

**Business F726 / V702
Behavioral Finance
Fall 2019 Course Outline**

**Finance and Business Economics
DeGroot School of Business
McMaster University**

COURSE OBJECTIVE

An introduction to the emerging field of behavioral finance. Psychology and finance are integrated in studying how investors' emotions affect stock prices and markets. While it is not surprising that financial decision-makers make mistakes, behavioral finance teaches us that many of these errors are systematic and can be explained by our psychological makeup. An understanding of these biases can improve personal financial decision-making, facilitate client relationships and lead to product design improvements. More controversially, the view that instances of investor irrationality cancel themselves out, rendering markets perfectly efficient, is being called into question. This would suggest that there may be behavioral explanations for some well-known market anomalies. This course examines these issues and will be of interest to students pursuing careers in banking, insurance, risk management, pension, portfolio management, investment and financial services industry.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Section C01: Tue 8:30 AM – 11:20 AM

Class Location: RJC/263

Sumit Bose, MBA CFP FMA CIWM FCSI

Instructor

sbose@mcmaster.ca

Office: RJC/231

Office Hours: before class and by appointment

Tel: (905) 525-9140, Ext. 20694

(as office is used by number of instructors, please do not leave messages)

Course Website: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

COURSE ELEMENTS

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

COURSE PREREQUISITES

F600 or permission of instructor.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- have a good understanding of the major concepts and issues in behavioral finance;
 - and be able to apply these concepts in financial decision-making.
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COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Required

1. Custom Courseware
Purchase a 2019 copy at the bookstore
2. Avenue registration for course content, readings and case materials
<http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

Optional

1. *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman (Winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics)
 - Publisher: Doubleday Canada
 - purchase a copy at the bookstore
 2. *Behavioral Finance Course Book*, Dr. Richard Deaves, 2018
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EVALUATION

A combination of lectures, discussion and problem solving. Students will be encouraged to think, analyze, evaluate, and problem-solve, not memorize. Students are expected to come to class on time and be prepared for the class, i.e., to have read the assigned reading and to have done the assigned problems. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis except in certain cases where group work is expected. In these cases, group members will share the same grade. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Components and Weights

Participation	In-Class Contribution (individual)	10%
Mid-term Exam	Multiple-choice and Short Answer Exam (Closed book)	25%
Assignment	Group Case Assignment	30%
Final Exam	Cumulative Multiple-choice and Case-based Exam (Closed book)	35%
Total		100%

NOTE: The use of a McMaster standard calculator is allowed during examinations in this course. See McMaster calculator policy at the following URL:

www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/UndergraduateExaminationsPolicy.pdf

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	POINTS
A+	90-100	12
A	85-89	11
A-	80-84	10
B+	75-79	9
B	70-74	8
B-	60-69	7
F	00-59	0

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://mbastudent.degroote.mcmaster.ca/contact/anonymous/>

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.

GROUP ASSIGNMENT

The group assignment is worth a total of **30%** of your final grade and group members will share the same grade.

Each group will do a class presentation on a theme relating Behavioral Finance and relevant issues regarding Culture, Education, Executive Characteristics, Gender and Finance. A large part of the task will be the analysis and presentation of several recent research articles to the class with a concerted attempt to make the material accessible and to tie it into real-world practice (potential or actual). More information on this assignment will be provided early in the semester.

The group assignment reports **must** be typed (double space) for a maximum of 10-15 pages. They can be completed in groups of no more than **3 to 5** students. The groups are to be organized by students themselves. Your mark will be first based on content, and second, on presentation. Presentation includes effective and correct use of the English language.

The assignments are due at the start of class indicated on the class schedule section of the course outline. Late assignments will not be accepted unless the student and the professor have made prior arrangements.

Each report must include an executive summary (maximum length of one page) outlining key issues and conclusion. Figures and tables should be put in an appendix at the end of the report. All tables and figures must be numbered and all pages (including pages with tables and figures) must also be numbered.

MID-TERM EXAM

Mid-Term #1 is multiple choice, short answer and closed book and accounts for **25%** of your final grade. The exam will cover material from the text book, readings, handouts, web site material assigned, lectures and class discussion.

FINAL EXAM

This exam will be cumulative. The final exam is closed book, multiple-choice, short answer and essay or case-based questions. The exam will cover material from the text book, readings, handouts, web site material assigned, lectures and class discussion.

Students must pass the combination of the midterms and final exam in order to pass the course.

PARTICIPATION / CLASS CONTRIBUTION

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.

Your contribution is essential component in the overall education process. Contribution takes place in many forms: asking informed questions in class, making intelligent comments, reading the case and being prepared to discuss the issues, actively listening to your peers and working with others. Please remember that quantity is no substitute for quality.

There will be ample opportunity to contribute to the class. The format of the in-class discussions of cases may take a variety of forms including: group analysis of single case issues during class, presentation of issues and leading discussions of the case issues.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you take an active role in class. If this is a problem for you, I urge you to talk to me to discuss ways that you can make a contribution. The grading for the class contribution in each class is as follows:

Grade	Contribution
0	Does not show up for class.
1	Attends class but says very little.
2	Makes a significant contribution to the class by making important points with a significant element of originality or demonstrating mastery of difficult theoretical issues or concepts; is always prepared having read and analyzed prior to class, the various aspects of the problems and issues involved, shares in class presentations, contributes to in-class group work.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

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, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at:

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

Language for Use in Courses with an On-Line Element

In this course we will be using X*. 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 the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in 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.

X* = e-mail, LearnLink, WebCT, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Missed Mid-Term Examinations / Tests / Class Participation

Where students miss a regularly scheduled mid-term or class participation for legitimate reasons as determined by the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office, the weight for that test/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 Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office within five (5) working days upon returning to school.

To document absences for health related reasons, please provide to Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and the McMaster University Student Health Certificate which can be found on the DeGroot website at <http://mbastudent.degroot.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 Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office the Petition for Relief for MBA Missed Term Work and documentation supporting the reason for the absence.

Students unable to write a mid-term at the posted exam 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 Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office at least ten (10) working days before the scheduled exam along with acceptable documentation. Instructors cannot themselves allow students to unofficially write make-up exams/tests. Adjudication of the request must be handled by Student Experience – Academic (MBA).

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

Missed Final Examinations

A student who misses a final examination without good reason will receive a mark of 0 on the examination.

All applications for deferred and special examination arrangements must be made to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office. Failure to meet the stated deadlines may result in the denial of these arrangements. Deferred examination privileges, if granted, must be satisfied during the examination period at the end of the following term. There will be one common sitting for all deferred exams.

Failure to write an approved deferred examination at the pre-scheduled time will result in a failure for that examination, except in the case of exceptional circumstances where documentation has been provided and approved. Upon approval, no credit will be given for the course, and the notation N.C. (no credit) will be placed on the student's transcript. Students receiving no credit for a required course must repeat the course. Optional or elective courses for which no credit is given may be repeated or replaced with another course of equal credit value.

Requests for a second deferral or rescheduling of a deferred examination will not be considered.

Any student who is unable to write a final examination because of illness is required to submit the Application for Deferred MBA Final Examination and a statement from a doctor certifying illness on the date of the examination. The Application for Deferred MBA Final Examination and the McMaster University Student Health Certificate can be found on the DeGroot website at <http://mbastudent.degroot.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-applications/> Please do not use the online McMaster Student Absence Form as this is for Undergraduate students only. Students who write examinations while ill will not be given special consideration after the fact.

In such cases, the request for a deferred examination privilege must be made in writing to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office within five business days of the missed examination.

Special examination arrangements may be made for students unable to write at the posted exam time due to compelling reasons (for example religious, or for part-time students only, work-related reasons):

- Students who have religious obligations which make it impossible to write examinations at the times posted are required to produce a letter from their religious leader stating that they are unable to be present owing to a religious obligation.
- Part-time students who have business commitments which make it impossible to write examinations at the times posted are required to produce a letter on company letterhead from the student's immediate supervisor stating that they are unable to be present owing to a specific job commitment.

In such cases, applications must be made in writing to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office at least ten business days before the scheduled examination date and acceptable documentation must be supplied.

If a student is representing the University at an academic or athletic event and is available at an overlapping scheduled time of the test/examination, the student may write the test/examination at an approved location with an approved invigilator, as determined by the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office.

In such cases, the request for a deferred examination privilege must be made in writing to the Student Experience – Academic (MBA) office within ten business days of the end of the examination period.

Note: A fee of \$50 will be charged for a deferred exam written on campus and a fee of \$100 for deferred exams written elsewhere. In cases where the student's standing is in doubt, the Graduate Admissions and Study Committee may require that the student with one or more deferred examination privileges refrain from re-registering until the examination(s) have been cleared.

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 course work at the outset of term. Students must forward a copy of such SAS accommodation to the instructor normally, within the first three (3) weeks of classes by setting up an appointment with the instructor. 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 MODIFICATION 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your registration and continuous participation (e.g. on A2L, in the classroom, etc.) to the various learning activities of MBA F726/ V702 will be considered to be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.**

Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

A course evaluation will be conducted near the end of the term. Students are asked to participate in this evaluation

COURSE SCHEDULE

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Week	Date	Lecture
Reading 7. The Behavioral Finance Perspective		
1	Sept 10	Section 1: Introduction Section 2: Behavioral versus Traditional perspectives
2	Sept 17	Section 3: Decision Making
3	Sept 24	Section 4: Perspectives on Market Behavior and Portfolio Construction
Reading 8. The Behavioral Biases of Individuals		
4	Oct 1	Section 1: Introduction Section 2: Categorizations of Behavioral Biases Section 3: Cognitive Errors
5	Oct 8	MIDTERM 1 (Reading 7)
6	Oct 15	Section 4: Emotional Biases
7	Oct 22	Section 5: Investment Policy and Asset Allocation
Reading 9. Behavioral Finance and Investment Processes		
8	Oct 29	Section 1: Introduction Section 2: The Uses and Limitations of Classifying Investors into Types Section 3: How Behavioral Factors Affect Adviser-Client Relations
9	Nov 5	Section 4: How Behavioral Factors Affect Portfolio Construction Section 5: Behavioral Finance and Analyst Forecasts
10	Nov 12	Section 6: How Behavioral Factors Affect Business Managers and Committee Decision Making Section 7: How Behavioral Finance Influences Market Behavior
11	Nov 19	FINAL EXAM (Cumulative)
12	Nov 26	**Course Evals** Group Assignment Presentations Due
13	Dec 3	**Course Evals** Group Assignment Presentations

**** Course Evaluations: 10 minutes at the beginning of class. Bring your electronic devices.**