

**Business D700  
Case Analyses and Presentations  
Fall 2012 Course Outline**

**Deans' Office Course  
DeGroote School of Business  
McMaster University**

**COURSE OBJECTIVE**

Through the case method, students place themselves in the role of the decision maker. As the decision maker within a specified context, they must define the problem, gather and organize relevant information, perform necessary analyses, develop feasible alternative courses of action, evaluate alternative choices and recommend and defend the best course of action with detailed implementation and contingency plans. Appropriate experts will provide diagnostic and analytical foundations and students will receive detailed feedback throughout the course to further develop their analytical and presentation skills. MBA students wishing to represent the School of Business at national/international case competitions must take this course or audit a specified subset of this course.

**INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

<p><b>Dr. Milena Head</b> Instructor headm@mcmaster.ca Office: RJC 232 Office Hours: by appointment Tel: (905) 525-9140 x20515</p>	<p><b>Ken Owen</b> TA owenk@mcmaster.ca Office: DSB A211 Office Hours: TBA Tel: (905) 525-9140 x26195</p>
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**Course Website:** <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

**COURSE ELEMENTS**

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

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The case method is an experiential learning method that brings realism to problem solving. Numerous scholars credit case analysis with developing effective decision-making and critical thinking skills. Cases allow students to directly apply and integrate theories from various business disciplines to real-world situations/problems. Students will be working in teams and

will have the opportunity to present their analysis and recommendations to a panel of academic and industry experts. As such, they will also develop effective presentation, team management and communication skills.

During the first few weeks of the course, students will be provided with a strong foundation of analysis tools and techniques, problem solving methodologies and effective presentation and communication approaches through lectures and in-class simulations. The remainder of the course will allow student teams to practice and continuously refine their case analysis and presentation skills. A variety of formats will be utilized to simulate and prepare students for various case competition settings (i.e. 3-hour case; 24-hour case; one-week case)

In alignment with the DeGroote School of Business' Statement of Purpose, this course emphasizes an effective experiential learning approach to prepare students for market-ready success. The instructor will draw from faculty and industry experts across business disciplines to provide foundation and feedback for student development. Cases will be carefully selected to represent various industries and disciplines. As such, this course does not belong to any particular Area within the School of Business, but is being offered through the Associate Dean's office as a Faculty-wide course.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Identify important and relevant information for making business decisions.
- Identify key issues for an organizational situation, based on urgency and importance dimensions.
- Utilize appropriate analysis techniques to assess industry and organizational contexts.
- Generate realistic alternatives for various organizational situations, from which a well reasoned course of action is determined.
- Apply and integrate theories from various business disciplines to real-world situations.
- Build, foster and manage effective teams.
- Demonstrate effective presentation skills.
- Handle challenging questions directly following a presentation.
- Demonstrate critical evaluation and critiquing skills.

### REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

<b>Lecture Notes, Assignments and other course content</b>	\$ FREE
Download from the D700 website <a href="http://avenue.mcmaster.ca">http://avenue.mcmaster.ca</a>	
<b>Business D700 Cases Course Pack, Fall 2012, Editor: M. Head</b>	\$TBD

### OPTIONAL COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

<b>Learning With Cases</b> , 1997, L. Mauffette-Leenders, J. Erskine & M. Leenders, Publisher: Richard Ivey School of Business (purchase a copy at the bookstore)	Approx. \$20
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<b>EVALUATION</b>
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The components of the course grade will be weighted as follows, tentatively. The instructor reserves the right to modify the weightings to adjust for more or less material covered during the term.

### ***Components and Weights***

<b>Case Presentations (Team)</b>	Multiple formats	50%
<b>Presentation Skills (individual)</b>	Based on best 3 presentations	15%
<b>Critiques (individual)</b>	Written critiques of other teams	10%
	Presentation self-critique	10%
<b>Class Participation (individual)</b>	Focus on first half of course	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### ***Grade Conversion***

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT
A+	90 - 100
A	85 - 89
A-	80 - 84
B+	75 - 79
B	70 - 74
B-	60 - 69
F	00 - 59

### ***Communication and Feedback***

Students that are uncomfortable in directly approaching an instructor regarding a course concern may send a confidential and anonymous email to the respective Area Chair or Associate Dean:

<http://www.degroote.mcmaster.ca/curr/emailchairs.aspx>

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the

confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Administrative Assistant.

Instructors are encouraged to conduct an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery. Instructors should provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #8 in the term.

### ***Team Case Presentation***

Team case presentations is worth 50% of your final grade. Teams of approximately 5 students will conduct case analyses and present them in class. Cases will follow various formats to best match the formats of the case competitions that students will participate in. Cases will be distributed appropriately according to the case format (i.e. one week in advance of presentation; 24 hours in advance of presentation; 3 hours in advance of presentation; 1 hour in advance of presentation). Students must purchase the D700 course pack when it is made available (mid-September), which will cover the cost of case licences.

The length of presentations and questions & answer period will depend on the format of the case (in alignment with case competition formats). Students are expected to make effective use of material discussed in class as well as other resources available from the Web or specialized relevant references. The mark of the team presentation will be based on how professional and comprehensive the presentation is, and how well the Q&A period was handled by the team.

### ***Presentation skills within Groups***

Each student will be assessed individually on her/his contribution to the group presentations described above. This evaluation will reflect the student's abilities to deliver a professional and convincing section of each group presentation. The evaluation will also depend on the student's abilities in fielding questions following the presentations of her/his group. Individual presentation marks will be given for each presentation. The top three presentation marks for a particular student will constitute the grade on this component (5% for each of the top three presentation marks).

### ***Critiques***

Students are required to assess the performance of other groups who are presenting each week. Constructive and detailed feedback is expected on the content as well as the presentation skills of the presenting groups. A standard evaluation form will be used for the case critiques, which must be handed in at the end of class. These critiques will help to further develop the critical assessment skills of evaluators as well as provide further quality feedback to presenters.

Additionally, students will have their first case presentation video recorded so that they can self-assess their presentation skills. A written report on their presentation skills will be due one week after the presentation. The written report will focus on students' self-assessment of what they did well in their presentation and identification of opportunities for improvement.

### ***In-Class Participation***

Students are encouraged to engage actively in class discussions related to the material being presented by the instructor or guest experts, including the discussion of the sample case (Lego). Debate and challenge are important activities that help in the learning process and the willingness of individuals to engage in such activities with their classmates is appreciated.

Name cards and class pictures are used to help give credit for your participation. You must have a name card with your **full first and last name** clearly written and displayed in front of you for every class. If you are absent from any class for a legitimate reason, you should indicate that to the instructor so that you are not penalized for lack of participation during that class.

Participation marks will be based on both the quantity and quality of your in-class contributions. **Mere attendance in class without participation does not earn you any participation marks.**

### **TEAM WORK GUIDELINES**

A large component of the evaluation of this class will be based on team work. In order to achieve the full benefits expected from working in a team and to be fair to all team members, all members are expected to contribute equally to team work and to be fully informed of all aspects of their team assignments.

One negative aspect of working in teams is that conflict may arise among team members. Such conflict could negatively impact the progress of the team towards achieving its objectives. Hence, every effort should be made, by all team members to be reasonable and to avoid conflicts.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the University Senate Academic Integrity Policy at the following URL:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

This policy describes the responsibilities, procedures, and guidelines for students and faculty should a case of academic dishonesty arise. Academic dishonesty is defined as to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. Please refer to the policy for a list of examples. The policy also provides faculty with procedures to follow in cases of academic dishonesty as well as general guidelines for penalties. For further information related to the policy, please refer to the Office of Academic Integrity at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

## **MISSED ACADEMIC WORK**

Where students miss a regularly scheduled mid-term (presentation) or class participation for legitimate reasons as determined by the MBA Academic Services Office, the weight for that test (presentation)/participation will be distributed across other evaluative components of the course at the discretion of the instructor. Documentation explaining such an absence must be provided to the MBA Academic Services Office within five (5) working days upon returning to school.

To document absences for health related reasons, please provide the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and the McMaster University Student Health Certificate which can be found on the DeGroote website at <http://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-applications/>. Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form as this is for Undergraduate students only. University policy states that a student may submit a maximum of three (3) medical certificates per year after which the student must meet with the Director of the program.

To document absences for reasons other than health related, please provide the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and documentation supporting the reason for the absence.

Students unable to write a mid-term (or perform their presentation) at the posted time due to the following reasons: religious; work-related (for part-time students only); representing university at an academic or varsity athletic event; conflicts between two overlapping scheduled mid-term exams; or other extenuating circumstances, have the option of applying for special exam arrangements. Such requests must be made to the MBA Academic Services Office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled exam along with acceptable documentation. Adjudication of the request must be handled by the MBA Academic Services Office.

If a mid-term exam (or presentation) is missed without a valid reason, students will receive a grade of zero (0) for that component.

## **STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) offers various support services for students with disabilities. Students are required to inform SAS of accommodation needs for examinations on or before the last date for withdrawal from a course without failure (please refer to official university sessional dates). Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor immediately upon receipt. If a student with a disability chooses NOT to take advantage of an SAS accommodation and chooses to sit for a regular exam, a petition for relief may not be filed after the examination is complete. The SAS website is:

<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

### **POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURSE**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

**COURSE SCHEDULE – FALL 2012**

WEEK	DATE	ASSIGNMENT
1	Sept 12	<i>Lecture:</i> Course overview and discussion of case competitions <i>Due:</i> Students e-mail owenkd@mcmaster.ca by Monday September 17 <sup>th</sup> , 12:00 noon their completed Student Information Sheet (available on Avenue).
2	Sept 19	<i>Lecture:</i> Presentation and PowerPoint Skills (Bobby Umar) <i>Due:</i> 6-minute 3 person team presentations (with PowerPoint)
3	Sept 26	<i>Lecture:</i> Finding relevant information (Jeannie An & Vivek Jadon) <i>Due:</i> Read & prepare Lego case to discuss information needs <i>NOTE: Class starts at 3 pm on Sept 26th</i>
4	Oct 3	<i>Lecture:</i> Accounting Analysis Tools (Lisa Schoenberger and Mustafa Dossajee) <i>Lecture:</i> Financial Analysis Tools (Paul Bates) <i>Due:</i> Prepare to discuss Lego case from an Accounting & Finance perspective
5	Oct 10	<i>Lecture:</i> Strategic Analysis Tools (Nick Bontis) <i>Lecture:</i> Crisis Management Tools (Terry Flynn) <i>Due:</i> Prepare to discuss Lego case from a Strategy & Crisis perspective
6	Oct 17	<i>Lecture:</i> Sustainability Tools (Brent McKnight) <i>Lecture:</i> Case Competition Strategies (Milena Head) <i>Due:</i> Prepare to discuss Lego case from a Sustainability perspective
7	Oct 24	<i>Lecture:</i> Marketing Analysis Tools (Peter Vilks) <i>Due:</i> Prepare to discuss Lego case from a Marketing perspective <i>Expert Guests:</i> past case competition participants <i>NOTE: Class is from 4 pm until 6:30 pm on Oct 24th</i>
8	Oct 31	<i>Finance/Accounting Case (distributed 1 week before)</i> All teams will be videotaped for presentation self-critique
9	Nov 7	<i>Crisis Case (distributed 1 hour before)</i> <i>Due:</i> Presentation self-critique
10	Nov 14	<i>Marketing Case (distributed 3 hours before)</i>
<i>Nov 16-17: FEI Case Competition (Toronto)</i>		
11	Nov 21	<i>Sustainability Case (distributed 3 hours before)</i>
<i>Nov 24 (?): TATA Cup Case Competition (Toronto)</i>		
12	Nov 28	<i>Live Case</i>
13	SAT Dec 1	<i>24-Hour Case Competition</i> <i>(book Friday afternoon/evening and all day Saturday)</i>

Please note that additional cases will be added to train teams for specific case competitions outside of the specified class times.