underway. Please understand that such rude or distracting behaviour can make it difficult for the professor or TA to teach, and this behaviour can also make it difficult for other students to learn. For example, other students may find it hard to learn if they are distracted by the sound of chatting or eating and the sight of someone in front of them surfing the Web or playing a video game on a computer or a smartphone. You are welcome to engage in such activities while waiting for the class or tutorial to begin or while enjoying a scheduled break in the class time. However, while the class or tutorial is underway, please show consideration for me, your TA, and your classmates. If you are bothered by the behaviour of other students, you are welcome to discuss your concerns with me privately.

It is your responsibility to interact with the professor, the TA, and other students in a respectful manner. Disruptive or unacceptable behaviour is strictly prohibited. This behaviour includes (but is not limited to): speaking from your seat – or speaking up during class discussions – without raising your hand and waiting to be acknowledged by the professor or the TA; yelling at the professor, the TA, or other students; and engaging in any threatening, intimidating, degrading, harassing, or discriminatory behaviour (physically, verbally, or in writing) that is directed at the professor, the TA, or other students. 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. Disruptive or unacceptable behaviour that occurs in or out of class may constitute a violation of McMaster University’s “Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities” (formerly known as the “Student Code of Conduct”) and be punishable by various sanctions (penalties) that can be imposed on students by the university. According to the university, all McMaster students have an obligation to familiarize themselves with the “Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.” Again, if you are bothered by the behaviour of other students, you are welcome to discuss your concerns with me privately.

## 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.

### 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.

### Accommodation for Missed Academic Term Work

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow McMaster’s [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Requests-for-Relief-for-Missed-Academic-Term-Work-Policy-on.pdf).

### 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 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

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.

### 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.

### Extreme Circumstances and Course Modification

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). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels (such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn, and/or McMaster email).