

Sociology 3QQ3: Sociology Students and the Work World.

Fall, 2020.

Day and Time of Class (Please note that lectures will not be held live, but any tests held during the term will be scheduled for the Registrar-assigned class periods indicated below).

Mon., 3:30 pm to 5:20 pm.

Wed., 4:30 pm to 5:20 pm.

Classroom: Not applicable for this term.

Instructor: Dr. David Young.

Email: youngd@mcmaster.ca (Please read the instructions below before sending messages).

Office Location: KTH 629.

Office Hours: Not applicable for this term due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Office Phone: Ext. 23615 (Please do not call until office hours resume. Please use email).

Course Outline

My name is Dr. Young. Welcome to the COVID-19 edition of Sociology 3QQ3! Please carefully read through the following information in this course outline. Below, I have covered many issues that students are often wondering about.

Contact Information

Email communication will be the main means for you to ask me questions, but I can arrange a virtual meeting with you if needed. Please read the sub-sections below for more information.

Email Communication

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

1. Please check to make sure that your question has not been answered already somewhere in this course outline. If your question has not been answered in the outline, feel free to send an email message to me.
2. 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.
3. Please use "Sociology 3QQ3" as your subject line (so that I can quickly identify which of my courses you are in and more easily sort my email).
4. Please start your message with an appropriate greeting and 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 with the person's name. Please also understand that "Hey" is not an appropriate greeting in business communication.

5. Please write your message in a professional manner. Be polite and respectful. Where appropriate, write "please" and "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.
6. 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 to a number of 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.
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 of 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 Meeting

Most matters can be dealt with through email, but there may be some occasions when it is useful or necessary to speak verbally. Although I have indicated my office information above, I will not be holding physical office hours until the university fully reopens again after the COVID-19 crisis. However, in cases when email communication is insufficient, I would be happy to continue my communication with you beyond email by sending a link to your McMaster email account for a virtual meeting through Zoom.

Course Description

This course is designed to assist students who will soon be graduating with an undergraduate sociology degree and either pursuing further education at the graduate level or directly entering the world of work.

The course covers important issues that sociology students need to be aware of and think about in order to enhance their prospects in the work world. Practical advice will be offered, but a great deal of attention will also be given to sociological research and other academic research related to the topics of the course.

Part I of the course considers what is involved with utilizing and building on an education in sociology. We will examine research on the skills and personal attributes that employers are looking for in job candidates as well as research on how university students see issues connected to employability. This will provide the foundation for exploring how a four year undergraduate sociology degree gives students the opportunity to develop the skills and personal attributes that are of interest to employers as well as graduate schools, law schools, and teaching colleges. While utilizing their sociology education to enhance their employability, sociology students also have to start building on that education; they have to decide between pursuing further education or directly seeking employment, so we will conclude Part I by considering both of these options.

Part II of the course focuses on preparing for further education and preparing for the process of seeking employment. We will study research on the prospects for sociology graduates (i.e., research on the employment of former sociology students). We will then turn to issues that graduates of undergraduate sociology programs need to think about as they get ready for the future. As we will discover, it is important for sociology graduates to begin by undertaking a self-assessment (which includes critical assessment of their skills and personal attributes) and engaging in sociological reflection (by considering what they have learned from an undergraduate program in sociology and how this can be useful in terms of seeking employment and developing a life-long career). We will then discuss the next step for sociology graduates, which entails preparing a resume or a curriculum vitae that effectively conveys their personal attributes and the skills they have acquired through completion of a sociology degree and possibly further education. In order to pursue further education or employment, sociology graduates need letters of recommendation from professors or former employers. We will discover what is involved with these letters, including the importance of making a strongly favourable impression on professors or former employers in relation to skills and personal attributes.

Part III of the course examines several topics associated with seeking employment. We will consider various issues connected to the job search that are important for sociology graduates to be aware of. These include the process of researching jobs, the importance of networking with other people and developing ties that will enhance the chances of finding a job, and the positive or negative implications of social media with regard to seeking employment. Finally, we will address issues connected to job interviews and hiring decisions.

Course Learning Objectives

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

- understand the skills and personal attributes that employers, graduate schools, law schools, and teaching colleges are looking for.
- comprehend how a sociology degree provides an opportunity to develop important skills and desirable personal attributes.
- grasp the various options available to sociology students in terms of further education or direct entry to the world of work.
- recognize how to engage in critical self-assessment and sociological reflection in preparation for further education or direct entry to the work world.
- know how to emphasize important skills and desirable personal attributes through a resume or curriculum vitae.

- be cognizant of factors that can affect your chances of getting positive letters of recommendation (which provide an assessment of skills and personal attributes).
- be aware of what is involved with the job search, job interviews, and hiring decisions.
- be able to interpret all of the above through a sociological lens by drawing on academic materials, including papers published in sociology journals or other academic journals.

All of 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](#) adopted at McMaster University. In particular, you will have the opportunity to enhance the depth and breadth of your knowledge as you learn about theoretical ideas and empirical research associated with the transition from university education to the work world. 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

There are two main forms of online courses. The virtual classroom involves a synchronous experience (e.g., in which lectures are delivered live at scheduled times and students watch the lectures on a computer as they are happening). The online classroom involves an asynchronous experience (e.g., in which lectures are pre-recorded and available for students to access through a computer at times they find convenient).

Some courses, including this one, involve elements of these two forms. This course will primarily utilize an online classroom for delivering lectures and other course content, but it has been designated by Mosaic as a virtual classroom in order to ensure that we have scheduled class times for testing that do not conflict with other courses you may be taking. In other words, you will be able to examine course content at times you choose and at your own pace (as long as you familiarize yourself with this material before scheduled testing times), but you and all other students must be available at the scheduled testing times because everyone will be undergoing testing at the same times. Only students with certain disabilities or Faculty Office-approved absences due to illness, death in the family, or other unfortunate circumstances may be permitted to have alternative testing arrangements.

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. 4.

Written Assignment (30%); due on Nov. 18.

Final Examination (35%); scheduled by the Registrar (Dec. 10 to Dec. 23).

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

Details of Course Requirements

Mid-Term Test

The mid-term test will be held online (through the “Quizzes” section of Avenue to Learn) on November 4 during the scheduled class period from 4:30 pm to 5:20 pm. Students are expected to be available to write the test on this date and during this time slot.

The mid-term test will cover the first six topics (modules) in the course. It will consist of multiple-choice and 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 lectures will go into greater detail (e.g., definitions of concepts, examples of concepts, aspects of particular theories or studies, and contributions of theorists or researchers). 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 approach to research was dominant in a particular decade).

The number of questions and the length of the mid-term test will be determined at a later point. More detailed information about the mid-term test will be posted in the “Announcements” section of Avenue to Learn at least a few weeks before the scheduled test.

Please be aware that 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.

Please note that the principles of academic integrity apply to an online test or examination. Looking up answers, communicating with or working with others to determine answers, and copying any questions is strictly prohibited. Evidence of academic dishonesty will result in serious sanctions, ranging from a grade of zero on the test or examination all the way up to suspension or expulsion from McMaster University. For more information, see the sub-section below titled “Academic Integrity.”

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 of the 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 November 18 at 11:59 pm. 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 in time, Avenue will label your assignment as late. A lateness penalty will then be imposed (and there will be 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.”

Final Examination

The final examination will be held online (through the “Quizzes” section of Avenue to Learn) on a date and at a time determined by the Office of the Registrar. Students are expected to be available to write the examination during our assigned slot in the examination schedule.

The final examination will cover the last six topics (modules) in the course. Therefore, the final examination is not cumulative. You will not be re-tested on earlier material. Only topics not covered on the mid-term test will appear on the final examination. The final examination 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 information presented above in the sub-section on the “Mid-Term Test.” The same points about multiple-choice and true/false questions apply. 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.

The types of questions, the number of questions, and the length of the examination will be determined at a later point. More information will be posted in the “Announcements” section of Avenue to Learn at least a few weeks before the scheduled examination.

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.

Please note that the principles of academic integrity apply to an online test or examination. Looking up answers, communicating with or working with others to determine answers, and copying any questions is strictly prohibited. Evidence of academic dishonesty will result in serious sanctions, ranging from a grade of zero on the test or examination all the way up to suspension or expulsion from McMaster University. For more information, see the sub-section below titled “Academic Integrity.”

Required Course Materials and Texts

There are two sets of required readings for this course. Some required readings come from a textbook, and other required readings have been assembled in a courseware package. Both of the following are available for purchase through the Campus Store:

Lambert, S. (2009). *Great jobs for sociology majors* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
Young, D. (2020). *Custom courseware for Sociology 4HH3*. Hamilton: McMaster University.

Some additional required readings are only available through websites. You can find the links to these readings in the “Course Schedule and Required Readings” section below. The links were working at the time this course outline was finalized. If the links are no longer working when you try to access the articles, please let me know and I will provide the class with more information on how to access these materials.

All of these required readings are crucial to your success in the course. You will be required to answer questions about the required readings on the mid-term test and the final examination. You will also be required to utilize a number of the readings in your written assignment.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

The course schedule below identifies the course topics (modules), the dates when I recommend that you start and finish studying the topics (in order to stay on schedule), the required readings for the topics, and some other important course dates.

Please note that the modules for course topics will be posted on Avenue to Learn bit by bit as the course progresses. The modules will not all be there when the course begins. Given the shift from in-class to online lecture material, I will be taking time throughout the course to prepare material for the modules.

At the time this course outline was written (in July 2020), the precise format of modules for the course topics was still being determined. However, each of the modules will include lecture material presented in a particular way. I may prepare a short 5-minute video introduction for each module (highlighting the importance of the topic as well as some key issues). For each module, I may then follow this video introduction with several “mini-lectures” on some major aspects of the topic (each perhaps 15 minutes in length). The “mini-lectures” may be made up of PowerPoint slides with audio commentary. Their purpose will be to help you understand

certain issues raised in the required readings, but they will not be a replacement for doing the required readings; it is impossible to adequately cover all of the issues in the required readings through lectures (even when lectures are given in person), so a certain amount of independent reading and learning is necessary.

Part I: Utilizing and Building on an Education in Sociology

Module 1 – Employer Expectations of Skills and Personal Attributes.

To be completed between Sept. 8 and Sept. 11.

Required Reading: Tymon (courseware).

Required Reading: DuPre & Williams (courseware).

Module 2 – Development of Skills and Personal Attributes through a Sociology Degree.

To be completed between Sept. 14 and Sept. 18.

Required Reading: Lambert, Introduction (textbook).

Required Reading: Finkelstein (courseware).

Module 3 – After a Sociology Degree I: Pursuing Further Education.

To be completed between Sept. 21 and Sept. 25.

Required Reading: Lambert, Chapter 5 (textbook).

Required Reading: Spalter-Roth & Van Vooren (courseware).

Module 4 – After a Sociology Degree II: Directly Seeking Employment.

To be completed between Sept. 28 and Oct. 2.

Required Reading: Lambert, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8, and Chapter 9 (textbook).

Part II: Preparing for Further Education or Seeking Employment

Module 5 – The Prospects for Sociology Graduates.

To be completed between Oct. 5 and Oct. 9.

Required Reading: Guppy et al. (courseware).

Required Reading: Senter et al. (courseware).

Thanksgiving and Mid-Term Recess.

Oct. 12 to Oct. 16.

Module 6 – Self-Assessment and Sociological Reflection.

To be completed between Oct. 19 and Oct. 23.

Required Reading: Lambert, Chapter 1 (textbook).

Required Reading: Knoblock (courseware).

Mid-Term Test.

Scheduled for Nov. 4

Covering Modules 1 to 6.

Module 7 – The Resume or Curriculum Vitae.

To be completed between Oct. 26 and Oct. 30.

Required Reading: Lambert, Chapter 2 (textbook).

Required Reading: Miller & Morgan (courseware).

Module 8 – Letters of Recommendation.
To be completed between Nov. 2 and Nov. 6.
Required Reading: Payne et al. (courseware).
Required Reading: [Sternheimer \(website\)](#).

Part III: Seeking Employment

Module 9 – The Job Search I: Research and Strategies.
To be completed between Nov. 9 and Nov. 13.
Required Reading: Lambert, Chapter 3 (textbook).
Required Reading: Cotton et al. (courseware).

Module 10 – The Job Search II: Strong Ties, Weak Ties.
To be completed between Nov. 16 and Nov. 20.
Required Reading: Sharone. (courseware).
Required Reading: Spalter-Roth et al. (courseware).

Module 11 – The Job Search III: Implications of Social Media.
To be completed between Nov. 23 and Nov. 27.
Required Reading: [Fitzpatrick et al. \(website\)](#).
Required Reading: Drouin et al. (courseware).

Module 12 – Job Interviews and Hiring Decisions.
To be completed between Nov. 30 and Dec. 9.
Required Reading: Lambert, Chapter 4 (textbook).
Required Reading: Bills (courseware).

Final Examination.
Scheduled by the Registrar for a date as early as Dec. 10 and as late as Dec. 23.
Covering Modules 7 to 12.

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

In this course, we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, Avenue to Learn will be an absolutely 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 distribute lecture material or

other course content, to hold tests and examinations, 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 vacations or travel arrangements are not acceptable grounds for absences or missed academic term work. If travel arrangements mean that you are not going to be available on the scheduled test date(s) during the term (as noted above), you are advised to drop the course. Furthermore, you should be aware that McMaster University's Undergraduate Calendar states the following: "Examinations are not rescheduled for purposes of travel."

Only certain circumstances constitute acceptable grounds for absences or missed academic term work. Accommodation can be arranged for unanticipated or 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 all requirements for this course are worth over 25% of the final grade. This means that you cannot use the MSAF online self-reporting tool to request accommodation. 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 instructors 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 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 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, and regularly create 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

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student-submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com or to Avenue to Learn plagiarism detection must still submit an electronic and/or hard copy to their instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or to Avenue to Learn plagiarism detection. 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 information, please refer to the [McMaster Turnitin Guidelines](#) on the website for the Office of Academic Integrity.

If you do not wish to submit your work to Turnitin.com or to Avenue to Learn plagiarism detection, 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 Turnitin.com or to Avenue to Learn plagiarism detection. You will have to wait several weeks longer.

If you do submit your work to Turnitin.com or to Avenue to Learn plagiarism detection, 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 prepare 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 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.

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 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 at his or her discretion.

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 \(MSAF\)](#), 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](#) (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. SAS can be contacted by phone (905-525-9140, Ext. 28652) or email (sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster's policy on [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

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](#) (the RISO policy). Students requiring an RISO accommodation 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 instructor 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.

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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to McMaster's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and visit the website for the [Office of Academic Integrity](#).

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](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g., use of Avenue to Learn, WebEx, or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and 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 materials 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 contact 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.